The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.… The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer 1969, p. 2).

Accordingly, individual and collective actions of any scale or complexity reflect the meanings that people assign to things, as these meanings emerge in and are transformed within the context of human group life. Blumer incorporated these assumptions into his vision of social life as an ongoing stream of situations handled by people through self-indication and definition.

Blumer synthesized the pragmatist philosophy of George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) with Charles Horton Cooley's (1864–1929) notion of sympathetic introspection, particularly as it informs contemporary ethnography, to develop a sociologically focused approach to the study of human lived experience. In opposition to behaviorist, structuralist, and positivist views that have dominated the social sciences, Blumer championed using an interpretivist perspective when examining social life. He contended that theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of human behavior must recognize human beings as thinking, acting, and interacting entities and must, therefore, employ concepts that authentically represent the humanly known, socially created, and experienced world.

Blumer's pioneering sociological perspective informed his analysis of a broad array of subjects including collective behavior, social movements, fashion, social change, social problems, industrial and labor relations, public opinion, morale, industrialization, public sector social science research, social psychology, and race relations. And, because his rendition of symbolic interactionism invariably portrays people as possessing agency, as reflective interactive participants in community life, he routinely called into question analyses of social life that rely on more stereotypical factors-oriented approaches.

Although Blumer's 1958 article "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position" challenges psychological and psychoanalytic explanations of race relations by emphasizing social processes entailed in conflict, institutionalized power relations, and collective definitions of the situation, his most consequential contribution to the study of intergroup relations was his 1971 article "Social Problems as Collective Behavior."

SEE ALSO *Behaviorism; Groups; Industrialization; Intergroup Relations; Mead, George Herbert; Meaning; Positivism; Pragmatism; Prejudice; Public Opinion; Race; Race Relations; Racism; Social Psychology; Sociology; Stereotypes; Structuralism; Sympathy*

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Thomas J. Morrione

BLYDEN, EDWARD

SEE *Pan-Africanism; Socialism, African.*

BOAS, FRANZ
1858–1942

Franz Boas is recognized widely as the "father of American anthropology" because at Columbia University he trained a generation of graduate students who transformed an assortment of classificatory schemes based on evolutionary hierarchies into a comprehensive four-field discipline that integrated linguistics and archaeology with biological anthropology and cultural anthropology. In addition, Boas was a pioneering public intellectual who used science to challenge ideas of racial inferiority and the barbarism of certain cultures by employing empirical research to demonstrate how racism, the environment, and the history of specific cultures can explain difference and diversity.

EDUCATION AND WORKS
Born in Minden, Germany, Boas attended universities in Heidelberg, Bonn, and Kiel. His first academic appointment was in 1888 at Clark University, where he initiated a comprehensive research program that began to challenge

some of the basic assumptions of racial categories; those efforts culminated in a major project for the U.S. Immigration Commission and were published as *Changes in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants* (1912). In that work Boas demonstrated that the environment plays a significant role in determining physical attributes, such as head size, that often were used at that time to demarcate racial difference.

During the late nineteenth century racial categories were classified by head size, body type, and skin color and were linked to behavior, language, customs, and morality. Boas asserted that body type and race are discrete modalities and are not linked to customs and belief systems. Furthermore, he argued, one could not demarcate distinct racial categories accurately and cultures could not be rank-ordered within the then-current terminology as savage, barbarian, and civilized. His most definitive treatment of these issues was in *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911).

The foundation of that theoretical paradigm shift in the natural and social sciences was Boas's understanding that cultures and languages should be evaluated in the context of their own complex histories and on their own terms as opposed to analyzing societies in terms of stages of evolution along a singular road to a civilization or an apex of culture. Much of Boas's research and theory was grounded in empiricism, participant observation, and detailed transcription of grammars, myths, kinship terminology, and folklore, using the interpretive framework of the people he studied.

Opposed to imposing an analytical framework on a set of traits and tendencies to deduce laws of culture, Boas instead relied on the use of inductive methods to identify patterns in process and the diffusion of material culture or folkloric themes through time and between cultural groups. Most of his ethnographic fieldwork was focused on the complex indigenous communities of the Pacific Northwest. To achieve such exhaustive empirical studies Boas relied on key informants who served as important collaborators. One of the most influential of those collaborators was George Hunt (Lingít), who was raised among the Kwakwaka'wakw near Fort Rupert on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Hunt was instrumental in helping Boas develop his definitive work on the Kwakiutl language and kinship.

In 1896 Boas began to lecture at Columbia University, and in 1899 he became its first professor of anthropology. At that university he developed the distinctly North American four-field approach to anthropology. He also helped curate anthropological exhibits at the American Museum of Natural History, where he worked from 1895 to 1905.

In addition to his ethnographic work Boas conducted detailed studies on the growth of children and the head sizes of immigrants. Between 1908 and 1910 he measured 18,000 adults and children, using the data to produce the study *Changes in Bodily Forms of Descendants of Immigrants* (1912). Although there has been debate about the validity of his data, that study, among others Boas conducted, demonstrated that the physical metrics used to demonstrate the putative superiority and inferiority of racial groups and thus justify Jim Crow segregation and selective immigration restrictions were erroneous. African American intellectuals and early civil rights organizations welcomed the new science, and Boas actively supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and formed lasting working relationships with scholars such as Carter G. Woodson (1875–1950) and W. E. B. Du Bois. Boas was also a champion of peace, academic freedom, and equal opportunity.

INFLUENCE

Perhaps Boas's greatest contribution to the field of anthropology was inspiring and training a generation of students who shaped the field in enduring ways. Many were women, and several were people of color. The list of students and colleagues whom Boas influenced at Columbia is impressive. Alfred Kroeber and Robert Lowie established the anthropology program at the University of California at Berkeley, Edward Sapir (1884–1935) and Faye-Cooper Cole (1881–1961) developed anthropology at University of Chicago, Leslie Spier (1893–1961) brought anthropology to the University of Washington, and Melville J. Herskovits organized an anthropology program at Northwestern. Other notable students include Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Zora Neale Hurston whose collective influence on American science and letters is much greater than his male students. Others included William Jones (1871–1909), a member of the Fox Nation and one of the first American Indian anthropologists; the Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio (1883–1960); the African American ethnographer Eugene King (1898–1981); Elsie Clews Parsons (1875–1945); Gene Weltfish (1902–1980); Gladys Reichard (1893–1955); and Alexander Goldenweiser (1880–1940). Together they went well beyond Boas's careful empirical studies to develop an understanding that cultures are dynamic and fluid, language is an integral aspect of culture that has internal structures and logics, history and ethnographic methods are central facets of anthropological research, and racial categories are scientifically untenable bases of analysis.

SEE ALSO *Anthropology, Biological; Anthropology, U.S.; Benedict, Ruth; Culture; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Ethnography; Ethnology and Folklore; Herskovits, Melville J.; Hurston, Zora Neale; Jim Crow; Kroeber, Alfred; Lowie, Robert; Mead, Margaret; National*

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Race

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Lee D. Baker

BODY IMAGE

Body image is a familiar phrase in contemporary American culture. The fourth edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary* (2000) defines it as "the subjective concept of one's physical appearance based on self-observation and the reactions of others." In the scientific literature, body image is considered a multidimensional construct encompassing self-perceptions and attitudes regarding one's physical appearance across cognitive, affective, perceptual, and behavioral domains.

The systematic study of body image began in the 1960s when psychiatrist Hilde Bruch (1904–1984) posited that negative body image was a causal mechanism in the development of anorexia nervosa. Since that time, numerous studies have linked body-image disturbance to the development of eating disorders and the onset of dieting. Although studies of non-treatment-seeking obese individuals indicate that there is no difference in the prevalence of psychopathology among obese and normal weight individuals, obese people consistently report higher dissatisfaction with body image and physical appearance than normal weight individuals (Rosen 2002). Furthermore, negative body image in treatment-seeking obese individuals is associated with psychological distress (Friedman et al. 2002).

A renewed interest in body image arose in the 1980s. Judith Rodin and colleagues (1984) described the widespread concerns about body image among women as a "normative discontent." This early research found a greater risk for body dissatisfaction among Caucasian women than men and women of color. Among females body-image dissatisfaction tends to be associated with the desire to lose weight, whereas among males body-image dissatisfaction is often associated with the desire to increase muscularity (McCreary and Sasse 2000). Recent evidence suggests that ethnic differences in body-image dissatisfaction may be decreasing, although more research is needed (Shaw et al. 2004). Sexual orientation is another factor that is associated with body-image concerns: homosexual males are more likely to report body dissatisfaction than heterosexual males and homosexual women (Siever 1994).

Body-image concerns typically surface with the onset of puberty. Adolescence may be an especially challenging time for girls because the thin-body ideal is inconsistent with normal pubertal changes such as increased body fat (Bearman et al., 2006) In contrast, muscle development associated with puberty in boys is more consistent with the athletic male body ideal. Normal growth and gender-specific social ideals may help explain the discrepancy in the prevalence of body dissatisfaction between females and males.

Interpersonal relationships during adolescence also appear to be related to negative body image. In particular, being teased about one's body by peers and family is associated with body-image disturbance (Keery et al. 2005; Eisenberg et al. 2003). Perceived pressure about weight from friends and parents also may play a strong role in promoting body dissatisfaction (McCabe and Ricciardelli 2005). Sociocultural theories suggest that the cultural emphasis on female appearance, especially weight, contributes to the development of body-image dissatisfaction. The impact of the mass media on body image seems to