

# Portraits of Pioneers in Developmental Psychology



Edited by

Wade E. Pickren  
Donald A. Dewsbury  
Michael Wertheimer

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**Wade E. Pickren**

Pace University

**Donald A. Dewsbury**

University of Florida

**Michael Wertheimer**

University of Colorado, Boulder

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## Preface

With this volume, the series *Portraits of Pioneers in Psychology* takes a new direction in focusing on a specific area: developmental psychology. Previous volumes have included chapters on contributors to a variety of psychology's substantive areas of scholarship and practice. We now turn to a closer examination of specific areas within psychology with this volume, which features 16 key figures in developmental psychology. As with previous volumes, our aim is to have chapters that inform our readers about both the scholarly and personal lives of the psychologists included in the volume. The chapters have been constructed to be authoritative yet accessible. Our chapters include new insights, balanced perspectives, and new or little-known information about our subjects. Our objective is to make the chapters of interest to undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty members in psychology. They should be of interest not only to psychologists, but also to scholars in many related fields. The chapters should be especially valuable in the field of the history of psychology. However, we believe they will also be useful in such courses as developmental psychology (child, adolescent, and lifespan), human development, and educational psychology. This volume represents a new direction for a series begun in 1991 by the Society for General Psychology and published as *Portraits of Pioneers in Psychology*. Now, each volume will focus on a particular subfield of psychology. For this volume, Donald Dewsbury and Michael Wertheimer continue to serve as coeditors. Wade Pickren has joined Dewsbury and Wertheimer and has undertaken primary responsibility for the volume.

Each of the 16 subjects made significant contributions to developmental psychology and thus are legitimately regarded as pioneers. Mamie Phipps Clark initiated the research that was later cited in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* litigation that helped end segregation in public schools; she also pioneered new community-based psychological interventions in New York City. Robert W. White pioneered a new approach to the study of persons across the lifespan and his contributions continue to be felt in many areas of psychology. Lois Barclay Murphy offered a distinctive perspective on the strengths of developing children; her work foreshadowed later developments in humanistic and positive psychology. Florence L. Goodenough pioneered new testing methods for children and was a leader of mid-20th century psychology, including the National Council of Women Psychologists. John Paul Scott hoped that his pioneering research on behavioral genetics would help diminish aggression and make a more peaceful world.

The chapters that make up the center of the book highlight the many contributions of European pioneers in developmental psychology: Jean Piaget, Charlotte Bühler, Heinz Werner, and Lev Vygotsky. The work of these Europeans has had an enduring influence on how we understand human development. Their contributions were carried forward in the United States by Joseph McVicker Hunt and in Brazil by Helena Antipoff. Both Hunt and Antipoff, as our chapters detail, interpreted the work of the Europeans to fit their respective contexts.

Arnold Gesell was in his time perhaps North America's best known authority on children. His film studies of children's development remain a landmark accomplishment. Lawrence Kohlberg pioneered the study of moral development across the lifespan and, as our chapter indicates, many of his questions about moral development arose in the context of his own life. While working with Kurt Lewin at the University of Iowa Child Welfare Station, Roger Barker was involved in the key studies on aggression and democratic leadership among children. From this foundation, Barker went on to study human development across the lifespan in a variety of settings and synthesized his findings into what became known as environmental or ecological psychology. Eleanor "Jackie" Gibson, of course, was one of the world's best known psychologists for her work on the "visual cliff." She was a lifelong researcher on questions of perception and development. Finally, Sidney Bijou had a long and productive career in which he delineated ways to improve the lives of children.

The book owes its existence to the contributions of many people. We especially want to acknowledge the efforts of the chapter authors, as well as of our editor at Psychology Press/Taylor & Francis, Debra Riegert. Finally, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to our reviewers: Lawrence Balter (New York University), Barney Beins (Ithaca College), Brian Cox (Hofstra University), Harry Heft (Denison University), and Mark Mattson (Fordham University).

**Wade E. Pickren**  
**Donald A. Dewsbury**  
**Michael Wertheimer**

# Foundations of Human Experience

WADE E. PICKREN

A psychology of human development was woven from multiple strands of theory, practice, and changing demographics in Europe and North America. The 19th century was an era of grand theories about human nature and human society, as exemplified in the writings of Karl Marx, August Comte, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud, among others. The rise of manufactory capitalism as part of the Industrial Revolution helped create changes in the distribution of population, as millions moved to cities to work in factories. Home and work life was also impacted, as the modern nuclear family characteristic of Western societies gradually emerged and became the norm, if not the only expression of family relationships and modes of living. Questions about the status and role of children in modern industrializing societies arose, with compulsory schooling and legislation forbidding child labor spreading fitfully across both Europe and North America throughout the 19th and into the 20th century. Improvements in the understanding and treatment of disease led to slow but marked increases in life expectancy, with attendant questions about the life course and life stages. By the end of the 19th century, these various strands began to be woven together into an emergent science about human development, focused first on children and their development. In the first few decades of the 20th century, a pragmatic approach to developmental issues was fostered by a new cadre of philanthropic organizations that viewed an understanding of the child and human development as central to managing large and increasingly diverse societies. All of these strands together were important in constructing the field of developmental psychology.

The rich theoretical traditions of the 19th century shaped the more narrowly focused theories and practices of the early cohorts of developmental psychologists. For example, the ideas of Karl Marx, filtered through the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and embedded in the new institutions of the Soviet Union, found expression in the work of Lev Vygotsky and his colleagues (see Chapter 7). But it was the ideas and writings of Charles Darwin that provided the greatest theoretical impetus for a psychology of human development.

Developmental psychology became diverse in topic, subspecialties, and reach, but the notion that children could be understood as holding the key to understanding human linkages with an evolutionary past grew from the writings of Darwin. Thus, as the new field of scientific psychology emerged in the last quarter of the

19th century, questions of the development of human characteristics became of interest to these new scientists.

Darwin was not the first theorist or scientist to address human development, especially that of children. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) was an advocate of developmentally appropriate education for children in *Émile, or On Education* (1762). Rousseau divided human development into three stages, each with unique developmental characteristics. Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) originated the idea of a kindergarten, a term he coined and applied in 1840 to the Play and Activity Institute he founded in Germany in 1837. He emphasized the importance of the child learning through activities, in which he anticipated many later developmental and educational theorists, including two subjects in this volume, Lev Vygotsky (Chapter 7) and Helena Antipoff (Chapter 4).

Biographies of infants and young children were one way to describe child development. Two notable examples from Germany include that of philosopher Dietrich Tiedemann in 1787 and Wilhelm Preyer in 1881. Darwin published an account of his son William's development in 1877 based on observations made much earlier. In the United States, Millicent Shinn gave an intensive account of her niece's development in *The Biography of a Baby* (1900).

Still, it was the work of Darwin or, perhaps more accurately, interpretations of Darwin that inspired ideas about human, particularly child development among the first generation of the new scientific psychologists, especially in America (Noon, 2005; O'Donnell, 1985). G. Stanley Hall, notable for many accomplishments in the first generation of the New Psychologists, drew heavily upon evolutionary ideas, some of which were Darwinian, to extol the great promise of child study. Recapitulation theory, which owed more perhaps to German zoologist Ernst Haeckel than to Darwin, posited that the evolutionary history of a species is replayed in development. This idea that ontogeny (development) recapitulates phylogeny captured the imagination of many psychologists.

In the United States, the Child Study movement emerged in the late 19th century led by psychologist G. Stanley Hall. The movement is best understood in light of Progressive Era ideals of reform and rationalization of American life. Understanding the child, it was thought, would provide insight into how best to order an increasingly complex world and help make it possible to balance the social and the natural worlds. Psychologists and other social scientists of the era also saw this as an opportunity to gain cultural authority as experts who could contribute to the reform of society. Thus, these scientists became advocates for reform of child rearing, child hygiene, and child education. The last became especially important with the new compulsory schooling laws that led to a 1000% increase in the number of children in schools between 1890 and 1920.

The modes of scientific inquiry promoted by child study advocates centered on observation of the child, extensive questionnaires, and reports. Hall was a founder of the National Association for the Study of Childhood (NASC) in 1893, which was the leader in the promotion of these data-gathering efforts. Hall and the NASC introduced the use of the questionnaire, and nearly 200 distinct questionnaires were used over the next two decades to solicit information from thousands of school children about a wide variety of childhood fears, dreams, hopes, and behaviors.

All this activity, by psychologists, physicians, teachers, and other experts, aroused a kind of national fervor about childhood. President Theodore Roosevelt called the first White House Conference on Childhood in 1909 to develop ideas that could be used to sponsor legislation to improve the health and care of children. The Children's Bureau was established as part of the Department of Commerce and Labor in 1912. Hall even set up a Children's Institute at Clark in 1909. This was at a time when Hall was intensely interested in Freud's theories about childhood and sexuality. Hall established in the institute a section for the study of "Psychology, Pedagogy, and Hygiene of Sex." Although the institute was short-lived (1909–1914) and apparently little research was ever done there, it reflected Hall's intense interest in the importance of a scientific understanding of all aspects of childhood.

In 1904, Hall published what became a landmark, two-volume set on a newly minted developmental stage—adolescence. Hall, of course, coined the term and outlined its extensive implications for human development, as indicated by the title of the volumes: *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*. Several of Hall's students at Clark University, including Arnold Gesell, Henry Goddard, and Lewis Terman, went on to become important contributors to the new science of child development.

The term used for much of this work was *genetic psychology*, indicating not the role of genes in human behavior, but genetic in the sense of origins of behavior. James Mark Baldwin (1861–1934), a psychologist educated at Princeton University, contributed two important books to the new genetic psychology, *Mental Development in the Child and the Race* (1895) and *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development* (1902). Baldwin's notion of "dialectic of personal growth" suggested how children distinguish self from others and the implications of this realization for social and moral development. Baldwin's theorizing about child development in various domains, such as moral and cognitive development, later influenced Jean Piaget (see Chapter 6), Lawrence Kohlberg (see Chapter 16), and Lev Vygotsky (see Chapter 7).

Within the larger context of increasing urbanization, growth of professional expertise, and compulsory schooling with its demands for vastly expanded administrative and instructional structures, the new discourse on childhood and human development became part of the Progressive project of social reform. Notions about the importance of shaping children to continue the advance of humanity upward on the ladder of social evolution became incorporated into new programs of education, such as kindergartens and nursery schools.

The shift within the still young field of scientific psychology toward a science of prediction and control gave new importance to psychology's potential as an instrument of social management. It was this potential that the new philanthropies focused on when their attention turned to childhood and human development.

Although the work of Hall and his students was arguably the beginning of developmental psychology in North America, along with the theorizing of James Mark Baldwin, it was not until after the end of World War I that psychologists in North America began consistent research programs on development. This was an

important part of the institutionalization of developmental psychology between the world wars. The additional, and critical, component was the injection of funding from newly established philanthropic foundations interested in supporting systematic research on childhood in the service of improving civil society and the social order (Bulmer & Bulmer, 1981).

Philanthropy and scientific research on child development were spurred by the nursery school movement, which began in England in the early 1900s. The movement caught on in the United States after World War I. Unlike the movement in England, American nursery schools began as part of colleges and universities, typically in the then new home economics programs. Psychology and education faculty members were initially adjunctive to these schools. Within a few years, however, academics began to see the potential of these schools as a place to study children scientifically. The Iowa Child Welfare Station at the University of Iowa was an early site of such study, with psychologist Bird Baldwin as its director. At the Merrill-Palmer School in Detroit, America's best known woman psychologist, Helen Thompson Woolley (1874–1947), was head of research, while at the Psycho-Clinic of Yale Hall's student psychologist-physician Arnold Gesell (1880–1961) was in charge (Varga, in press). Teachers College at Columbia University in New York was also an important setting for the emergence of systematic research on children's development. Typically, the research was interdisciplinary in these first laboratory-based clinics and institutes, so that physical, psychological, and nutritional aspects of growth were investigated, along with home care influences.

These efforts in the early 1920s provided a base for the expansion and then institutionalization of developmental psychology as a scientific subfield with academic psychology. The catalyst for both the expansion and institutionalization was the infusion of funds from private philanthropic foundations (Bulmer & Bulmer, 1981; Fisher, 1993; Kohler, 1991; Lomax, 1977). Beginning in the mid-1920s and continuing for the next 15–20 years, several new foundations (e.g., the Commonwealth Fund), the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation provided significant funding, certainly far more than had ever been offered previously, for developmental research. The intent of the research funds often had an application rationale, such as to improve parent education. The funds supported a variety of initiatives, from fellowships for graduate study to direct support of laboratories, and included support for publishing. These were all crucial for creating the new field of developmental psychology (Kohler, 1987; Schlossman, 1981).

Perhaps the largest initiative came from one of the Rockefeller Foundation funds, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM; Bulmer & Bulmer, 1981). Psychologist Beardsley Ruml was the director of the memorial and in 1923 was given the task of spending \$1 million of the funds yearly to benefit children. Social scientist Lawrence K. Frank was given the task of developing a plan to implement the program. Frank's plan focused on building a knowledge base about children through research. The practical result was the allocation of funds to establish independent research institutes at several universities across North America (Lomax, 1977; Pols, 1999).

With the funds, Teachers College at Columbia began the Child Development Institute and recruited Helen Thompson Woolley to become the director. While

the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station was already well established, it received significant funds to supplement state support. New institutes were established in the next decade at the University of Toronto, University of Minnesota, and the University of California–Berkeley (Lomax, 1977; Smuts, 2006). It was at the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota that Florence Goodenough (see Chapter 2) made her major contributions.

In an innovative move that was controversial at the time, the memorial required that the institutes be independent of existing academic departments, perhaps to prevent the diversion of funds to other purposes. This was an important safeguard, as research on children was not highly valued by academic psychologists, who were mostly male. Certainly, many of these male psychologists saw such work as women's work and did not want children around their laboratories.

An additional initiative supported by the LSRM was funds to establish a Committee on Child Development at the National Research Council in Washington, D.C. The committee was chaired by Robert S. Woodworth, then an experimental psychologist at Columbia University. Perhaps the most important function of the committee was the administration of a Fellows program. The fellowships provided crucial support for a number of graduate students to complete their doctorate in psychology, especially during the early years of the Great Depression (Smuts, 2006). While the fellowships were open to both men and women, the recipients were mostly women. Several of these women went on to make highly significant contributions in both research and institutional leadership in developmental psychology.

Because knowledge dissemination was part of the mission of the Committee on Child Development, Woodworth and his colleagues were able to use funds from LSRM to host several conferences on child development, and these proved instrumental in institutionalizing the field. Out of these interdisciplinary conferences, one of the world's premier scientific organizations, the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), was created in 1933. The society then received funds from the General Education Board (Rockefeller Foundation) to initiate a new journal, *Child Development*, in 1935 (Smuts, 2006).

It was in this interwar period, then, that the field of scientific study of human development, focused first on children's development, became part of the landscape of American psychology. Although its greatest growth did not come for another 2 decades, these years were critical. Thus, the psychologists profiled in this volume provide the reader an opportunity to gain knowledge of the foundations of modern developmental psychology. These theorists and practitioners made contributions that continue to provide insight and inspiration today as developmental psychology grows as a science by and about the richness of the human experience.

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# Editor Biographies

**Wade E. Pickren** is a professor and chair of psychology at Pace University in New York. He is the editor of *History of Psychology* and has served as historian of the American Psychological Association since 1998. He is a past president of the Society for the History of American Psychology (APA Division 26). He received his PhD in the history of psychology from the University of Florida. Wade is a widely respected author and editor of six books, numerous journal articles and book chapters, and has given conference presentations and invited talks on four continents. He is the coeditor of the book series *Psychology in a Global Area*.

**Donald A. Dewsbury**, co editor and author of the chapter on John Paul Scott, is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Florida. His PhD is from the University of Michigan and was followed by postdoctoral work with Frank Beach at the University of California, Berkeley. Through much of his career he has worked as a comparative psychologist, but in recent years his work has shifted to the history of psychology. He has served as the president of three APA divisions and the Animal Behavior Society. Dr. Dewsbury is the author or editor of 17 volumes, including *Comparative Animal Behavior*, *Comparative Psychology in the Twentieth Century*, *Evolving Perspectives on the History of Psychology*, and *Monkey Farm: A History of the Yerkes Laboratories of Primate Biology, 1930–1965*. He has also published over 360 articles and chapters.

**Michael Wertheimer** is Professor Emeritus at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He received his PhD in experimental psychology from Harvard University. He is co-editor of the first six volumes of the *Portraits of Pioneers in Psychology* series. Dr. Wertheimer is a past president of four APA divisions (general psychology, teaching of psychology, theoretical and philosophical psychology, and history of psychology) and the recipient of two national awards for the teaching of psychology. In 2000, APA's Division 26 presented him with a "lifetime achievement award for sustained, outstanding, and unusual contributions to the history of psychology."



# Contributors

**Bernard C. (Barney) Beins**, author of the chapter on Jean Piaget, earned his PhD in experimental psychology from the City University of New York. He is currently a professor and chair of the Psychology Department at Ithaca College and formerly served as the director of pre-college and undergraduate programs at the American Psychological Association. Barney's professional interests include teaching by drawing connections between current psychological thought and historical theory and research and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

**Regina Helena F. Campos**, author of the chapter on Helena Antipoff, is a professor of educational psychology at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil. She established the Archives of the History of Brazilian Psychology at UFMG and is a member of the Work Group on the History of Psychology at the Brazilian Association for Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology.

**Ben Harris**, coauthor of the chapter on Arnold Gesell, is a professor of psychology and an affiliate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire. He works at the intersection of the history of psychology, history of medicine, and history of science. Ben's doctorate is in clinical psychology from Vanderbilt University and he has held fellowships in the history of science and medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is a former president of the Society for the History of Psychology and executive officer of the Cheiron Society.

**Ann Johnson**, author of the chapter on Florence L. Goodenough, is the director of faculty development and a professor of psychology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she teaches history and systems of psychology. Her research interests focus on second-generation women in the history of psychology (with Dr. Elizabeth Johnston) and the history of child psychology.

**Elizabeth Johnston**, author of the chapter on Lois Barclay Murphy, is a professor of psychology at Sarah Lawrence College. Her special interests include human perception of three-dimensional shape, binocular vision, and the perception of depth from motion. Elizabeth is the author of articles and book chapters on shape perception from stereopsis, sensorimotor integration, and combining depth information from different sources.

**Edward K. Morris**, author of the chapter on Sidney W. Bijou, earned his doctorate in psychology under Bijou's direction and the tutelage of William K. Redd at the University of Illinois. Since then, Edward has been a faculty member at the University of Kansas. His scholarly interests include the historical and conceptual foundations of behavior analysis, the field's relations with biological and psychological sciences, and the possibilities of their integration. He was president of the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Division 25 of the American Psychological Association (APA), as well as the editor of *The Behavior Analyst* and two newsletters, *The Interbehaviorist* and *The Recorder*, the latter for Division 25. He is currently a fellow of ABA, APA, and the Association for Psychological Science.

**Suzanne C. Ouellette**, author of the chapter on Robert W. White, earned her PhD in psychology (personality processes and psychopathology) at the University of Chicago under the sponsorship of Eugene Gendlin and Salvatore R. Maddi. She also received an MA in theology from the Yale University Divinity School. Suzanne is currently on the faculty of the graduate school of the City University of New York within the Social/Personality, Environmental, and Developmental Psychology programs, and the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program. Her scholarly interests include the study of lives, narrative psychology, identity, and the necessary links between psychology and the arts and humanities.

**Herbert L. Pick, Jr.**, author of the chapter on Eleanor Gibson, earned his PhD at Cornell University under the guidance of Richard Walk. He worked for Professors Walk and Gibson on investigation of perceptual learning. After a brief period at the University of Wisconsin, Herbert spent most of his career in the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota focusing on perception and perceptual development. He has had a long standing professional and intellectual interest in Soviet and Russian psychology. He has been able to make extended research visits there and to the Netherlands.

**Alexandra Rutherford**, author of the chapter on Mamie Phipps Clark, earned her PhD in history of psychology and clinical psychology at York University in Toronto under the direction of Ray Fancher. She is now an associate professor in the History and Theory of Psychology program at York. She is the author of *Beyond the Box: B. F. Skinner's Technology of Behavior From Laboratory to Life, 1950s–1970s* (University of Toronto Press, 2009) and coauthor with Wade Pickren of *A History of Modern Psychology in Context* (Wiley, 2010). Her current scholarship focuses on historical and contemporary issues in feminist psychology and she is the director of the Psychology's Feminist Voices project, see <http://www.feministvoices.com>.

**M. M. Scott**, author of the chapter on Roger Barker, is the Herman B. Wells Endowed Professor at Indiana University, and has taught human development, ecological psychology, and history of psychology for 35 years. She earned a PhD in psychology at Peabody College (now of Vanderbilt University). Her scholarly interests include theory of human development methods of oral history and other historical research methods.

**John R. Snarey**, author of the chapter on Lawrence Kohlberg, earned his doctorate in human development and psychology under the direction of Lawrence Kohlberg, with whom he worked for almost a decade. John is now a professor of Human Development and Ethics at Emory University, where he teaches an annual graduate course on moral cognition, development, and education. John is a fellow of the American Psychological Association, a fellow of the American Educational Research Association, and a past president of the Association for Moral Education.

**Jaán Valsiner**, author of the chapter on Heinz Werner, is a cultural psychologist with a developmental axiomatic base that is brought to analyses of any psychological or social phenomena. He is the founding editor (1995) of the Sage journal *Culture & Psychology* and editor-in-chief of *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Sciences*. In 1995 he was awarded the Alexander von Humboldt Prize for his interdisciplinary work on human development.

**Fredric Weizmann**, coauthor of the chapter on Arnold Gesell, is a senior scholar and professor emeritus in the psychology department at York University in Toronto. He received his PhD from Ohio State University, specializing in clinical psychology, and then completed a postdoctoral research fellowship on infant cognitive development with J. McV. Hunt at the University of Illinois. Before coming to York he taught at Ohio State University, the University of Illinois, and Purdue University. His interests include the history of psychology and medicine as they pertain to child development and the history of eugenics and ideas of race.

**William R. Woodward**, author of the chapter on Charlotte Bühler, earned his MA under the direction of Julian Jaynes and his PhD under the direction of George Rosen, the historian of public health. His biographical chapter on Jaynes appeared in *Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness* (2006), available through the Julian Jaynes Society website. Following a piece in *Integrative Psychology and Behavioral Science* (2007), he continues work on decolonialization. He published on women's capacity building in *Journal of Human Ontogenetics* (2009). His recent work on immigration and Russian women in psychology appeared in *History of Psychology* (2010). An article on Lotze's Gestalt metaphysics appears in *Idealistic Studies* (2010).

**Anton Yasnitsky**, author of the chapter on Lev Vygotsky, is currently a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow at York University in Toronto. Anton is primarily interested in the issues of integrative cultural and biosocial developmental science, specifically, the theory of cultural-historical development. These interests lead him to research on the social and intellectual history of Soviet, international and transnational psychology, the scientific legacy of the Vygotsky Circle, and application of cultural-historical psychology in the context of contemporary developmental and educational research. Anton served as a guest editor for a number of special issues of the *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* as well as the Russian-language journal *Cultural-Historical Psychology*. Along with his collaborators (René van der Veer, Leiden University, and Michel Ferrari, University of Toronto) he is currently working on editing *The Cambridge Handbook of Cultural-Historical Psychology*.



# 15

## Mamie Phipps Clark: *Developmental Psychologist, Starting From Strengths\**

ALEXANDRA RUTHERFORD

*York University*

A child can pick up race prejudice at 10 o'clock in the morning. It's in the air. It's on the face of some people when they look at Negroes.... M. P. Clark as cited in "Control Prejudice." (1968, p. 7)

About 3 months after the assassination of America's best-known civil rights activist and integrationist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., an article titled "Control Prejudice" appeared in the *Billings Gazette*. "Race prejudice is everywhere," it began, "and parents who want to guard against it must work on it every day" (July 29, 1968, p. 7). The article went on to quote Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark, a "prominent psychologist and mother of two children" (p. 7), who outlined a number of strategies parents could use both in the home and outside it to promote racial understanding and fight



Figure 15.1 Mamie Phipps Clark. (Courtesy of the Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Center for the History of Psychology—The University of Akron, Robert V. Guthrie papers. With permission.)

\* The author would like to thank Kelli Vaughn for her assistance compiling material on Mamie Phipps Clark. The research for this chapter was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Standard Research Grant.

prejudice early in their children's development. These strategies included providing children with opportunities to learn about people from different cultures and religions, reading to them from books with multiethnic characters and taking an active stand against discriminatory remarks and behaviors when they occurred.

Dr. Clark concluded by stating that the primary goal of these strategies is to help all children develop respect for others, especially others who are unlike themselves. Central to her philosophy of respect was the belief that all people, no matter how disadvantaged, have strengths that could be identified and built upon, that families and communities are important sources of these strengths, and that central to the task of helping any child develop optimally is a simultaneous focus on these strengths and the structural factors that might suppress them. She put this philosophy into practice as the executive director of the Northside Center for Child Development in New York City, which she cofounded in 1946 with her husband, Kenneth Bancroft Clark. Northside is, to this day, a multidisciplinary, multiethnic service for children, adolescents, and parents with psychological and educational needs in the Harlem community. Mamie Clark's vision for Northside and her implementation of this vision for over 30 years attest to her enormous contribution to strengthening and improving the lives of disadvantaged children and their families. Her philosophy also exemplifies the conjoining of the social welfare and psychological outlooks on child development, a process that had begun in the first White House Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1930 and that became the "dominant framework for understanding the social and psychological effects of racism" at midcentury (Selig, 2006, p. 138).

## FAMILY STRENGTH

Mamie Katherine Phipps (b. April 18, 1917, d. August 11, 1983) experienced firsthand the value of a strong family and community. Born in 1917 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, she was the daughter of a prominent physician, Harold H. Phipps, and Katie Florence Phipps, a homemaker. Like all children in the United States at the time, she attended a racially segregated school. In Hot Springs there was one White school and one Black school, from first through twelfth grade. The schools were located at opposite ends of town so that many students passed each other on the way to their respective schools. Racial tension erupting into fights was not uncommon. In this environment, Phipps recalled developing a protective armor that she carried with her at all times, but she was also aware that her position as the daughter of a well-respected physician (her father also managed a resort hotel for vacationers) accorded her certain privileges not extended to other Blacks in the community. As Lal (2002) pointed out, Black physicians, like Black lawyers, were extremely rare in the first half of the 20th century, with the ratio of Black physicians to the Black population as a whole a meager 1 in 3,194. The Phipps family was privileged with respect to class, but this did

not mean they were immune to the racism that was all-pervasive in their small southern town.

However, despite the economic privations of the Great Depression, the omnipresent awareness of racism, and the direct experience of legalized discrimination, Phipps described her childhood as comfortable, happy, and secure. Adversity produced increased family cohesion:

I had a very happy childhood. I really did. We were comfortable, and we lived through the Depression, but somehow it seemed to strengthen the family ties, rather than anything else. I remember the Depression very well. I remember that we had to cut back on all kinds of things that we had always had in our lives. But it wasn't really that much of a hardship. And at the end of it, I went to college. (M. P. Clark, 1976, p. 3)

In a later autobiographical reflection, she reiterated the importance of a “warm and protective extended family” in giving her the foundation for later career satisfaction (Clark, 1983, p. 269).

Coping with the facts of everyday life in the Jim Crow South required resilience and determination, and Phipps drew on both of these qualities in her decision to pursue post-secondary education. Noting that “in 1934, a southern Negro aspiring to enter an academic college had relatively few choices” (Clark, 1983, p. 269), Clark chose one of the very few options open to her. At the age of 16, with the support of her parents who were determined that she should get the best education possible, she traveled over 1000 miles by train to enroll at Howard University in Washington, DC. To ensure his daughter's safety on her first few trips to and from college, Harold Phipps bought her a compartment and instructed her to keep the shades down and stay inside. He made arrangements with the porters to look after her and ensure that she got meals. Security, even in the midst of a hostile environment, was a consistent feature of Phipps's upbringing (Lal, 2002).

Initially, Phipps thought she would major in mathematics. She quickly discovered, however, that the segregated public school system in Hot Springs had not prepared her to meet the intellectual demands of her new environment. Howard University employed some of the nation's most exciting Black intellectuals of the 1930s, including Alain Locke in philosophy, Ralph Bunche in political science, and Francis Cecil Sumner in psychology. Phipps soon realized that there were huge gaps in her education, not only in mathematics but also in English and foreign languages. With typical resilience she acted quickly to compensate:

Well, I had to study harder. I really did.... I went to summer school the first two summers when I was in college, to make up the deficiencies.... But I was taking five courses in summer school, and that's a lot of courses.... (M. P. Clark, 1976, p. 12)

She caught up, but her interest in mathematics was soon replaced by a new interest: psychology.

## PSYCHOLOGY: THE SILENT CHALLENGE

Mamie Phipps's initial desire to pursue mathematics at Howard quickly gave way to an interest in child development and psychology, partly due to the lack of encouragement given female students in mathematics (Clark, 1983, p. 270), and partly due to the encouragement of her future husband, Kenneth Bancroft Clark (see Jackson, 2006; Keppel, 2002; Phillips, 2000). Clark, a fellow student who was studying psychology, described it as a stimulating field that would fit with her interest in children and, he noted (perhaps optimistically), would provide future job opportunities. He introduced her to the head of the psychology department, Francis Cecil Sumner, who was the first African American to receive a PhD in psychology (see Guthrie, 1998, pp. 214–232; Sawyer, 2000), and she changed her major in her sophomore year. There were no Black women on the staff of the department. She reported retrospectively that the absence of Black women with advanced degrees in psychology at Howard (and indeed anywhere) itself represented a “silent” challenge (Clark, 1983, p. 268).

Mamie Phipps and Kenneth Clark came to share significantly more than just an interest in psychology and were married in April 1938 in Stafford, Virginia, when Mamie was finishing her senior year. As Kenneth later described his first meetings with his future wife:

She was a freshman when I was a senior. I knew that she was going to be a part of my life from that point on, and that nothing was going to interfere with that fact, including the star basketball player—you know, the other competitors who thought that they had more to offer an attractive, and at that time, comparatively well-to-do young woman, whose father was a physician. (K. B. Clark, 1976, p. 73).

Mamie graduated with her bachelor's degree and spent the summer working as a secretary in the law offices of Charles Hamilton Houston, the dean of Howard Law School and a lead attorney for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (Jackson & Weidman, 2006; Lal, 2002). She described this experience as “an enormously instructive and revealing one in relation to my own identity as a ‘Negro’” (Clark, 1983, p. 268). There, she witnessed the excitement of early planning for the eventual repeal of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling of 1896 that had upheld the constitutionality of the separate but equal doctrine that permitted racial segregation for almost 50 years.

In the fall, she began her master's degree program with an interest in developmental psychology. Kenneth, who was doing his doctoral training at Columbia University, suggested that she travel to New York and talk with psychologists Ruth and Eugene Horowitz (later Hartley) about their work on self-identification in nursery school children (see Horowitz, 1939). Thus, after a visit to an all-Black nursery school in Washington, DC, that resulted in an offer to do research with the children and after her meeting with the Horowitzes, she decided to merge her interests in race and child development in her master's research, resulting in her thesis, “The Development of Consciousness of Self in Negro Pre-school Children” (Clark, 1939).

In this work, Mamie Clark explored the development of racial identity in 150 Black children in segregated nursery schools in the Washington, DC, area using a

modification of a picture technique that had been pioneered by Ruth and Eugene Horowitz. A version of the study was published later that year with her husband as first author (Clark & Clark, 1939). In the published study, boys and girls aged 3, 4, and 5 years were presented with a set of pictures portraying various combinations of White boys, “colored” boys, and irrelevant figures (clown, dog, lion, hen). The boys were asked, “Show me which one is you,” and the girls were asked to point out the figure that was like their brother, male cousin, or a male playmate (Clark & Clark, 1939, p. 594). The Clarks concluded that in the whole sample, choices of the colored boy increased with age, and for boys at least there was a distinct increase in awareness of self between the ages of 3 and 4. Ultimately, however, the technique would have to be refined to say anything about the development of self-awareness in girls or to generate a more nuanced picture for self-identification processes in older children.

The Clarks also analyzed the data with respect to choices of White versus colored boys when the sample was divided into light, medium, and dark-skinned children. This analysis showed that dark-skinned children were significantly more likely than their light-skinned peers to choose the colored boy over the White boy (Clark & Clark, 1940). They also gathered more data in “mixed” New York City nursery schools, where both Black and White children attended a school with White teachers. They concluded that compared with the segregated sample, children in the mixed nursery school seemed to develop a consciousness of self and sense of racial identification somewhat later (Clark & Clark, 1939).

Ultimately, the results of these studies, along with the acknowledged limitations of the method, produced more questions than they answered. Thus, Kenneth and Mamie prepared a proposal for further research on racial identification in Negro children that included new methods: a coloring test and a doll test (as noted in Clark, 1983, p. 269). They submitted their proposal to the Julius Rosenwald Fellowship program in 1939 and were awarded the fellowship in 1940 (with renewals in 2 subsequent years). The value of the initial fellowship was \$1500, and 68 were awarded from a pool of 600 applicants (Rosenwald Awards made to 68 students, 1940, p. 26).

The mandate of the Rosenwald Fund was to advance the lives of Black Americans and to improve race relations. Until the late 1920s, the fund had concentrated its attention on building schools for Black communities in the rural South. Following an extensive reorganization in 1928, the fund shifted its focus from building schools to building people. The philosophy behind the fellowship program that supported the Clarks’ work was that providing talented and promising Blacks with the resources necessary to undertake advanced training, to pursue professional careers, and to work toward social justice would “give the lie to the notion of racial inferiority” (Perkins, 2003, p. 345). It would demonstrate that “Black achievements were limited not by inherent inadequacy, but by the barriers of institutionalized racism, social isolation, educational deprivation, and lack of economic opportunity” (Perkins, 2003, p. 345). The fellowship allowed Mamie to enter Columbia University, where her husband had just been awarded his PhD in 1940, and for the couple to continue their research. That year, Mamie gave birth to their first child, Kate. Their son, Hilton, was born in 1943.

At Columbia, Mamie Clark chose to work with White psychologist and well-known eugenicist and racist Henry Garrett rather than with Kenneth's more sympathetic mentors Gardner Murphy and Otto Klineberg. Garrett had considerable statistical expertise, which was important for Mamie's work, but, as Kenneth later reported, she felt that working with Murphy or Klineberg would be "too easy" (K. B. Clark, 1976, p. 91); she wanted to show Garrett firsthand that a Black student could perform just as well as a White student. In Mamie's own understated words, Garrett was "not by any means a liberal on racial matters" (Clark, 1983, p. 270). Clark received her PhD in 1943. Her dissertation was titled "The Development of Primary Mental Abilities with Age" (Clark, 1944). It was a factor analytic study of intelligence conducted on children in the New York public school system. Garrett promptly assumed she would return to the South to teach in a Black high school, an assumption that Mamie later reported "amused" her (Clark, 1983, p. 270). A few years after her graduation, Mamie Clark would indeed meet Henry Garrett in the South—in a Virginia courtroom where a school desegregation case was being heard. Garrett was there to testify on the side of segregated schools, arguing that Black and White children had different talents and abilities that justified separate education. Clark gave testimony to support integration. It was the last time she would see her former supervisor.

With their PhDs completed, Mamie and Kenneth Clark became the first two African Americans to receive doctorates in psychology from Columbia University, and only the seventeenth and twenty-second African Americans, respectively, to receive psychology doctorates in the United States (Phillips, 2005).

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL IDENTIFICATION AND PREFERENCE

Although Mamie Clark's dissertation was a developmental study of mental ability, at the same time that she was conducting this research she was also continuing her collaboration with Kenneth on their Rosenwald-funded studies of racial identification in children. These studies were completed by 1943 (according to Clark, 1983, p. 270), but reports on the findings did not begin to appear in print until 1947 (Clark & Clark, 1947, 1950). As Kenneth Clark later reported:

Mamie and I were into the racial preferences and identification of Negro student research.... It was an extension of her Master's thesis on racial identification of Negro students. That was the thing that came to be known as the "Dolls Test" that the Supreme Court cited. The record should show that was Mamie's primary project that I crashed. I sort of piggybacked on it. (K. B. Clark, as cited in Nyman, 2010, p. 76)

In their 1947 report, the Clarks presented the results from one of their new methods of assessing racial identification and preferences: the Dolls Test. In this test, Black children ages 3 through 7 were presented with four dolls that were identical except for skin and hair color. Two of the dolls had brown skin and black hair, and two of the dolls had white skin and yellow hair. To assess racial preference,

the children were presented with the four dolls and responded to the following requests by picking one of the dolls and handing it to the experimenter: “1) Give me the doll that you like to play with or like best; 2) Give me the doll that is a nice doll; 3) Give me the doll that looks bad; and 4) Give me the doll that is a nice color” (Clark & Clark, 1947, p. 169). The children were then asked to make racial identifications (e.g., “Give me the doll that looks like a colored child”) and self-identification (“Give me the doll that looks like you”).

The Clarks tested 253 Black children, 134 of whom attended segregated nursery and public schools in the South (Arkansas) and 119 of whom attended racially mixed schools in the Northeast (Massachusetts). They found that by age 7, 87% of the children correctly self-identified by choosing the brown doll as the one that looked like them. In terms of racial preference, the majority of Black children chose the white doll as the doll they wanted to play with (67%), indicated that the white doll was the nice doll (59%), indicated that the brown doll looked bad (59%), and chose the white doll as having the nice color (60%). The Clarks also analyzed the children’s doll preferences by age and by light, medium, and dark skin-color groups. At the very end of their report, they compared the doll preferences of Northern children and Southern children. Although the pattern of preferences found in the overall sample held for the Northern and Southern groups analyzed separately, the Clarks did find that Southern children in segregated schools were slightly less pronounced in their preference for the white doll compared with Northern children. For example, while 68% of Northern children identified the white doll as the nice doll, 52% of Southern children made this identification. While 72% of Northern children chose to play with the white doll, 62% of Southern children made this choice.

In 1950, the Clarks published another study in which they expanded on the “dynamics of racial attitudes in Negro children” (Clark & Clark, 1950, p. 341). In this paper, they reported on the results from a coloring test given to the 5, 6, and 7 year olds in their sample. Children were asked to color a line drawing of a boy or girl “the color that you are” and then to color a second drawing “the color you like little boys [or girls] to be” (p. 342). They found that, as in other studies, racial self-identification was fairly accurate by age 7 (97%) but that 52% of the sample used white or a color other than brown to indicate the color they liked little boys or girls to be. Again, they presented results from the Southern and Northern children separately. As in the Dolls Test, Southern, segregated children were somewhat less pronounced in their rejection of the color brown, with 30% not using the color brown in response to the preference question, compared with 64% of the Northern children rejecting the color brown. The Clarks suggested that this represented more emotional conflict in the Northern children and returned to the Dolls Test to substantiate this interpretation with observations of the children’s behavior and the comments the children made to explain their choices. For example, while 9% of the Southern children who explained their preference did so in an evasive or irrelevant way, 40% of the Northern children gave evasive responses. The Clarks concluded that the “Northern group (even at this age) generally tends to repress or attempt to escape from the apparently painful fact of the meaning of color differences in American society” (Clark & Clark, 1950, p. 348). Conversely, the Southern children were more likely to

give matter-of-fact explanations and, in two cases, identified the black doll with the racial epithet “nigger.”

In explaining why they did not publish their study for several years after its completion, Kenneth Clark later explained:

Mamie and I knew that it was important, but I think we tended to assess its importance in terms of its effect upon us. It was a terribly disturbing bit of research for us.... It was disturbing for me to see the children in the test situation placed in this terrible conflict of having to identify with dolls to which they had previously ascribed negative characteristics. (K. B. Clark, as cited in Nyman, 2010, pp. 76, 77)

The Clarks were of course distressed when the children cried or ran out of the room when asked to respond to the identification question, but as Kenneth also remarked:

Equally disturbing was seeing the Southern children accommodating to this, accepting this as a God-given. I remember one little boy ... as if it was yesterday. He looked up into my face and he smiled pointing to the brown doll he said, “That’s me. That’s a nigger. I’m a nigger.” That hurt me as much as the Northern children who cried. In fact, I thought the crying was more healthy as a response than this seemingly humorous, total acceptance of rejected status. I don’t want to get too sentimental about this. In fact, I try to put that away sometimes. (K. B. Clark, as cited in Nyman, 2010, p. 77)

The Clarks’ studies of racial identification and preference among Negro children and their growing reputations as experts in this area soon came to the attention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) lawyers working to end the racial segregation of public schools in the United States. Both Kenneth and Mamie Clark were called to give expert testimony on the effects of racial segregation and racism on the personality development of Black children in several lower court school desegregation trials, including the one in Virginia where Mamie Clark ran up against her former PhD supervisor.

In 1950, Kenneth Clark was commissioned to write a report for the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth, which he titled *Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development* and which summarized research findings in this area (Clark, 1950). When his mentor, Otto Klineberg, was approached by Robert Carter, an NAACP Legal Defense Fund lawyer, because of his previous work on race and prejudice, Klineberg quickly referred Carter to Kenneth Clark (see Benjamin & Crouse, 2002; Kluger, 1975; Phillips, 2000). In September 1952, along with Isidor Chein and Stuart Cook, Clark wrote a document called “The Effects of Segregation and the Consequences of Desegregation: A Social Science Statement” (Clark, Chein, & Cook, 2004). The document reviewed the body of social psychological research on the effects of segregation and its role in maintaining prejudice as well as work on the potential effects of desegregation. Included were references to the Clarks’ own studies on racial preference in children in segregated versus desegregated schools. Signed by

32 prominent social scientists, including Mamie Phipps Clark, the Social Science Statement, as it would come to be known, would play an important role in the 1954 Supreme Court Decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which struck down the legality of segregation by race in public schools. Submitted as an Appendix to the appellants' briefs, and cited by Chief Justice Earl Warren, it stands as the first use of social science research in a Supreme Court decision (for more on the role of social science in the *Brown v. Board* decision, see Jackson, 2005; Keppel, 1995; Kluger, 1975; Schmidt, 2006).

### THE BIRTH OF NORTHSIDE

Although Henry Garrett's assumption that, upon completion of her PhD, Mamie Clark would return to the South to teach high school was clearly racist and sexist, his attitudes were not unlike those of many Americans in the period leading up to and persisting after the *Brown v. Board* decision (for assessments of the impact of *Brown v. Board*, see Pettigrew, 2004; Weinstein, Gregory, & Strambler, 2004). This racism and sexism made being female and Black distinct liabilities in terms of securing a professional position in the 1940s. Thus, despite her husband's recent academic appointment at the City College of New York (he was the City College's first African American instructor; Markowitz & Rosner, 2000), it was very clear to Clark that full-time university appointments for doctoral-level Black women psychologists were nonexistent. Consequently, she looked for research positions outside academia. Her first job was with the American Public Health Association, where she was charged with analyzing data being collected for a national study of nurses. It was a thoroughly demoralizing first post-PhD work experience. Despite her qualifications—the only other PhD psychologist was a White woman—as a Black woman and the only Black person on the staff, Clark was subjugated and humiliated. She later recalled:

I got a job with the American Public Health Association, and it was absolutely the most ghastly experience I'd ever had in my life. And it was my first job experience. It had nothing to do with children. It had to do with public health. And I said to Kenneth one night, I said, "Kenneth, I just can't work with people. And certainly not these kinds of people." I said, "I have to do something by myself." (M. P. Clark, 1976, p. 31)

Clark endured this situation for a year to gain experience but then took a job as a research psychologist for the U.S. Armed Forces Institute, New York Examination Center at Teachers College, Columbia University (Guthrie, 1998, p. 206), a position she found satisfying but likened to a "holding pattern" (Clark, 1983, p. 272). She then secured a position doing psychological testing at a private agency serving homeless Black girls, the Riverdale Home for Children. There, her earlier resolve to do something by herself began to take shape. Working at Riverdale convinced her that there were almost no resources, especially mental health resources, for neglected and abandoned minority children in New York City, and specifically in the Harlem community.

For over a year, with Kenneth, she approached a number of agencies that they hoped would be willing to start a program to provide such services, specifically psychological testing, remedial programs, and social support for these underserved children. As she explained:

Kenneth and I went to most of the existing agencies in Harlem, because it was our first thinking that this service should be a part of a larger agency, and we went for example to the Urban League. We went to the Children's Aid Society. We went to the Community Service Society. We even talked to a few ministers, thinking it could be part of a church program, in terms of location if nothing else.... For the most part, the agencies seemed to feel that it wasn't a service that they weren't performing. They seemed to feel that it was something they were already doing—which they weren't, really. So we just realized that we weren't going to get it open that way. So we decided to open it ourselves. (M. P. Clark, 1976, p. 39)

Thus, with a loan of \$936 from Harold Phipps, Mamie and Kenneth Clark opened a basement office in the Paul Dunbar Apartments on the north side of Harlem in February 1946. They named it the Northside Testing and Consultation Center but in 1947 changed the name to the Northside Center for Child Development. For the next 30 years, Mamie Clark's vision would drive Northside (for a detailed history of Northside, see Markowitz & Rosner, 2000).

Northside's primary and overarching objective was (and still is) to provide psychological and educational services to minority children and their parents to help them cope with and overcome the pervasive impact of racism, discrimination, and disadvantage. The Clarks' philosophy of treatment and their vision for Northside grew out of the social science research at the time (including their own) that showed the pernicious effects of racial discrimination and resulting social inequities on personality development. The two-pronged emphasis on both individual maladjustment and the role of the environment in producing that maladjustment at times collided with prevailing psychiatric thought that was predominantly psychoanalytic and tended to focus exclusively on intrapsychic deficiencies. However, even when to do so meant loss in funding from psychoanalytically inclined board members (see Markowitz & Rosner, 2000), the Clarks consistently promoted the understanding and treatment of children's emotional and behavioral difficulties holistically from a strengths-based, psychosocial, and environmental perspective while acknowledging the damage that racism brought about for both Black and White children.

This meant that the services offered at Northside were eclectic and multifocal and underwent constant revision to meet the needs of families and of the community. For example, when it became clear early in the center's history that minority children were overrepresented in classes for the mentally deficient (known as Classes for Children of Retarded Mental Development), the staff at Northside retested children and showed that most did not meet the criteria for this designation (most had IQs above 70) but were subjected to social and educational neglect (Clark, 1983, p. 273). They then developed remedial reading classes that became a core component of client services. The success of these efforts provided acceptance of the center in the larger Harlem community, a community where the

stigma attached to having psychological problems was high, as it was in American society generally. As Mamie Clark noted, “Although at that time there was a climate of not accepting psychiatry or anything clinical, people did come” (M. P. Clark, 1976, p. 41).

Thus, instead of identifying the weakness or pathology of the family, Northside would “start with what’s strong in this family and pick it up and work with it” (M. P. Clark, as cited in Markowitz & Rosner, 2000, p. 48). This emphasis on strengths was an antidote to a growing belief in the cultural deprivation hypothesis, widely espoused by liberals and social scientists. This hypothesis, in brief, stated that hundreds of years of racism had weakened the personalities of Blacks and wreaked havoc with the structures of their communities and families. It had displaced the Black man as head of his household by depriving him of his opportunity to be the primary breadwinner, thus creating deviant (at least by White standards) matriarchal family structures and social pathology. This belief, espoused by prominent Black social scientists as well as by Whites (e.g., Frazier, 1939; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951), resulted in little attention paid to the uniqueness and strength of Black social practices, cultures, and communities but did call for an end to racism to undo the damage being done to Blacks by Whites. There was a subtle slide, however, so that by the mid-1960s, amid escalating discourse about the “culture of poverty”—that poverty was more than economic deprivation, it was a way of life passed down through generations—Black families were increasingly seen as beyond help and responsible for their own problems. Psychological therapy, rather than structural reforms, was becoming the key to change.

In the context of belief in the cultural deprivation hypothesis, it is important to note that at Northside, the emphasis was on finding the strengths in the family and building on those strengths. There was strong resistance to narrowing services to psychological and psychiatric treatment only and a rejection of the pathologizing of the Black family. As Markowitz and Rosner (2000) noted of this period in Northside’s development, “In March, 1965, Mamie Clark called the staff together to . . . ‘define our approach to treatment at Northside’ and avoid the traps of the cultural deprivation hypothesis as it applied to children” (p. 135).

Another critical aspect of Northside’s service philosophy was that all children, regardless of race, should be served by a multiracial and multidisciplinary team of professionals and paraprofessionals. Despite differences in race, class, and professional status among the staff, Mamie Clark strove to maintain a nonhierarchical atmosphere. This reflected not only the center’s eclecticism but also the Clarks’ unwavering belief in the pernicious effects of racial segregation on all children and the desire to present a model of integration in its very structure. To appreciate how radical this position was at the time, Markowitz and Rosner (2000) noted the extent of Supreme Court sanctioned segregation, not only in the South but in the North as well: “When the Clarks initiated Northside, Jackie Robinson had not yet been allowed to play baseball in Brooklyn; the Yankees would not even consider integrating their team until another decade had passed” (p. 20).

Mamie Clark also believed in providing a pleasing physical environment for the children and their families. The offices at Northside, whether in the original basement or in the later multifloor facility in Schomburg Towers to which Northside

relocated in 1974, were safe, attractive, and stimulating for the children and parents served within their walls. In fact, on the thirtieth anniversary of Northside in 1976, Kenneth Clark recalled the reaction of one of the parents at the grand opening of the new facilities, who remarked, “Oh my God! It looks as if it were for rich kids!” (Cummings, 1976, p. 31). Indeed, as Lal (2002) noted, Mamie Clark herself embodied and enacted what has been termed *uplift ideology*, the belief that cultivating self-improvement and respectability would diminish White racism and elevate the moral and material conditions for Black people. Accordingly, it was often remarked that Mamie Clark herself was the picture of poise and respectability, both in demeanor and appearance. In the 1960s, she was a member of a committee to rename the section of Harlem where Northside was located *Central Park North* in the hopes that a name change, although symbolic, would also create more pleasing connotations and lead to physical upgrades in the community. As the *New York Times* reported, “The new name, Mrs. Clark said, ‘will have the same connotation, we hope, as Central Park South, which is a pretty nice place.’ ‘We want the place to look like Central Park South,’ said Mrs. Clark, a fashionable figure in an apricot silk sheath, off-white pumps, and a single strand of pearls” (Pace, 1965, p. 41). The committee’s efforts were not uncontroversial. Many in the Harlem community saw this as meaningless window dressing.

## BEYOND NORTHSIDE

In addition to her work at Northside, Mamie Clark was active in the larger Harlem community and the greater New York City area. She worked with Kenneth on the Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited project as well as being a member of its advisory board. She also served on advisory boards to the National Headstart Planning Committee of the Office of Economic Opportunity. In 1973, she was awarded the American Association of University Women achievement award for her “admirable service to the field of mental health” (Dr. Mamie Clark, recipient of AAUW achievement award, 1973, p. 7). Beyond psychology and child development, she served on the boards of numerous educational and philanthropic institutions, including the Mount Sinai Medical Center, the New York Public Library, the Museum of Modern Art, and the New York City Mission Society. In brief, Mamie Clark was deeply involved in her community (see Phillips, 2005).

Clark was the executive director of Northside until her retirement in 1979. Her death from lung cancer followed shortly thereafter in 1983. She was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in the town of Hastings-on-Hudson where she and her husband had been living for many years and where Kenneth Clark continued to live until he passed away in 2005 (Jones & Pettigrew, 2005). As one of her staff members characterized her directorship of the center:

When an unusual and unique person pursues a dream and realizes that dream and directs that dream, people are drawn not only to the idea of the dream, but to the uniqueness of the person themselves. I think this is what Dr. Mamie was like ... Northside, including today’s school, really revolved on her ingenuity, her dream.... (Johnson, 1993, as cited in Markowitz & Rosner, 2000, p. 246)

And finally, as Lal (2002) wrote:

Mamie Clark's comprehensive efforts to ameliorate the pain attached to skin color have had a lasting impact in the fields of child development and the psychology of race. Her vision of social, economic, and psychological advancement for African American children resonates far beyond the era of integration. (p. 20)

## SUGGESTED READINGS

Clark, K. B., & M. K. Clark (1939). The development of consciousness of self and the emergence of racial identification in Negro preschool children. *Journal of Social Psychology: SPSSI Bulletin*, 10, 591–599.

This published report, based on Mamie Clark's master's thesis research at Howard University, explored the development of racial identity in 150 Black children in segregated nursery schools in the Washington, D.C., area using a modification of a picture technique that had been pioneered by Ruth and Eugene Horowitz. The study was the first in a series of studies that modified and refined various projective techniques for assessing not only racial identification but also racial preference in "Negro" children.

Clark, K. B., & Clark, M. P. (1947). Racial identification and preference in Negro children. In T. M. Newcomb & E. L. Hartley (Eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (pp. 169–178). New York: Holt.

This publication is the report of the now famous Dolls Test—the method pioneered by the Clarks to assess racial identification and preference in "Negro" children, both in the segregated South and in the integrated North. The major finding was that the majority of Black children chose the white doll as the doll they wanted to play with (67%), indicated that the white doll was the nice doll (59%), indicated that the brown doll looked bad (59%), and chose the white doll as having the nice color (60%). This finding was cited, along with the results of many other studies, in the 1952 Social Science Statement authored by Clark et al. (2004) that was submitted as an Appendix to the brief prepared by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Education Fund. This brief was influential in the Supreme Court Case *Brown v. Board of Education*, which struck down the legality of segregation by race in the public schools in the United States. The Dolls Test has subsequently been replicated or modified by other researchers, with sharply differing results (see Farrell & Olson, 1983; Jordan & Hernandez-Reif, 2009).

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