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Foreword

Like snapshots of a growing family (and I use the metaphor “family” rather than “child” because fields of study band together multiple personalities), subsequent editions of a scholarly handbook can reveal phenomenal changes. Imagine family photographs taken 25 years apart. You might hardly recognize the group as the same family. In the case of adolescent study, the 25-year period between Handbook editions has caused transformations every bit as consequential as those we would see in a human family during a similar time span. From my reading of this splendid current Handbook, the changes have been entirely to the good.

As the editors correctly note, the term *adolescence* has been with us for centuries, but the systematic examination of it for scientific purposes really began with G. Stanley Hall in the early 1900s. Hall was a man of immense dedication to the healthy development of young people. He convinced America to create playgrounds for its youth; he helped build the new discipline of development psychology; and he trained many of its early leaders. Yet Hall’s own pioneering writings on adolescence bent that young branch in ways that would misdirect the field, and much of its public audience, for most of the ensuing century.

Hall’s influences were 19th-century *Bildungsromanen* whose authors wrote romantically of youthful *Sturm und Drang*, a brilliant young “psych-analyst” Sigmund Freud whom Hall introduced to America (and who had been reading those same German novels), and trendy evolutionary theories that confused the ontogenesis of individuals and species. The latter set of influences were so far-fetched and ultimately inflammatory that scientists soon came to ignore this entire line in Hall’s writings. But his vision of adolescence as a turbulent, trouble-ridden period that was at best a transition to something saner—if the youngster did not first self-destruct—foreshadowed what was to become the society’s dominant view of youths as walking problems. That vision was to be elaborated in numerous ways beyond any imaginings that Hall could have had. These ways led to ill-founded scientific studies as well as poor public policy advice.

The present Handbook is a world apart, for reasons both sensible and profound. For one thing, it is refreshing to read a collection of studies portraying adolescence as a full-colored, rich experience in itself, rather than only as a transition toward something or away from something. There are many highpoints in the collective portrayal of youth embodied in this Handbook, and I do not mean to slight any of them by mentioning others, but I was especially struck by the lush array of interests, capacities, and meaningful youthful activities that emerges from many of the chapters in this handbook. From the cognitive to the moral, from the academic to the civic, in relations with peers, parents, and society on its most global level, adolescents in this Handbook are shown
as active and able players in the world. They are not seen as unwitting pawns of their own uncontrollable desires or helpless victims of external forces beyond their control. The young people in this Handbook reason powerfully; make their own choices about their social and sexual relationships; adapt to their schools in a manner consistent with their own motives and concerns; navigate the complexity of influences that they encounter in their families, neighborhoods, mass media, and legal system; and end up forging their own judgments about who they are and what they believe in. Sometimes their judgments work for the better, sometimes for the worse. There are real risks and casualties associated with this age period, and the Handbook examines several of the most prominent ones. This we have long known. But there is also an infinite promise and positive excitement associated with youth. This, too, has long been known but perhaps was put out of mind too often in our initial century of adolescent research. The current Handbook merits our thanks for bringing the more positive, and accurate, characterization back to the fore.

A few years ago, the Society of Research in Adolescence indulged itself by arranging its biennial conference in sunny San Diego. An effect of the climate was that, at any time during the conference, large numbers of prominent adolescent researchers could be found seated around the hotel swimming pool. Perhaps as an excuse to hang out there myself—but also, I must admit, due to my sincere puzzlement about the matter—I took the opportunity to conduct an informal survey on the following question: What is adolescence?

Notably, none of the 20-or-so researchers whom I collared settled upon a demarcated age period (say, “twixt twelve and twenty”) as their final answer. (Here I should probably tweak the present editors for their designation of “the second decade of life” in their Preface, although I am sure that this was not meant to be their considered scientific definition of the term.) Instead, the answers noted benchmark experiences that bounded the period in a developmental sense. The designated benchmarks varied among researchers, but there were commonalities in the responses. Most common of the initiating benchmarks was puberty. The closing benchmark was harder to capture in a word or phrase: it was experiential in nature, and it often touched on the Eriksonian notion of psychosocial identity—my own translation would be something like “a stable personal commitment to an adult role.” Now I do not believe that this amalgam—the period between the advent of puberty and a stable commitment to an adult role—would hold up long as a scientific definition, at least without lots of further definitional work on both ends. Yet it is not a bad place to start, and I have found myself using it in public lectures whenever anyone puts to me the pesky question of “What is adolescence?”

I mention this here because puberty is exactly where the substantive set of chapters in this Handbook begins, and the acquisition of social roles in its most important sense—citizenship and civic engagement—is about where the book ends. In between, we have the whole glorious parade of exploration and growth, challenge and struggle, risk and progress. It is another indicator to me of this Handbook’s validity—and its value to anyone who wishes to gain a deeper understanding of this most memorable and formative period of live.

William Damon
Preface

According to most social scientists, a generation is about 25 years in length. By that measure, this second edition of the *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* represents a generational shift, for it was fully 25 years ago that the first edition of this volume was published. A cursory glance at this edition’s table of contents will show just how broadly the field has grown in that period of time, and a careful reading of the volume’s chapters will reveal that the generational shift has been as deep as it has been broad.

When the first edition of the Handbook was published in 1980, the empirical study of adolescence, by our calculation, was barely 5 years old. Much of what was prepared for that Handbook was, of necessity, theoretical because there was very little empirical work on which contributors could draw. In addition, much of the theorizing was psychoanalytic in nature, because through the mid-1970s that had been the dominant worldview among those who thought about adolescence. Now, it is fair to say that the field has reached full maturity, or at least a level of maturity comparable to that found in the study of any other period of development. Indeed, as we note in the first chapter of the volume, in which we review and reflect on the development of the scientific study of adolescence, research on the second decade of life often serves as a model for research on other stages of development. As the contributions to this volume clearly illustrate, the science of adolescent psychology is sophisticated, interdisciplinary, and empirically rigorous. Interestingly enough, grand theories of adolescence, whether psychoanalytic or not, have waned considerably in their influence.

Other generational changes can also be discerned by comparing the second and first editions of the Handbook. First, the study of adolescent difficulty and disturbance has taken a backseat to the study of processes of normative development. Accordingly, although the current edition includes several chapters on the development of psychological problems in adolescence, they by no means dominate the volume’s contents. Second, our knowledge about the ways in which processes of adolescent development are shaped by interacting and embedded systems of proximal and distal contextual forces has made the study of adolescence less purely psychological in nature and far more interdisciplinary. While psychology continues to be the primary discipline reflected in the contents (and, of course, the title) of this Handbook, it is not the only one. Contributors to the volume have drawn on a wide array of disciplines, including sociology, biology, education, neuroscience, and law. Third, the growth in applied developmental science over the past decade has led to a more explicit focus on the ways in which empirically based knowledge about adolescence can be used to promote positive youth development. Several contributions to this volume reflect this emphasis.

This edition of the *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* is concerned with all aspects
of development during the second decade of life, with all the contexts in which this development takes place and with a wide array of social implications and applications of the scientific knowledge gained through empirical research. This edition is divided into three broad sections: foundations of adolescent development, the contexts of adolescent development, and special challenges and opportunities that arise at adolescence. These sections are preceded by a foreword (by William Damon) and followed by an afterword (by Beatrix and David Hamburg), which locate the Handbook’s contribution within the history of the field of adolescent development.

The first section of the Handbook examines the foundations of the scientific study of individual development in adolescence. Following an introductory chapter that overviews the past history and future prospects of adolescent psychology as a scientific enterprise (Lerner and Steinberg), contributions in this section examine puberty and its impact on psychological development (Susman and Rogol), cognitive and brain development (Keating), the development of the self (Nurmi), academic motivation and achievement in school settings (Eccles), morality and prosocial development (Eisenberg and Morris), sexuality and sexual relationships (Savin-Williams and Diamond), gender and gender role development (Galambos), and processes of risk and resilience (Com- pas). Taken together, these chapters illustrate the ways in which biological, intellectual, emotional, and social development unfold and interact during the second decade of the life span.

The second section focuses on the immediate and broader contexts in which adolescent development takes place. The chapters in this section situate adolescent development across history, cultures, and regions of the world (Larson and Wilson); within the family, and especially in the context of the parent-child relationship (Collins and Laursen); within the interconnected and nested contexts of peer relationships, including friendships, romantic relationships, adversarial relationships, cliques, and crowds (Brown); in relationships with adult mentors at work and in the community (Hamilton and Hamilton); in the settings of work and leisure (Staff, Mortimer, and Uggen); in neighborhood contexts (Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn); within the contexts defined by mass media and technology (Roberts, Henriksen, and Foehr); and within the law (Scott and Woolard). Consistent with the ecological perspective on human development that has dominated research on adolescence for the past two decades, these contributions show how variations in proximal, community, and distal contexts profoundly shape and alter the developmental processes, trajectories, and outcomes associated with adolescence.

The final section of the Handbook examines a variety of challenges and opportunities that can threaten or facilitate healthy development in adolescence and explores the ways in which maladaptive as well as positive trajectories of youth development unfold. The first set of contributions in this section considers threats to the well-being of adolescents, including physical illness, examined from an international perspective (Blum and Nelson-Mmari); internalizing problems, including depression, anxiety, and disor- dered eating (Graber); externalizing problems, including conduct disorder, aggression, and delinquency (Farrington); substance use and abuse, including the use and abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs (Chassin, Hussong, Barrera, Molina, Trim, and Rit- ter); and developmental disabilities, including autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental retardation, and other neurological impairments (Hauser-Cram and Krauss). The second set of contributions in this concluding section examines three sorts of opportun-
ties with the potential to promote health and well-being in adolescence: the promotion of volunteerism and civic engagement among youth (Flanagan); the application of developmental science to facilitate healthy adolescent development (Sherrod, Busch-Rosnagel, and Fisher); and the development of policies and programs explicitly designed to promote positive youth development (Benson, Mannes, Pittman, and Ferber).

There are numerous people to thank for their important contributions to the Handbook. First and foremost, we owe our greatest debt of gratitude to the colleagues who wrote the chapters, foreword, and afterword for the Handbook. Their scholarly excellence and leadership and their commitment to the field are the key assets for any contributions that this Handbook will make both to the scientific study of adolescence and to the application of knowledge that is requisite for enhancing the lives of diverse young people worldwide.

We appreciate as well the important support and guidance provided to us by the members of the editorial board for the Handbook. We thank Peter L. Benson, Dale A. Blyth, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, B. Bradford Brown, W. Andrew Collins, William Damon, Jacquelynne Eccles, David Elkind, Nancy Galambos, Robert C. Granger, Beatrix Hamburg, Stuart Hauser, E. Mavis Hetherington, Reed Larson, Jacqueline V. Lerner, David Magnusson, Anne C. Petersen, Diane Scott-Jones, Lonnie R. Sherrod, Margaret Beale Spencer, and Wendy Wheeler for their invaluable contributions.

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We are also appreciative of our publishers and editors at John Wiley & Sons: Peggy Alexander, Jennifer Simon, and Isabel Pratt. Their enthusiasm for our vision for the Handbook, their unflagging support, and their collegial and collaborative approach to the development of this project were vital bases for the successful completion of the Handbook.

We also want to express our gratitude to the several organizations that supported our scholarship during the time we worked on the Handbook. Tufts University and Temple University provided the support and resources necessary to undertake and complete a project like this. In addition, Richard M. Lerner thanks the National 4-H Council, the William T. Grant Foundation, and the Jacobs Foundation, and Laurence Steinberg thanks the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, for their generous support.

Finally, we want to dedicate this Handbook to our greatest sources of inspiration, both for our work on the Handbook and for our scholarship in the field of adolescence: our children, Blair, Jarrett, Justin, and Ben. Now all in their young adulthood, they have taught us our greatest lessons about the nature and potentials of adolescent development.

R.M.L.
L.S.
March 2003
In the opening sentence of the preface to the first edition of his classic *A History of Experimental Psychology*, Edwin G. Boring (1929) reminded readers that “psychology has a long past, but only a short history” (p. ix), a remark he attributed to the pioneer of memory research, Hermann Ebbinghaus. A similar statement may be made about the study of adolescents and their development.

The first use of the term *adolescence* appeared in the 15th century. The term was a derivative of the Latin word *adolescere*, which means to grow up or to grow into maturity (Muuss, 1990). However, more than 1,500 years before this first explicit use of the term both Plato and Aristotle proposed sequential demarcations of the life span, and Aristotle in particular proposed stages of life that are not too dissimilar from sequences that might be included in contemporary models of youth development. He described three successive, 7-year periods (infancy, boyhood, and young manhood) prior to the person’s attainment of full, adult maturity. About 2,000 years elapsed between these initial philosophical discussions of adolescence and the emergence, within the 20th century, of the scientific study of the second decade of life.

The history of the scientific study of adolescence has had two overlapping phases and is, we believe, on the cusp of a third. The first phase, which lasted about 70 years, was characterized by three sorts of Cartesian splits (see Overton, 1998) that created false dichotomies that in turn limited the intellectual development of the field. With respect to the first of these polarizations, “grand” models of adolescence that purportedly pertained to all facets of behavior and development predominated (e.g., Erikson, 1959, 1968; Hall, 1904), but these theories were limited because they were either largely all nature (e.g., genetic or maturational; e.g., Freud, 1969; Hall, 1904) or all nurture (e.g., McCandless, 1961). Second, the major empirical studies of adolescence during this period were not primarily theory-driven, hypothesis-testing investigations but were atheoretical, descriptive studies; as such, theory and research were split into separate enterprises (McCandless, 1970). Third, there was a split between scholars whose work was focused on basic developmental processes and practitioners whose focus was on community-based efforts to facilitate the healthy development of adolescents.

The second phase in the scientific study of adolescence arose in the early- to mid-1970s as developmental scientists began to make use of research on adolescents in elu-