The Institute of Child Development

Further Developments

2014

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Hello from the director

The Institute of Child Development has long been a national leader in research and practice in child and adolescent psychology. However, for nearly as long, we have also had a strong international reach. In this issue of Further Developments we share stories of some of our cross-cultural research and international collaborations around the globe. For example, an exciting collaboration between Professors Stephanie Carlson and Philip Zelazo with scholars in China has developed allowing for support of research in China and planning for an exchange program. Jumping continents, Professor Koenig is conducting research on selective trust in the U.S. and Brazil along with her colleague, Professor Deborah Souza. The “Tute” was delighted to have Dr. Souza as a visiting scholar during the fall semester. Continuing the global theme, it is very fitting that our 38th Minnesota Symposium on Child Psychology was on Culture and Developmental Systems.

Our international reach also extends from our students. For example, doctoral student Kathryn Hecht’s dissertation project, focusing on aggression, victimization, and trauma in war-affected Uganda not only carries on the legacy of our late colleague Nicki Crick, it furthers our knowledge of the impact of severe trauma in war-affected populations. The “Tute” is also fortunate to have international students who bring global experiences to our doorstep. In our “Meet our students” section, we highlight how Ph.D. student, José Causadias, describes his journey through our doctoral program as an international student. In another Brazilian connection, two students participated in an early childhood teaching internship coordinated by Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School creativity coordinator, Frances Durkin. We look forward to watching this internship continue to grow allowing for more students to gain an international experience.

Along with these global stories, we are excited to bring you up-to-date on other activities in the Institute. Our Research In Focus piece highlights the groundbreaking work on child abuse and neglect that Professor Cicchetti is conducted in his newly renovated research space. We also take this opportunity to share with you our sense of loss in the passing of our dear colleague, Shirley G. Moore. The Lab School was renamed in her honor when she retired in 1987.

Last but not least, please celebrate with us some of the honors that have come to our faculty over the past year. Among honors received by my colleagues, I was deeply honored to be awarded the Association of Psychological Science’s Mentor Award, the type of award that faculty will tell you means the most of all of the kinds one can receive.

Thank you all for your interest in the work we do at the Institute of Child Development and do not hesitate to contact us. Please follow us on Facebook.
Making a difference:

We are deeply appreciative of all the support we receive from the families who choose to send their children to the Shirley G. Moore Lab School. This was especially the case when a former Lab School family, Amy Susman-Stillman and Marty Stillman and their children, Jacob (14), Ruby (11) and Zachary (6), recently made a contribution designated to furthering the professional development of the Lab School staff.

Inspired by the Lab School’s stellar teaching and collaboration, as well as the extraordinary care their children received while attending the school, Amy and Marty decided to show their appreciation by ensuring continued professional development is possible. “The Lab School has had an amazing impact on our children and on our family. We have all benefitted enormously from the incredibly talented, skillful teaching staff. We know that you don’t find early care and education teachers like this everywhere, and that ongoing professional development is necessary for teachers to continue to learn and refine their teaching practices. We also value the Lab School as a model training site, and want to insure that Lab School staff and the new teachers they train are able to access cutting-edge professional development opportunities. To that end, we are establishing a teacher professional development fund to insure that Lab School staff will always be able to stay abreast of current developments in the early education field and bring those back to the classroom for their students and the student teachers. We encourage other families to consider making a donation to help grow the fund.

If you are inclined to support the work of the Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School please visit our webpage, www.cehd.umn.edu/ICD/LabSchool, and click “Make a Gift.” Indicate that you would like your contribution to be designated for “teacher professional development.”

While you are there, check out the Lab School’s new video tour, highlighting the history, mission and philosophy, interviews with the amazing teachers, and many learning moments featuring, best of all, the children! The video was a production of Vox Pop video company. You can access it by clicking on the “Welcome” tab under “Prospective Parents” and accessing the “Video” link.

Would you like to give to the Institute of Child Development?

Please visit www.giving.umn.edu/icd or contact Lynn Slifer, slife001@umn.edu, 612-625-5511 to learn more about giving opportunities.
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children’s heads in order to monitor the electrical activity in their brains as they are shown things like photos of positive and negative facial expressions. What the researchers observe will help clarify how abuse and neglect may affect aspects of neural processing in different parts of the brain.

“Physically abused kids have a much greater sensitivity to anger and identify angry faces much earlier than children who have been maltreated in other ways or have not been maltreated,” Cicchetti explains.

Plans for the new lab in St. Paul include expanding research on areas such as how maltreatment affects children in the first five years of life, how a parent’s bipolar disorder or major depressive disorder impacts development, whether there may be early precursors to personality disorders, and how early adversity affects epigenetics, which examines how experience can alter the functioning of genes but not the sequence of DNA. Results of these and other studies will be translated into the development and implementation of preventive interventions to promote resilient functioning.

“One thing we’ve learned by doing this work is that interventions with children and families need to be research based,” he explains, stressing that treatments based on myths or misconceptions can be ineffective and even cause harm.

“There’s always hope if you’re doing good prevention and intervention. You can’t just look at a child and say: ‘Well, they were abused in the first, second, and third year of life so they’re doomed forever.’ They’re not. Never lose hope.”

Adapted from a story by Meleah Maynard in the fall 2013 issue of Connect magazine for CEHD alumni.
Happenings at the Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School

Each day at the Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School brings new opportunities for discovery around the University of Minnesota campus. Teacher candidates in the early childhood education foundations program learn along with the preschool children in this high quality early childhood education environment.
Carlson and Zelazo collaborate with scholars in China

Stephanie Carlson and Phil Zelazo welcomed the first of what they hope will be many visiting scholars to ICD from China, when Ying Zhang arrived in March 2014 from Zhejiang Normal University in Hangzhou, China. Carlson and Zelazo were appointed adjunct professors at ZNU in June 2013. The appointment includes funding to support collaborative research and will enhance a planned exchange program providing graduate students and faculty at ICD with support for cross-cultural research in China. “There’s a huge wave of increasingly well trained young developmental scientists in China, and as a result, there are tremendous opportunities for collaboration,” Zelazo said.

Ying Zhang holds a master’s degree from ZNU and has completed her first year of teaching. Being an early childhood educator is considered a high status occupation in China and Zhejiang Normal University handles the majority of pre-service teacher training there. Teachers in China are encouraged to pursue research, not only to obtain advanced degrees, but as part of their overall continuous occupational training. While at ICD, Zhang hopes to learn more about executive function (EF) from the Carlson research lab and also to learn more about practices in early childhood education from the Shirley G. Moore Lab School.

Stephanie Carlson is looking forward to collaborating with Zhang.

“We hope to learn much from Ying about cutting edge early childhood education and teacher education in China as they relate to executive function, academic readiness, and social skills. It might surprise many Americans to hear, for example, that the new mode of preschool education in China emphasizes an entirely play-based curriculum.” And Carlson hopes that this will be the beginning of more cross-cultural research on the development of EF with Zhejiang Normal University in the future. “Ying is the first ambassador in this program and we are delighted to be hosting her,” she says.

Selective trust in children in the U.S. and Brazil

Melissa Koenig, associate professor, ICD, and Debra Souza, assistant professor, Universidade Federal de São Carlos, met as graduate students at the University of Texas-Austin. Now, in the first part of a collaborative, cross-cultural study that Souza began as a visiting researcher at ICD this past year, they want to know if children in Minnesota and children in Sao Carlos, Brazil believe everything they are told. Koenig and Souza are collaborating in studies that seek to find out more about the possible effects of culture and socioeconomic background in the development of selective trust, the trust that children develop which helps them determine who is and isn’t a reliable speaker. Souza and Koenig have found that recent experimental evidence calls into question the previous prevailing assumption that young children tend to believe everything they are told. Recently, research in North America has shown that children are capable of developing “selective trust”, that is, making a distinction between a reliable and an unreliable source of information and developing selective trust based on this information. A cross-cultural study in Brazil offers an ideal opportunity to study how culture and socioeconomic background affect the development of selective trust.
Kathryn Hecht, 6th year doctoral student at the Institute, has been working on research with children in war-torn Uganda for the past 3 years, which will comprise her dissertation project. The path she has taken to focus on this kind of research has not always been easy.

Kathryn joined ICD as a doctoral student in 2009 to work with professors Dante Cicchetti and Nicki Crick in pursuit of better understanding developmental responses to adversity across cultures. This “interest” became her passion after their first data collection trip to Uganda in 2011. Since then, Hecht and the research team have conducted 3 waves of longitudinal data focused on aggression and victimization as precipitants of psychopathology in this war-affected sample.

After an aggressive form of cancer took Dr. Crick’s life in fall of 2012, Kathryn took over management of the longitudinal data collection. Returning to Uganda in the summer of 2013, the interdisciplinary team was composed of Hecht researches trauma in war-affected Ugandan youth Kathryn, undergraduate research assistants and two community members: Dr. Karen Miller, a clinical psychologist, and Lucy Lyons, a preschool teacher. In addition to completing their research, the team also designed and conducted evidence-based psychoeducational workshops for the Ugandan teachers who must also serve as therapists for emotionally and behaviorally troubled students.

Twelve 9+ hour flights, trips to the embassy, multiple-day power outages, her research team swarmed by safari ants while asleep… Kathryn never expected her dissertation data collection to require management of such unique methodological circumstances. However, she says she believes that the data is valuable enough to merit the extraordinary work involved in attaining it.

Her ongoing work will further our knowledge of the impact of severe trauma on relational and emotional development in a high-risk, war-affected sample; the cultural generalizability of established developmental antecedents of psychopathology; and specific culturally relevant markers of risk that may be used to design culturally sensitive preventive interventions for war-affected African populations. Kathryn defended her dissertation in June 2014.

Early childhood education teaching internships in Brazil

Frances Durkin, early childhood specialist and creativity coordinator at the Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School, has launched an early childhood teaching internship in the Colegio Helyos, a pre-k through high school private school in Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil. Durkin developed the program while traveling in Brazil over the past few years. Durkin says, “As an undergraduate Latin American Studies major, the chance to see Brazil up close was intriguing. As an early childhood person, I also began to cultivate connections with local preschools and schools--visiting programs, leading music and arts sessions where possible with children and with teachers.”

A collaboration began between Durkin and Cinira Soledade, who manages the English language program at Colegio Helyos School in Bahia. The collaboration allows for students in ICD’s early childhood education program to gain additional mentored teaching experience. The school in Brazil would gain native English language models in the classroom, as well as students with a strong background in early childhood education knowledge.

Since January 2014, Marissa Albritton and Heidi Werner have been intern teaching with Valesca Pantoja, on-site supervisor in the early childhood program at Colegio Helyos. Albritton and Werner prepared for their trip by completing student teaching at the Shirley G. Moore Lab School as well as taking an intensive Portuguese language course.

Both students are finding that they are having an effect on the English language learning of the children. “I have noticed children using more language in meaningful contexts, specifically during the Portuguese portion of day,” Werner said. “They use words we go over in English class when playing with me; when we went over the three little pigs story, children were bringing toy pigs to me all day and trying to say “pig”.” Albritton has seen that some of the teachers she works with are adopting her English knowledge during the Portuguese language portion of the day, “using what they know in English (e.g. day of the week, numbers, colors etc.) to layer English onto their morning circle routines.” This is the kind of integration of native language speakers in the dual-language classroom that Durkin and Cinira Soledade hoped to establish in the program.
From Panama to Madrid to Panama to Minneapolis to Clinton: 
My graduate school journey

By Jose Causadias

My journey in graduate school has taken me to four cities in three different countries. In 2001, after I finished my undergraduate training in psychology in Panama, my home country, I moved to Madrid to pursue a master in psychotherapy. Upon completion of my master’s, I moved into a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology, but I was not clear about what I wanted to study, and so I left the Ph.D. program.

I returned to Panama where I got involved with attachment research.

In 2007 I traveled to Mexico City to get trained in the Adult Attachment Interview. There I met Alan Sroufe, who agreed to collaborate with me in my research project and encouraged me to apply to graduate school in Minnesota. I did and was admitted to the Institute of Child Development in 2009. Five years have passed, and I defended my dissertation in May 2014 and began my scholarly career as an assistant professor at Hamilton College in the state of New York in July 2014.

My research is “me search”. My process of incorporating my various cultural experiences into my identity is reflected in my passion for integrating culture and developmental psychopathology into a field I call cultural development and psychopathology (Causadias, 2013). I apply this framework to the study of adolescent immigrants by examining how cultural processes evolve over time, and how these processes intersect with genes to forecast trajectories of mental health and illness.

One the most valuable experiences during my doctoral training has been the opportunity to work with stellar researchers like Dante Cicchetti, Alan Sroufe, and Moin Syed. All of them have taught me how to do rigorous science, ask the tough questions, derive a work ethic based on service to a community and passion for research, learn to learn, and most importantly, believe in the value of innovation, in myself, and in my own work.

Meet our students

Jessica Shankman | senior, B.A. program in child psychology

I am currently a junior pursuing a bachelor of arts in child psychology. I am most inspired by the sense of unyielding curiosity about the field—questions of how we develop, why we behave the way we do, and how we can further facilitate healthy communities. I love this about developmental psychology! Last summer, I went to a child psychology-based internship in Israel. I hope to use this international opportunity to gain a better understanding of and to immerse myself in a foreign community, and to give back to a community in need. In the future, I hope to go to graduate school and pursue a career that involves both research and clinical work. I hope to gain as many hands-on experiences as possible as an undergraduate, to help clarify my career goals.

Jana Norgren | senior, early childhood education program

I chose to enter this field because I know how crucial influences in our early years of life can be and I hope to have a positive impact on as many young lives and families as possible! I am working towards both an early childhood and an elementary education license and studied abroad last summer in Copenhagen, Denmark. I chose Denmark because the coursework there includes a hands-on section and I’m very interested in experiencing early childhood education from another culture and applying what I learn to my future career.

Brittany Henn | early childhood education M.Ed./ILP student

What inspires me about early childhood education is the opportunity to play a key role in a child’s development and future academic success, since many aspects of their cognitive and social skills begin developing in this age range. In the future, I hope to start my own preschool after being in the field as a teacher/administrator for a few years.

Jenny Yun-Chen Chan | second year doctoral student, ICD, general developmental psychology

I am interested in how early competencies shape the learning of complex mathematics. Mathematical competency is critical for both academic success and navigating everyday life. I am intrigued by the immense variability in children’s mathematical ability and performance: what makes some children better in mathematics than others? My current research project examines the factors that contribute to the development of mathematical thinking and competence. While examining the cognitive mechanisms underlying the development of mathematical reasoning, I aim to consider the educational implications and develop instructional methods that take psychological processes into account.
Karina Quevedo graduated with her Ph.D. in child psychology from the Developmental Psychopathology and Clinical Science track in 2008. Prior to joining us at ICD, Karina completed a B.A. in psychology at the University of Havana, Cuba, and an M.A. in counseling psychology at the University of St. Thomas. After completing her Ph.D. she worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Pittsburgh, and then in 2012 she returned to the University of Minnesota as an assistant professor in the psychiatry department. We asked Karina to reflect briefly on her experience as a student at ICD and her career thus far.

What was the most valuable aspect of your education at ICD? What did you enjoy most about the program?

It shifted my thinking from 3 to 4 dimensions to consider time as a variable that affects outcomes. I enjoyed the opportunity to work with highly intelligent and kind professors.

What inspires you in the field of developmental psychology?

Science performed with a target in motion.

What is/are your current research program/projects investigating?

The long term impact of early adversity in endocrine and brain function; and how self referential processing is indexed by aberrant brain function and structure in child and adolescent psychopathology.

What do you look forward to in the next few years?

I look forward to expanding my work toward cultural dimensions of psychopathology, physical health outcomes and collaborating with graduate students and scientists in the process of doing so.

During winter break 2014, we traveled to Cape Town, South Africa as a part of a global seminar, Tracing the Footsteps of Social Change, with 25 University of Minnesota students of all majors and backgrounds. We had the opportunity to gain a new perspective on community, social justice and forgiveness.

After a 24-hour flight that felt like an eternity, we began our journey in the mountains of South Africa, through Educo Africa, a program that helps youths in townships to develop leadership skills. Our days were spent in nature, participating in team building activities that strengthened our bond as well as built a community within our group. We completed problem-solving activities, prepared meals for the group, and participated in talking circles where we shared our personal experiences and struggles. We both took away a sense of empowerment that came from sharing our personal stories and learning the true meaning of forgiveness as experienced with the citizens of South Africa. After the retreat, we spent the remainder of the time learning about the history of South Africa through visiting historical sites such as Mandela’s prison cell and various museums dedicated to preserving the history of the Apartheid.

Although the Apartheid era ended in 1994, the legacy of Apartheid is still evident within the country as seen with the disparities in health, socioeconomic status, and education between communities. We spent a week doing service learning projects with Afrika Tikkun, an organization working with families within the townships surrounding the city of Cape Town. The projects served to provide assistance in any way that we could. Completing tasks such as gardening, cooking for families, or even being with the children allowed for the workers of Afrika Tikkun to attend to the needs of the community served. We went on home visits and listened to the experiences of the families, where we saw firsthand the impact that this legacy has had on children and families. We also spent a day in a school, where the children never stopped smiling, laughing, or playing. Together we played games, sang, and read to them. Although there was a language barrier between us, their smiles and laughter told us how excited they were that we were there. I think our smiles told them the same thing.

The core philosophy of “Ubuntu”, meaning “I am because we are” is imbedded in the culture of South Africa. Through working on various service learning projects with the organization we learned the value of Ubuntu in the work that we completed, in which the needs of a community as whole are valued.
ICD student awards and honors

Lauren Hindt and Madeline Babel, child psychology undergraduate majors, have received both the 2014 President’s Student Leadership & Service Award (PSLSA) and the 2014 University of Minnesota Alumni Association Student Leadership Award. The President’s Award is facilitated in coordination with the Office of the President, Office for Student Affairs, University of Minnesota Alumni Association and Student Unions & Activities and it recognizes the accomplishments and contributions of outstanding student leaders at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. The award is presented to approximately one-half of one percent of the student body for their exceptional leadership and service to the University of Minnesota and the surrounding community.

From this group of President’s Award winners, the University of Minnesota Alumni Association (UMAA) annually chooses to award $500 scholarships to undergraduate student leaders with its UMAA Student Leadership Awards. The Student Leadership award is given for academic achievement, personal character, leadership qualities and contributions to the University of Minnesota. The awards were presented at the President’s Award Banquet on April 20, 2014.

Cicchetti, Gunnar, and Masten honored with major awards

This year, three ICD faculty members have been chosen to receive prestigious awards in our field. One of them alone would be cause for celebration, but three in the same year is just amazing, and a testament to these stellar faculty and their important work.

Association for Psychological Science (APS) Fellow Dante Cicchetti (left) has been awarded a 2014 James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award for his lifetime contributions to the field of applied psychological science. Cicchetti, William Harris Professor of Child Development and Psychiatry and McKnight Presidential Chair, delivered his award address at the 26th APS annual convention this May. The announcement in the APS Observer singles out Cicchetti’s research as having had far reaching impact on developmental theory as well as on science, policy and practice in many domains of development.

APS has named Megan Gunnar (center) the 2014 recipient of the APS Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement. APS recently established this annual award to recognize and to honor members of the discipline who masterfully help students and others discover and pursue their own career and research goals. As Alan Kraut, executive director of APS, put it: “This is just the second year the Mentor Award has been given and your inclusion in this elite group says a lot about what we mean this award to be. You represent all of it wonderfully: The advisor who makes special efforts; one who transforms the careers of so many you have worked with; that inspirational researcher who influences larger groups in the field; and that doesn’t even do you justice.” This award was also conferred at the APS annual convention.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has selected Ann Masten (right) as a 2014 recipient of the Urie Bronfenbrenner Award for Lifetime Contribution to Developmental Psychology in the Service of Science and Society. This award recognizes Masten for her lifetime career of major contributions to the science of developmental psychology and her work to apply developmental psychology to society. The award was presented at the APA annual convention in Washington, D.C., August 7-10, 2014.

Congratulations to Dante, Megan, and Ann!
Selected 2013-2014 honors and awards

Dante Cicchetti
2014 James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award from Association for Psychological Science
2014 Excellence in Academic Advising Award, College of Education and Human Development (CEHD)
2013 Award for Outstanding Research Article from the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)

Jed Elison
Article recognized as a scientific advance on 2013 Summary of Advances by Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) of the US Department of Health and Human Services

Megan Gunnar
2014 APS Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement, Association for Psychological Science (APS)
Cairns Capstone Lecture to recognize contributions to developmental science, Center for Developmental Science, University of North Carolina

Ann Masten
2014 Urie Bronfenbrenner Award for Lifetime Contributions to Developmental Psychology in the Service of Science and Society, American Psychological Association (APA)
Appointed: co-chair of the new Forum on Investing in Young Children Globally, Institute of Medicine, National Academies

Glenn Roisman
Fellow, Division 7 of the American Psychological Association (APA)

Kathleen Thomas
Promotion to full professor

Phil Zelazo
President, Jean Piaget Society

Henry Wellman (Ph.D. ’75), Harold W. Stevenson Collegiate Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan, received the 2013 CEHD Distinguished Alumni Award for “a lifetime of contributions to our understanding of children’s development, including the development of social cognition and metacognition.” Wellman joined Stephanie Carlson for a conversation at a bag lunch presentation at ICD on November 22, 2014, in which he fielded questions about his research, which focuses on children’s developing theory of mind; their everyday interpretation of a person’s behaviors as the product of their internal beliefs, desires, emotions, and intentions.

2013 Anna and Samuel Pinanski Teaching Prize, Wellesley College
Tracy Gleason (Ph.D. ’98) the Whitehead Associate Professor of Critical Thought and associate professor, Wellesley College, was awarded the 2013 Anna and Samuel Pinanski Teaching Prize by the college. The Pinanski Prize is given to members of the Wellesley College faculty to honor fine teaching. The prize is meant to recognize some particular strength, some style or method or course, or some other describable event that has been especially successful. Gleason was recognized for “inspiring students to reach their highest potential,” and for being “committed not only to teaching, but to developing her students as thinkers, writers, and as researchers.”

2013 Curt Richter Award ISPNE
Emma Adam (Ph.D. ’98), professor at Northwestern University, has been honored with the 2013 Curt Richter Award by the International Society of Psychoneuroendocrinology (ISPNE). The award was presented at the ISPNE 43rd Annual Meeting in Leiden, the Netherlands, on August 23, 2013. The award recognizes the research of distinguished young investigators whose submitted manuscripts report original, never-published research in basic or clinical psychoneuroendocrinology. Adam presented her awarded paper in a talk entitled “Social Influences on Child and Adolescent Cortisol in Naturalistic Settings: Implications for Mood and Anxiety Disorders” at the meeting.

Named provost at UW-Madison
Sarah Mangelsdorf (Ph.D. ’88), has been named provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Mangelsdorf currently acts as dean of Northwestern University’s Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and is a professor of psychology there. Mangelsdorf, whose work on the socio-emotional development of infants and young children is known internationally, was honored with a CEHD Distinguished Alumni Award in 2012.

Honored by CLA
Peggy Flanagan (B.A. ’02, child psychology) is one of 15 alumni who were honored by the College of Liberal Arts on March 27, 2014 for their “remarkable contributions or attained significant achievements in their fields.” Flanagan was honored as a “nationally recognized expert in community organizing and public policy formation and a tireless advocate for families.” Flanagan is currently the executive director of the Children’s Defense Fund-Minnesota and is adjunct faculty for George Washington University’s Native American Political Leadership Program.
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Left to right: W. Andrew Collins, Steven Yussen, Glenn Roisman, Albert Yonas, Stephanie Carlson, Megan Gunnar (director), Kathleen Thomas, Melissa Koenig, Jed Elison, Maria Sera, Philip Zelazo, Michael Maratos, Ann Masten, Abigail Gewirtz, Barbara Murphy (Not pictured: Dante Cicchetti, Michael Georgieff, Canan Karatekin, Michele Mazzocco, Arthur Reynolds)