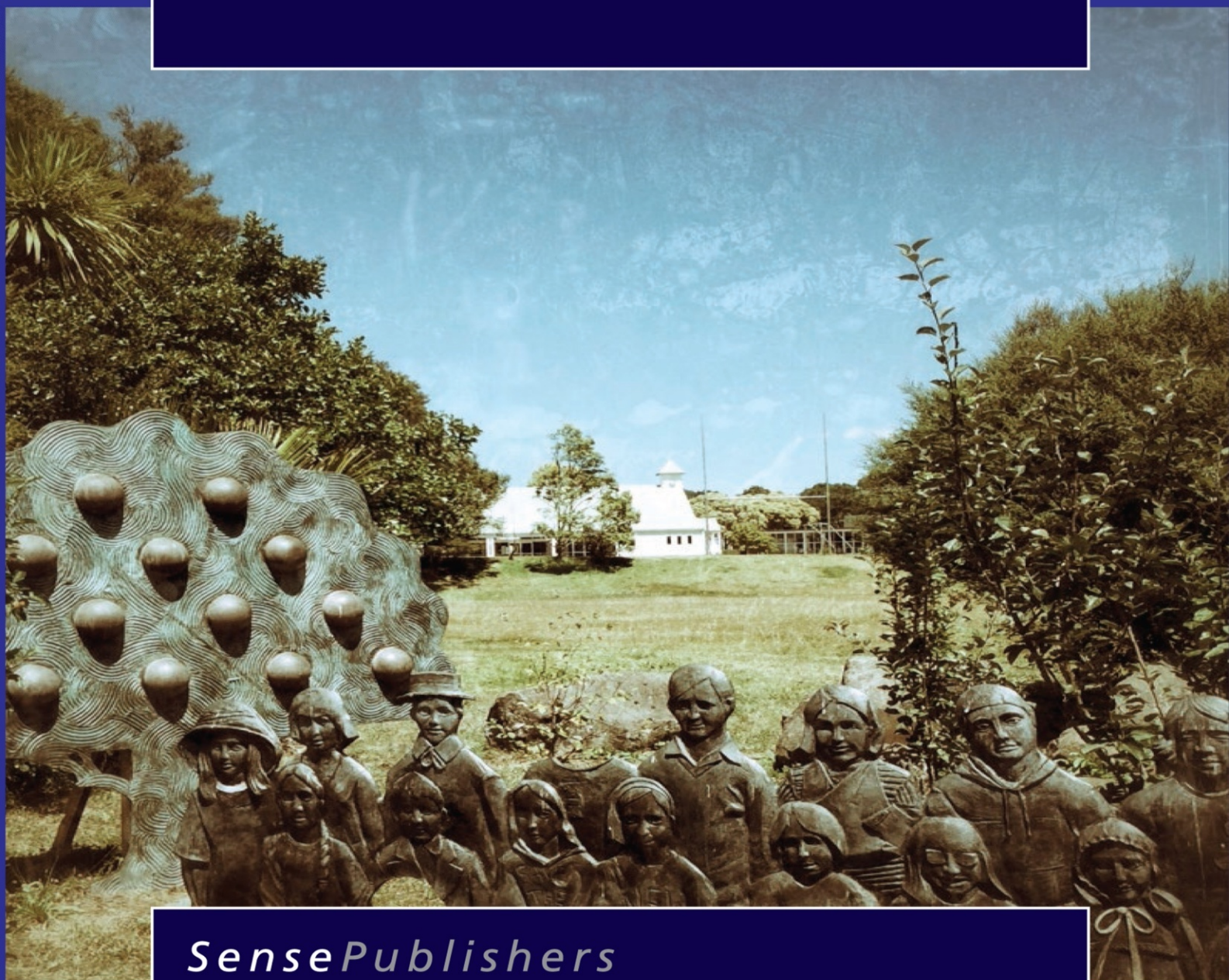


Tales from School

Learning Disability and State Education after Administrative Reform

Rod Wills, Missy Morton, Margaret McLean,
Maxine Stephenson and Roger Slee (Eds.)



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Tales from School

STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
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Scope

This series addresses the many different forms of exclusion that occur in schooling across a range of international contexts and considers strategies for increasing the inclusion and success of all students. In many school jurisdictions the most reliable predictors of educational failure include poverty, Aboriginality and disability. Traditionally schools have not been pressed to deal with exclusion and failure. Failing students were blamed for their lack of attainment and were either placed in segregated educational settings or encouraged to leave and enter the unskilled labour market. The crisis in the labor market and the call by parents for the inclusion of their children in their neighborhood school has made visible the failure of schools to include all children.

Drawing from a range of researchers and educators from around the world, *Studies in Inclusive Education* will demonstrate the ways in which schools contribute to the failure of different student identities on the basis of gender, race, language, sexuality, disability, socio-economic status and geographic isolation. This series differs from existing work in inclusive education by expanding the focus from a narrow consideration of what has been traditionally referred to as special educational needs to understand school failure and exclusion in all its forms. Moreover, the series will consider exclusion and inclusion across all sectors of education: early years, elementary and secondary schooling, and higher education.

Tales from School

*Learning Disability and State Education
after Administrative Reform*

Edited by

Rod Wills

University of Auckland, New Zealand

Missy Morton

University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Margaret McLean

University of Auckland, New Zealand

Maxine Stephenson

University of Auckland, New Zealand

and

Roger Slee

Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia



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Dedicated to the memory of Burton Blatt (1927-1985) who reminded
us of the importance of two central beliefs; all people are *valuable*
and all people are *educable*.

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ROD WILLS, MISSY MORTON, MARGARET MCLEAN,
MAXINE STEPHENSON AND ROGER SLEE

INTRODUCTION

Conversations and Concerns of Tales from School

THE EDITORS

Roger Slee has been involved with disability and education in Australia and internationally for more than 30 years, routinely visiting New Zealand since 2001. Maxine, Margaret, Missy and Rod have all been involved with disability service providers, institutions, special education and teacher education for a similar length of time. This book reflects the engagement, by the editors and contributors, with the development and delivery of the legislation, regulations and guidelines that have shaped the evolution of education for disabled learners in New Zealand since 1984 and its longer historical antecedents. More particularly their work can be identified in the area of education for students with an intellectual disability. Alongside their teaching, research, and service roles in the field of special education and disability services, both formal and voluntary, the editors and contributors have all made significant and particular contributions in the move toward an inclusive education response for this group of students in the schooling system in New Zealand.

The work we called ‘the book project’ reflects the investment of ourselves, not just as academics, but also more often than not as advocates and protagonists in an ideological, social and educational struggle. The struggle has been in our institutions amongst our colleagues and peers; in the community with service providers; and alongside families and students in their schools and communities. The response to disability is not a high priority, anywhere. It never has been!

The editors acknowledge commonalities of concern identified in international research but recognise also the significance of certain factors specific to the New Zealand context. We ask here what are the points of difference that the New Zealand context might contribute to international conversations on common problems.

WHY THIS BOOK AND WHY NOW?

One of the main points of concern is that there is currently so little teaching going on within the university in this field and yet it is a major issue in education. Reflecting changing demographic trends, the issue of inclusion as a non-categorical approach, as identified in research and among practitioners, has been reduced to

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one of 'diversity.' The educational response has often been expressed through technicist approaches that focus on managing categorical difference. The lack of attention to disability in teacher education particularly disturbs all the contributors to this book. We are concerned that some teacher education providers may not be preparing teachers to work appropriately with disabled children and families. As one contributor says disability has got lost in the morass of diversity.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN NEW ZEALAND?
WHAT IS USEFUL TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT?

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), New Zealand's foundational document, gives us space to question inequitable social dynamics because it makes the values underpinning relationships really explicit. The Treaty is one of the biggest points of difference because it has legitimation in the country and Māori are part of the hegemonic block. It is through the Treaty that we have established in both legislation and rhetoric those principles of partnership and sharing, of social justice and collaboration, of mutuality and duality. This became the basis for institutional respect of human difference that could be mobilised by interest groups experiencing marginalisation in the 1970s and 1980s.

The renaissance of Māori cultural rights within New Zealand was engendered and given impetus by people working at the grass roots and learning from one another. This gave way to a variety of social networks organised from below and energised by concerns relating to human rights and a vision of community seeking an end to prejudice and oppression. This included a growing consciousness of and concern about the educational experiences of many groups including learners from Pacific cultures, children of the poor and disabled learners. This text demonstrates how a small population offers the potential for effective action and advocacy, while political ideology can become hegemonic and limiting of the dynamics of change from below.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS THREATEN INCLUSION?

The commodification of education as a purchasable benefit is one threat. Another is the unintended consequence of the policy goal of attaining a 'world-class inclusive system offering educational opportunities of equal quality' by imposing a model of rationing and fiscal control across supports and services for learners with disabilities. Decentralising the administration of education removed both the steady hand of educational advice and allowed schools as competitive business units to value and prefer some groups of students over others.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO REMIND YOURSELF OF IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN
THINGS THAT MIGHT BE ACHIEVABLE?

As a small group of practitioners and researchers the work of the Disability Studies in Education special interest group has provided a theoretical framework because it

INTRODUCTION

expands the traditional 'special' education paradigm to include social, cultural and political understandings. This book has enabled parents to tell the stories of their children's school experiences, and practitioners to explore and reflect on their own actions and concerns. This illustrates how a lot of people are doing really good things in educational contexts. The book brings together people from different vantage points engaging in good talk, good writing and sharing ideas.

Since the implementation of the policy *Special Education 2000* it has been the activity of some families and teachers at the local level that has offered strength and certainty rather than the policy framework itself. *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) also offers the potential for inclusion and participation of disabled children and their families. The common characteristic of both of these policies is the potential for teachers and parents to become directly involved in decision-making with their local school communities to get things up and running. Concern remains where older separatist paradigms continue to have a powerful influence over the education and community future of disabled learners. The limitations arising from hegemonic views of difference, children and their learning creates a risk. This means that the actions of individuals, their vision, their clarity, their truthfulness to each other and getting on with the job and just being good at education may not go far enough to overcome the resilience of old ideas.

Stories can be very potent. The text is not a recipe for getting it right or being totally successful. We can all learn from the *Tales from School*.

MAXINE STEPHENSON

PART ONE
UNDERSTANDINGS FOR TODAY

The major restructuring of the administration of New Zealand's education system that was written into the Education Act of 1989 sought to address both economic imperatives that emanated from the fiscal crisis that was facing the nation, and social imperatives precipitated by the social movements relating to human rights that had gained traction in the previous two decades. Governance arrangements under the new public management model legitimated the introduction of market principles, but also posited a rhetoric of equity. For disabled learners, the most influential clause in the Act was that which decreed that all children should have the right to enrol at their local school, thus inscribing in legislation a paradigm shift from exclusion to inclusion. This demanded a radical change in thinking about the "children, difference, learning and schooling" nexus (Slee, 2001, p. 106) than that which had shaped the educational experiences of many young people from early colonial times. However, 25 years later, New Zealand continues to struggle with interpreting and implementing the principles of inclusion at multiple levels. One of the arguments being put forward to explain this policy/implementation impasse is the resilience of discourses through which exclusion and targeted provision to address some supposed abnormality became naturalised as the response to understandings of difference in the country's history (Selvaraj, 2014). With a view to providing a well-informed critical foundation from which to interrogate current reform and debate, the opening section of *Tales from School* presents an historical examination of the shifting and constitutive circumstances through which segregated institutions were developed.

In her comprehensive study of special education in North America, Margret Winzer warns against work in the field that is presented in an historical void or that is examined against narrowly conceived historical snapshots. She talks of a tendency of some writers to be "uncompromisingly critical of past endeavours" when viewing them with a contemporary lens, and also of the dangers of assuming a liberal stance which casts current arrangements in the field as both inevitable historical developments and as the pinnacle of progress (Winzer, 2009, p. viii). Education initiatives or systems do not simply appear as if in a vacuum. The form they take is neither natural nor inevitable. Rather, according to Foucault (1977), such social institutions emerge from a specific historical context, from the

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interactions, which take place within that context, and in response to social, economic, political, and ideological factors and forces.

Foucault adopted a method of historical analysis that he called 'genealogy' to encapsulate his objective of providing a critical diagnosis of the present. Genealogy provides a way of looking at the past of our present – to reveal the source of entities, expectations, practices or actions that we might have unwittingly accepted without question in our current lives, but that “in ways we don't realize, are rooted in the past” (Rajchman, 1985, p. 4). He is particularly interested in analysing “the way an unproblematic field of experience or set of practices which were accepted without question ... becomes a problem, raises discussion and debate, incites new reactions, and induces a crisis in the previously silent behaviour, habits, practices and institutions” (Foucault, 2001, p. 74). In reflecting on the resilience of now outmoded responses to difference, tracing practices that are no longer in existence, but that nonetheless continue to contribute to our ideas and understandings seemed a useful way forward. Capturing echoes of earlier pasts would not only support a critique of the present, but would also enable the awareness required to support attitudinal and ethical transformation.

The opening section of the book, comprised of three chapters, presents an historically-based understanding of the development of what came to be called special education in New Zealand as institutionalised practice. It draws attention to the resilience of troubling and contentious issues as they have emerged in their varying guises in different historical, social, political, and ideological contexts to both reflect and impact policy and practice. A key point of focus is the historically contingent development of the burgeoning professionalism of the sector, the location and representation of children and their parents, and the implications of this for parents and families as advocates for their children.

Boorstin (1969, p. 46) pointed out “even in modern times, communities existed before governments were here to care for public needs.” In New Zealand it was the meliorist crusade of missionary and middle class charitable organisations that initiated much of the early western educational provision. The civilising agenda of the Native schools, and the practice of isolating 'criminal and neglected' children in the country's early industrial schools and orphanages were justified on the grounds that, as agencies of sound moral correction, the institutions would not only support social stability, but would also offer hope of redemption for the children. When the Native and industrial schools came under state control on 10th October 1867, a focus on correcting what was considered to be asocial or uncivilised behaviour was maintained, embedding further value distinctions that shaped notions of racial and class superiority in colonial times. Such distinctions readily accommodated ideas about intellectual 'backwardness' that were facilitated following the nationalising of state education ten years later. This is the subject of Chapter One which locates the beginnings of special education in New Zealand within the constellation of varying axes of material and ideological power, where knowledge of the population became as much a defining factor as the already institutionalised political and economic understandings of class and race.

Dyson (2001, p. 21) explains that understanding past attempts to address complex situations, regardless of their outcomes, provides insights into “both the possibilities they opened up and the contradictions that they embodied.” Education for disabled children has been characterised by periods of tension and controversy as well as periods of optimism and this is a key theme for Chapters Two and Three. These two chapters traverse much of the twentieth century to take account of ways in which parents have been represented at the official level, and their varying responses over time. Following an examination of the circumstances under which special classes were introduced and a professional body for the sector was formalised, Chapter Two introduces two key professionals who worked alongside parents and parent advocacy groups for change. One of those professionals, Charlotte Thomson, provides invaluable insights into those heady times of optimism, and of the resilience of the parents in their struggle for change. Parent advocacy is also central to Colleen Brown’s Chapter Three, which casts the struggle in relation to the contribution of politicians and other leaders who also saw the potential of the period for change. Together Chapters Two and Three highlight factors and forces that have emerged in more recent times to define the terrain in new and challenging ways; to highlight the possibilities in social movements and expressions of dissatisfaction with, and resistance to existing institutional arrangements; and to consequent challenges for understanding and providing for school populations.

This section demonstrates that the history of education in New Zealand is a history of the categorisation of children on the basis of cultural, emotional, behavioural, physical and learning characteristics. Whether grounded in ideological notions of race, civilisation, redemption, eugenic value or ability, systems of classification have been central to institutional differentiation within education and the particular forms it has taken at particular points in time. Decisions about which children should be schooled were rationalised variously at specific times – as humanitarian; as addressing goals of moral conformity, social control, and social reform; as responding to developments in medical and scientific knowledge; as enabling liberation of the individual and in recognition of their rights.

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Maxine Stephenson
School of Critical Studies in Education
The University of Auckland

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1. LEGITIMATING EXCLUSION

Compulsory Education, the Standards and the Experts

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the national education system in New Zealand in 1877 made education free, secular and compulsory bringing all children under public scrutiny. The following year ‘the standards’ were introduced as the official basis on which school students were to be organised into classes and have their progression through school determined. This operated through a national curriculum, examination and promotions regime, which enabled all primary school pupils to be assessed for their readiness to cope with the demands of the next level. As compulsory attendance became more rigorously enforced, the number of children taking the annual standards examinations increased. Those who did not reach the level of achievement required for promotion became officially recognised as failures. Thus was created a new student identity – the backward child – and a new problem for education (Stephenson, 2013).

Educational performance also came to be seen in medical terms. Political and educational centralisation in New Zealand had been followed by a period of severe economic depression. The social impact was high and prompted a raft of welfare initiatives in the 1890s from the country’s first liberal administration. Highlighting issues relating to health, sanitation, disease, morality, crime and education, which were seen to be inextricably linked to poverty, the aim of the legislation was both ameliorative and preventative. At the same time, the conflation of social, medical and educational concerns resonated with those raised through ‘the science of heredity,’ or eugenics, that had been expressed in parts of the western world and formally articulated by Francis Galton (1883) in Britain. These factors coalesced with new and developing social knowledges and classificatory strategies to inform the management of social and educational problems. Legitimated because of the supposedly neutral scientific solutions they offered, the medical and educational professionals, and the psychologists who worked within the medical model became especially influential in categorising students and in prescribing rehabilitational, custodial and educational treatments as a medical necessity (McLean & Wills, 2008). By 1900, the problem of the backward child was being understood in terms of new knowledge about children that educationalists around the world were developing and sharing through professional networks.

This chapter historicises the development of what came to be called special education in New Zealand. It examines the circumstances under which experts and expertise gained influence in the formulation of more refined classificatory

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strategies, practices of segregation and institutionalisation than those begun with the cultural and social imperialism of the missionary and middle class civilising agendas. Although grounded in assumptions of individual pathology, these practices became increasingly concerned with the perceived source of pathology as a means to seeking a more permanent solution to the social problems it precipitated (Stephenson, 2008). Experts in social knowledge came to exercise influence, not only in defining policy and practice in the field of special education, but also in speaking for those whose interests they were perceived to represent. It is this aspect of the client/expert relationship, which prompts De Swaan to refer to clientele of state related experts as a “virtual constituency” (De Swaan, 1998, p. 232). Although the focus of the chapter is on macro level politics, consideration is also given to instances where students figured in this history, how they were represented, and whether their voices could be discerned anywhere within the official discourse.

EXPERTS AND SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

German sociologist Max Weber sees the appearance and evolution of modern (western) experts as an integral feature of the institutionalisation of scientific and technical reason in the secularisation of society (Weber, 1958). In this view specifically trained technological and managerial experts become essential in supporting the developing mathematisation of social and natural knowledge and experience; to its being sustained by the use of measurements and empirically rationalized proofs; and, in the pursuit of efficiency, in the application of such scientific procedures to social and technical problems (Fischer, 1990). Fischer claims that capitalist development, with its characteristic economic behaviours and bureaucratic state administration, has been an influential mechanism in its expansion. His critique of intellectual transformations in the modern world rests on his concern that a positivist understanding of knowledge serves to uphold technological and material values. This conceals the political implications of any practice which fails to take account of the full range of human and social values. Hence, Fischer claims, social problems come to be conceptualised in technical terms, their resolution expressed in terms of value-free administratively designed and empirically calculable management, control and efficiency, and their identification and treatment left in the hands of objective experts.

In New Zealand, expertise and its purveyors became an increasingly authoritative component in the formulation of early social policies. This influence was extended as the central administration took over more and more responsibility for social policies which had previously rested with local authorities, and for institutional practices which had previously been the domain of voluntary agencies. Central in mediating the social needs, demands, problems and dilemmas associated not only with a capitalist society but also with the process of nation building were “the new uses of knowledges and the new roles of knowledge-generative institutions and knowledge-bearing elites” (Skocpol & Rueschemeyer, 1996, p. 4). Policy makers, politicians and others who were in positions of power supported the

perpetuation of existing patterns of privilege, justifying them on the basis of their being in line with the natural organisation of a society, and in the national interest (Smith, 1985). This union of scientific knowledge and social power that Foucault (1980) called power/knowledge fuelled the influence of eugenicists who were particularly active in the early years of the twentieth century. Although criticised for running counter to individual liberty, eugenic principles became increasingly supported in scientific circles, and it was those eugenicists who served as public officials and whose scientific and professional expertise combined to legitimate their position, who were to the fore in seeing realised a number of restrictive legislative measures, many centred on schooling.

THE POLITICS OF BIOLOGY

Before that legislation was put into effect, however, a virulent indictment of the nation's 'losers' was brought to public attention. In 1903, politician and surgeon Dr William Chapple published, with the endorsement of some influential medical and political figures, a work which focussed on the disturbing decline in birth rate amongst "the most fit to produce the best offspring" and what he identified as the associated problem of the "relative proportion of the unfit born into the world" (Chapple, 1903, p. 8). For Chapple, a key purpose of the work was to suggest possible solutions to this problem, and to consider the role (and right) of the state to intervene in the issue.

Chapple presented a number of arguments, which appealed to various sectors of the population, addressing matters that had been simmering as both personal and national concerns. The book's introduction was explicit. It drew on the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest to justify the relative success of one group over another. Thus any questions about colonisation by a dominant imperial power, the increasing ascendancy of a middle class in New Zealand and the apparent imminent demise of Māori as a distinct group could be rationalised and concerns appeased. Ideas about criminal inheritance, proposing crime to be a natural function of mental and physical differences, appealed to the concerns of those members of society exhibiting moral panic about conditions emanating from the growth of the urban sector, and offered ideological support for the establishment of middle class cultural hegemony. For Chapple, "the criminal, the pauper, the idiot and imbecile, the lunatic, the drunkard, the deformed, and diseased" were "the fit man's burden" (p. xii). This struck chords with indignation being expressed about increased taxation and welfare provision for those who were perceived to be the undeserving and incorrigible poor.

Providing statistical data to demonstrate an increase in dependence on the state and other forms of support enabled Chapple to draw attention to issues of national efficiency and the quality of the population as a national resource. This spoke to concerns about racial fitness that had emanated from disturbing evidence of substandard physical strength and general health revealed through the medical examinations prior to recruitment for the South African War. It also supported his view that the outcomes of previous humanitarian based charitable or state

initiatives had served to perpetuate national degeneracy rather than alleviate individual suffering. Chapple's treatise also provided 'scientific' evidence on which immigration restrictions could be legitimated, particularly in relation to those of Chinese origin; "any idiot or insane person"; those having a contagious disease considered to be "loathsome or dangerous"; or those having had a conviction for an offence involving "moral turpitude" (Immigration Restriction Act, 1899, p. 116). Significantly, Chapple's arguments had relevance for the rising professional middle class who, in dealing with perceived social problems, were able to carve out a niche of expertise for themselves, and so enhance their authority and secure a position of status, power and authority (Shuker, 1987).

The human pedigree, a statistically sophisticated analysis of a family's genetic information, was used by eugenicists from divergent theoretical bases to support their claims of intergenerational mental retardation. This was possible because it "presupposed no particular theory of heredity, yet made the visible fact of heredity easy and convincing to demonstrate" (Mazumdar 1992, p. 71). It was supported by powerful political allies and experts in the fields of medicine, psychiatry, psychology, statistics, criminology and social work, eugenicists drew on and moulded knowledge produced within the biological sciences to produce a new discourse of racial fitness. Provision of perceived appropriate forms of care, education and treatment for those classified as mentally defective evolved around this discourse as groups that by eugenic definition possessed inferior hereditary material, that exhibited anti-social and immoral behaviours, even a tendency to physical differences, became problems of mental degeneracy whose lack of self-control and disproportionate fecundity was a focus of policy and practice.

The rise of experts and associated forms of specialised knowledge in the field of education was most significant in the area of special education for groups of children schooled primarily in segregated settings. In a shift away from the paternalistic charity discourse, which gave meaning to, missionary and voluntary sector activity in the nineteenth century and its underpinning dichotomy of care and control, problems for education came to be framed increasingly by constitutive notions of national efficiency, utility and eugenic value. If managing the population became the panacea for the nation's problems within the scientifically based reasoning which saw "abnormal" groups in biological or hereditarian terms as "breeding isolate[s] at the margin of the human race" (Mazumdar, 1992, p. 2), segregated educational institutions had an important task to fulfil. The medical profession became especially influential in redefining, in medical terms, conditions which previously had been perceived in terms of moral deviancy or of social dysfunction, but which nonetheless remained symptomatic of some deviation from, or conflict with, moral, social or legal norms or expectations.

Whilst provision was established to address the educational needs of children who had previously either been exempted from school or accommodated (often reluctantly) within regular classrooms, the delineation and redefinition of what constituted the normal was accepted uncritically under the supposedly objective discretionary guidance of a small number of experts. Reducing difference to individual deficiency in this way, as De Swaan cogently argues, ensured that

apparent failure of an individual (or any number of individuals) to operate successfully within specific and anticipated norms was never seen as part of a wider structural conflict – as indicative of the way in which such norms served to exclude certain people from meaningful participation. “Medical diagnoses,” he argued, “no matter how many, never added up to a social critique” (De Swaan, 1998, p. 241).

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

At this time also problems for education that had been highlighted by the introduction of compulsory attendance and central performance measures were being understood in terms of international developments in knowledge about children and their development. Close study of genetic patterns revealed minimum capabilities or capacities in some young people, which in turn legitimated institutionalisation of those seen to be ineducable. In a similar way, inhibited potential could be revealed and appropriate treatment planned to optimise development. This was often some form of specialised provision. Implicit in the philosophy around which these initiatives were formulated was the notion of education as a science underpinned by a developmentalist perspective.

The late nineteenth century research of G. Stanley Hall constituted the earliest endeavours to position childhood central to, and as an object of, serious academic study. Hall initiated the child study movement in America with his survey of Boston kindergarten children on their entrance to school. His investigations into childhood sought to gain insights into children’s thought processes through his use of surveys, questionnaires, and anecdotal reports from adults, primarily parents and teachers. Reported in a major two-volume work, *Adolescence* (Hall, 1904), these would inform social and educational reform movements that aimed to improve the health and welfare of children. However, in adopting a scientific statistically grounded method of child study, Hall presented his data with a degree of classification that would have implications for student identities. Furthermore, the early participation of teachers and parents was subsequently marginalised in the successful bid by the medical profession to legitimate child study as a science for the experts.

Hall’s influence amongst his peers was considerable, most notably in the establishment of a site for continuous debate and theoretical development in the first institute of child psychology in America (Hulse & Green, 1986). The development of institutions like the Chicago Board of Education’s Department of Child Study and Pedagogical Investigation facilitated the dissemination of the ideas more readily, making them available to small nations like New Zealand. Equally influential were the technological measures of intelligence initiated by French psychologist Alfred Binet in collaboration with Théodore Simon, a physician experienced in working with children who were not progressing with their age peers (Binet & Simon, 1915). In this early work (originally published in 1904), Binet and Simon used a diagnosis/school placement model – the information of the intelligence of the child according to the test would determine

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whether the child would benefit from a special education placement, or one in a regular classroom.

Valerie Walkerdine (1984), drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, isolates the practices of child study and mental measurement as pivotal to scientifically legitimated classification of children at the beginning of the twentieth century. Within the historically specific understanding that this knowledge confirmed, she contends, not only were the practices, opinions and decisions of experts in the field of developmental psychology legitimated, so too did the techniques and instruments they employed become acceptable apparatuses of scientific judgement and classification. Case studies of individual children and mental measurement provided educationalists with what was considered to be well-founded knowledge of the child which, in the hands of the designated experts, became a powerful instrument of control in a number of ways. Because pedagogic practices became totally saturated with the notion of a normalised sequence of child development, Walkerdine argues, the knowledge of the child was used to determine and shape the classroom experiences most conducive to optimal development. Under these conditions, and concealed in a liberal rhetoric of humanitarian concern, educational reform and progress, children became objects of pathological description and norms of development, and subsequently subjected to an array of what Foucault (1977) called normalising techniques.

In the process of normalising against a standard, however, knowledge of the individual was juxtaposed with knowledge of others similarly studied. This enabled comparatively devised classification in developmental terms as normal, slow, a fast learner for example. Rather than supporting a liberating and meaningful learning experience, Walkerdine argues, by assessment and continual observation and recording, developmental psychology as a field of specialised knowledge became implicated in constructing the individual and his/her place on a similarly constructed normal/abnormal continuum. The institutionalisation of the standards provided the conditions under which such a regime could take hold in New Zealand.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE 'BACKWARD CHILD' IN NEW ZEALAND

Advocacy for special consideration of children who were falling behind their age peers in New Zealand schools centred to a considerable extent on their perceived (in)ability to cope with the first of the standards examinations. These examinations were conducted each year by school inspectors who, from as early as 1892 were commenting on children in the infant classes who were being held back (or 'retarded') by their teachers from advancing to the first standard class. In their reports, inspectors explained that teachers had offered varying explanations for retardation – late entry to school, irregular attendance, bad teaching, poor health and mental or physical incapacity (see for example AJHR, 1893, E-1). Further concerns emanated from the performance of those who were unsuccessful in the examinations. In 1894, when measures were taken to reinforce the compulsory clause of the 1877 Education Act, a Wellington inspector expressed concern that

schools would be inundated with backward children who, he felt, would be more appropriately placed in segregated settings to facilitate their preparation for the higher standards (Winterbourn, 1944). The problem of the 'backward child' had emerged.

Sustained and/or combined advocacy by inspectors was difficult, however, because of the nature of the administrative hierarchy in the New Zealand education system. Oversight of the inspectors was with the regional Education Boards rather than the central Education Department and they were virtually the only professional support and advisory presence external to the everyday classroom. They visited only once or twice annually and were clearly heterogeneous in opinion and outlook. Their reports reflected the diversity of opinion concerning an equally heterogeneous group of youngsters who were not conforming to the normalised expectations for their age group and who relied on confirmation of a successful level of achievement to be moved from one standard to the next. Inspectors' comments which privileged the advantages of social promotion stood alongside those that favoured promotion by merit (Winterbourn, 1982). Debate was further generated when the teachers' professional organisation, the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) began expressing concerns about the implications for 'normal' children in the class when the teacher was obliged to devote excessive time to the 'backward' children. The problem, it appeared, was with the children, but the consequences were everyone else's. The backward child was not just atypical, but also a classroom liability. The solution favoured by many was segregation and a concentrated effort to bring the child in line with his/her peers.

This solution was increasingly seen in medical terms as NZEI members, drawing on links which had already been forged within medical circles between intellectual dullness and physical causes, began lobbying for a school medical service to assist in diagnosing the causes of backwardness. Co-terminously, the New Zealand Department of Public Health was struggling to persuade the government to fund regular medical and dental inspections of school children as part of its "preventative rather than curative" philosophy on community health (Dow, 1995, p. 11). Clean healthy bodies equated with healthy minds and disciplined and regulated bodies with moral normalised citizens. This meant that calls for medicalisation of the New Zealand school system came from two independent departments.

Although it was the backward child who initiated NZEI agitation, it was the children in the industrial schools who provided the greatest stimulus for action. The institutionalisation of problem populations had long been an accepted practice of the young colony. Those who failed to meet accepted social standards, who were not engaged in employment, who failed in some way to conform to the virtues of morality and industry, were morally condemned and segregated from the rest of society. Whilst the legitimating discourse had not always been grounded in biological determinism, conflation of mental difference with criminal behaviour had been commonplace in early institutionalisation practices. Prior to the establishment of provincial 'lunatic asylums,' the practice had been "to confine lunatics in the gaol," often under the supervision of "some of the best conducted

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criminal prisoners” (National Archives Wellington: LE 1/1858/4). Incarceration under the custodial care of the gaoler and the medical care of the provincial surgeon, whose responsibilities included the position of medical attendant to the gaol and hospital, made manifest the ideological underpinnings which were to provide fertile terrain for future eugenic debate. Furthermore, as provincial asylums were established, and in the absence of other more appropriate facilities, the ad hoc consignment of orphaned or destitute children to the institutions, (i.e. those “incapable of managing himself or his affairs and whether found lunatic by inquisition or not” (Lunatics Act, 1868, p. 59) foreshadowed the explicit linking of poverty with feeble-mindedness which was to characterise eugenic discourse. It was just a short while later that Dr Duncan MacGregor, Professor of Mental and Moral Science at Otago University, and later Inspector-General of Hospitals and Charitable Institutions, classed “hopeless drunkards, hopeless criminals, and hopeless paupers” as insane and dangerous (MacGregor, 1876).

These practices also informed an on-going concern to have recognised differentiation between destitute and delinquent children in industrial schools that resurfaced at the turn of the century. This was an early-identified legislative measure for the newly appointed Inspector-General of Schools, George Hogben. In reviewing industrial schools legislation he considered boarding out as the most appropriate strategy for neglected children. The ‘delinquent,’ however, required more careful consideration if the appropriate treatment were to be prescribed. To this end, Hogben identified six causes of juvenile crime – the stress and struggle of life; bad hygienic surroundings and consequently inferior physique; the temptations that result from overcrowding and from the greater facilities for committing petty thefts with impunity that exist in the towns compared with the country; inherited low physical and moral nature; weakness and want of control on the part of parents; the neglect and bad example of parents (AJHR, 1900, E-3, p. 2). If insanitary environmental conditions, poor parenting and economic circumstances were considered significant, associated personal characteristics were rendered unproblematic. Hogben thus created a subject whose actions were a function of a criminal nature. Socially the criminal of his list was an abnormal being. The impact of eugenic thought had penetrated the ranks of the influential education bureaucracy (Stephenson, 2013). In reorganising the industrial school system, an increasing awareness of the neglected child’s right to protection was expressed in an extension of the boarding out system and the intention to segregate the “more difficult types of young people” in newly established reformatories (Beck, 1928, p. 129). Hogben would draw on initiatives already operating in Chicago on which to develop this phase of New Zealand’s specialist educational facilities.

A MODEL FOR NEW ZEALAND

In 1907 Hogben visited Europe and America to investigate schools and other educational institutions, including those, which had been established for backward children. He considered his visit to Chicago was especially fruitful. The Director of the Department of Child Study and Pedagogical Investigation was able to offer

what Hogben believed to be particularly valuable expert advice about the appropriate treatment that children in general, and backward children in particular, should receive at various stages of their schooling. Two initiatives gained Hogben's attention as offering possibilities for the New Zealand context. One was the special ungraded classes that were being trialled for four groups of students – “subnormal” or “incorrigible” children, those “behind in some school subject” or children who were “unable to understand the English language” (AJHR, 1908, E-15, p. 50). The other initiative that impressed Hogben was Chicago's Parental School for feeble-minded boys (see Breckinridge & Abbott, 1912).

Recognising the heterogeneity of the classroom populations, Hogben became convinced of the need for various forms of specialist provision in New Zealand and a range of educational and medical specialist knowledge, which would enable individualised diagnosis and treatment to the needs of the child. He was also confident that strategies planned for New Zealand were in line with international expert opinion.

There is general agreement among specialists who work for the education of the mentally defective that the test we propose to use in New Zealand for the classification of such cases is the best that can be applied in practice, namely that the feeble-minded children, as distinct from idiots are those who can keep themselves clean and out of personal danger, and, further, as distinguished from imbeciles (who can also satisfy this test) are those who can be trained to earn their own living, wholly or partly, in subordinate positions. (AJHR, 1908, E-15, p. 67, emphasis in original)

To this end Hogben intended to establish a dual special school/special class system, starting with a residential school for the feeble-minded. While he was abroad, he sought a suitable specialist in the field who could take control of the institution. The following year the Otekaike Special School for boys considered “capable of being trained in some degree” (AJHR, 1910a, E-4, p. 3) began its operation under the leadership of George Benstead. Its establishment was presented as being grounded in a greater degree of understanding of the feeble-minded than that which had previously guided their treatment. Chicago's Parental School was drawn on as an archetype, and as a working financial model in its operation (AJHR, 1910a, E-4, p. 4).

Early reporting on the school for backward pupils reflected the then hegemonic conflation of moral and mental deficiency, and assigned a student identity, which was both personal and social (Kenway, 1990). Initially, Benstead stated, it was believed that students such as those at Otekaike would be able to assume full rights and obligations of citizenship. However, it had become clear that:

The peculiarities of temperament, the lack of inhibitory powers, apathy, and other idiosyncrasies, which, more or less, are concomitants of mental defect, are generally so persistent that at no time can the majority of feeble-minded persons be looked upon as responsible members of society. (AJHR, 1910b, E-4, p. 9)

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Because mental deficiency rendered individuals morally irresponsible for their actions, it was considered that the majority should be allowed neither the liberty nor the rights of responsible citizenship. However, to ensure that some “practical return” could be gleaned from their labours, Benstead had introduced training which would render those who, he stated, “would otherwise remain absolutely useless units” capable of contributing to their upkeep. He would thus be “lessening the misery of the world, and preventing increase of the helpless and hopeless section of the Empire” (AJHR, 1910b, E-4, p. 9). The passage of the youngster who may have at one time failed to pass his examination, to the status of dull-witted and finally morally and mentally deficient (non)citizen had been successfully completed by their enlightened benefactors (Stephenson, 2013).

AND FOR THE GIRLS?

By 1910 a number of philosophical and legislative shifts had occurred as eugenic thought contributed to determine wider social policy, many focusing on women. Besides official measures on immigration, steps had been taken to legislate for dissolution of marriages where there was a likelihood “to produce offspring with a strong tendency to become insane, feeble-minded, epileptic, or otherwise neurotic [and who were] likely to become a charge upon the State” (Bolt, 1905, p. 726). The concerns about racial fitness, compounded by awareness of the declining population, especially as it reflected lowering of the birth-rate amongst those of the eugenically good class, had prompted the founding in 1907 of the Society for Promoting the Health of Women and Children (The Plunket Society) by Dr Frederick Truby King (King, 1913). As an overt attempt to reverse these alarming trends, the society sought to give credence to the notion of the innate value of women as “race-producers” and “race developers” (Seddon cited in Shuker, 1987, p. 215). King, whose expertise was legitimated in his role as superintendent of Seacliff Mental Asylum, later became Director of Child Welfare. Subscribing to the branch of eugenics that recognized the benefits of early environmental intervention, King argued that by rendering women better prepared for maternity, by discouraging instrumentally assisted deliveries, and by disseminating information concerning advantageous methods of feeding and training children, aims to enhance racial fitness and purity would be realised. In this way, he stated, “the main supplies of population for our asylums, hospitals, benevolent institutions, gaols and slums would be cut off at sources” (AJHR, 1906, H-7, p. 9).

The ideals of the Plunket Society were expressed at one level by efforts to differentiate educational experiences in the regular schools on a gendered basis in order to underscore the importance of motherhood as a vocation, and at another, by identifying those not considered suitable to assume the role of parenthood as “a vocation of national importance” (Shuker, 1987, p. 215). For Sullivan, King’s discourse on mothercraft, its disciplinary rituals for the expectant mother and its precise techniques for subsequent mothering, which aimed at “formation of character as much as survival of the infant,” was virtually “a modified and repackaged version of the eugenic creed in which healthy bodies were seen to

equate with healthy minds, and disciplined, regulated bodies ... [with] moral, normalized citizens” (Sullivan, 1997, pp. 104, 101).

More rigid procedures in the institutionalisation of girls continued to be advanced, and was central to the debates preceding the Reformatory Institutions Act, 1909. To gain support for legislation that was “to make provision for the establishment and control of reformatory institutions for the reception and detention of habitual inebriates and of fallen women,” Attorney-General, Dr Findlay lobbied from an overtly eugenic and economic platform, urging his fellow members to consult the records of ex-residents of the various state or charitable institutions, particularly the women, to ascertain the danger of indiscriminate release on the grounds of age (Findlay, 1909, p. 878). “In some cases,” Findlay argued, “we have released women from an industrial school at twenty-one years who were morally degenerate, and the State today has to support four and five illegitimate children of theirs in the institution without getting a brass farthing from any one of them towards that maintenance.” “Are we to allow them,” Findlay questioned, unproblematically conflating notions of mental and moral degeneracy, “to degrade themselves and to bring into life children who are tainted with their parent’s imbecility?” (Findlay, 1909, p. 1036).

Similar arguments were presented in relation to education. With the passing of the 1910 Education Act Amendment Act it became possible to detain young people in special schools beyond the age of 21 when it was considered to be in the interests of the child and the community. Benstead’s immediate concern was in having established an appropriate facility in which feeble-minded girls who were eugenically unfit could be appropriately accommodated. In suggesting that the facilities at Otekaike could be developed to that end, Benstead, as had Findlay the previous year, drew on economic as well as eugenically-based arguments to claim that an institution for feeble-minded girls was a necessity because of their propensity to become “prostitutes, criminals, drunkards, and ... prolific breeders.”

Probably some people will say that too much money is already being spent on the education of feeble-minded children; but I may point out that it is entirely false economy to delay providing for the segregation of feeble-minded girls, inasmuch as delay means a continuous increase in the numbers. ... No one who looks the question of race-betterment squarely in the face can for one moment condemn the expenditure necessary to equip an institution for the accommodation of feeble-minded girls (AJHR, 1910b, E-4, p. 12)

Benstead lauded the fact that the 1910 amendment had enabled prolonged detention of some young people who were deemed unfit for release at 21, claiming that the government of the young dominion had made inroads into curbing the excessive fecundity of the unfit (AJHR, 1912, E-4). Records of Otekaike indicate that from 1913 until 1916 girls had been accepted into the Otekaike Special School as a temporary measure until the Richmond Special School for Girls of Feeble Mind was established in Nelson in 1916. The first stage of Hogben’s plan for special education had been realised. The special classes that he had envisaged to be part of the dual special education provision were still to eventuate.