

## *Conduct Disorder: the achievement of a diagnosis'*

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*ABSTRACT This paper explores the historical shapings behind the diagnosis of conduct disorders. We take as our point of purchase oppositional ways of knowing the subject of conduct disorder—as either pathologically motivated or as the victim of a repressive mandate to control disorderly conduct. We take our cue from Foucault's suggestion that the pursuit of singular motivations behind a phenomenon is not the most fruitful means of understanding its historical appearance. We explore the emergence of the individual with conduct disorder as an appearance contingent upon dispersed agencies of government—an artefact of dispersed technologies for channelling and directing a population.*

In the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM; American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 'conduct disorder' sits in a cluster of 'disruptive', 'externalizing behavior disorders' of 'infancy, childhood and adolescence'. Disorders in this grouping also include opposition defiant disorder (ODD) and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). By the mid-1990s, these disorders had come to form one of the main reasons for children's referral to mental health agencies in the US, and also in the UK, New Zealand and Australia (Hemphill, 1996; Spender & Scott, 1996). The symptoms of conduct disorder may lead among other consequences to 'school suspension or expulsion, problems in work adjustment, legal difficulties', problems that 'may preclude attendance in ordinary schools or living in a parental or foster home' (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1994, p. 87). The child with conduct disorder is propelled along a trajectory that expels him or her beyond the disciplinary boundaries of the institutions of home, school and workplace. We would further note the overall definition of 'disorder' provided by the DSM: the disorder 'must currently be considered a manifestation of a behavioral, psychological, or biological dysfunction in the individual'. It continues: 'Neither deviant behavior (e.g. political, religious, or sexual) nor conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of a dysfunction in the individual' (APA, 1994, pp. xxi—ii). The individual is to be considered the exclusive point of origin from whom emanate signs of a disorder within.

Within an oppositional 'counter-culture' paradigm, conduct disorder could be read as simply an effect of dominant culture. An advertisement for the treatment of conduct disorders in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* in 1989 features a picture of a gang of youths sharing a bottle in an alleyway. Set a little apart from the gang, and in the foreground of the advertisement, is another youth, chin in hand, as if pausing to consider his next move, an interpretation borne out by the accompanying text: 'we work closely with each boy's psychiatrist to chart new directions which can last a lifetime'. In this specific representation, conduct disorders manifest themselves in misdirection. Taking a most literal interpretation of the representation, the youth with a conduct disorder ends up on the street—or, more specifically, in a back lane or alleyway. As part of therapy, 'patients' are 'mainstreamed' into community schools and community activities (St Francis Homes, 1989). Here, diagnosis could be represented as a scientific means of putting the lid on expressions of resistance; those not conforming to the hegemonic order of the mainstream run the risk of being pathologized as having conduct disorder. Gordon Tait (1993) has argued that the logic of this paradigm has long influenced youth workers in their approach to the empowerment of the 'street kid', understood as a victim of forces of social control.

The counter-culture paradigm rests on a particular kind of historical understanding in which the motivation for the operation of power is sought in a centralized political mandate. Lynette Finch, for example, argues that the conduct of working class youth 'on the streets' first becomes visible and becomes problematic when this population is forced into a newly levelled space of 'singular homogeneous and rational grid systems', which began to replace the 'multifunctional space' of the medieval street in the second half of the 19th century 'when Emperor Napoleon III commissioned the city planner Haussmann to carve wide boulevards arcades and parklands through the medieval fabric of Paris' (Finch, 1993, p. 76). A population is newly exposed to a bourgeois gaze that demanded a particular code of behaviour, and made deviations from that code visible. Finch argues that the modern street is deployed by the middle class in the context of a residual fear of the revolutionary barricaded spaces of old, 'combined with the new importance of the orderly footpath in commercial activity'. It is designed to shore up the economic interests of capital and the social structural arrangements upholding them. In turn, the problematic conduct of youth is understood as a form of resistance to attempts 'to remove them from their traditional socializing places in the public spaces of the street' (Finch, 1993, p. 79). Here, the case history of the street kid is rooted directly in a bourgeois anxiety to keep the lower orders in their place.

In this paper, we seek historical explanation for the possibility of the diagnosis of conduct disorder in something other than psychiatry's explicit refusal to ground its explanation in anything other than the pathological motivations of the individual. But we also seek explanation in something other than the motivations of a centralized and repressive mandate of power. We take as our cue Michel Foucault's suggestion that the pursuit of motivations behind a phenomenon, whether construed at the level of the individual, or in terms of a broader mandate 'from above', leaves aside questions about the actual 'how'—the tools taken up by various governing agencies in achieving specific aims (Foucault, 1988). This paper explores the possibility of understanding the emergence of conduct disorder in a more instrumental context; as a specific gauge of individual direction and as an artefact of dispersed technologies to do with channelling and directing a population.

We begin at the level of the street and arrive at the possibility of reading disruption and disorder 'in the individual'. That is, we treat the appearance of the individual with

conduct disorder as an achievement of dispersed agencies of government, rather than as an initial moment of encounter from where these agencies might begin their work. We turn first to some descriptions of the emergence of the modern city street which offer alternatives to the kind of account that would set the foundations of the modern city grid so firmly on a theory of political legitimation.

### Circulation

Like Finch, Paul Rabinow (1989) points to the moment of Baron Haussmann's work as a sign of the beginning of the modern city street as we know it. But Rabinow provides an alternative slant on the rationale that gives rise to the approach of the town planner to the city street, one that began to gain an administrative foothold following the arrival and subsequent reappearance of cholera in Paris, a contingency that brought to the fore the appalling conditions of housing, health, water, sewerage and streets. Rabinow quotes Saint Simonian, Victor Considérant, who described the Paris of 1848 as a 'foul hole', 'a great manufactory of putrefaction in which poverty, plague, and disease labor in concert, and air and sunlight barely enter' (Rabinow, 1989, pp. 73-74). In this context, Rabinow argues, whatever his motivations, Baron Haussmann approaches the city with the gaze, first and foremost, of the technocrat rather than the ideologue, eyeing the city 'as a technical object to be worked on, improved, and regulated' (Rabinow, 1989, p. 77). The passage raises the possibility of a more mundane account of the city grid, purely in terms of the rational application of a set of technologies to the specific problem at hand—the problem of circulation: 'Circulation meant opening wide avenues, connecting them to squares or places, and establishing further connections with smaller arteries. Haussmann's roads were straighter, longer, and wider than ever before' (Rabinow, 1989, p. 77).

Didier Gilles (1986) elaborates upon how, in the mid 19th century, 'circulation' became the catchcry of the sanitary scientist, one that pitted itself, in the fashion of progressive science, against the 'old' paradigms of stagnation and stasis. Gilles cites an 1852 paper, 'Circulation or Stagnation?' by English hygienist F.O. Ward. Ward's model for 'the constant circulation of pure water into the city, and the equally continual movement of refuse out of it' is set against the 'two congeneric forms of pestilent stagnation' the reservoir and the cesspool. Replacing the stasis of these pooled volumes, 'glazed earthenware pipes ... will dispel all waste products ... at an average speed of at least one league per hour ...' (Gilles, 1986, pp. 235-237). Gilles underscores the oddness of pitting 'the type of trajectory implied by circulation' against the movement of the city of old. At first glance the 'putrid economy' of the old city is dependent upon stasis and stagnation. But stasis, as the mark of the city of old is, Gilles argues, largely an artefact of modernist discourse. A closer investigation reveals an economy dependent upon a series of 'percolations' of seepings down and bubblings up—wherein the production of refuse and excrement become in turn the raw materials and the catalysts necessary to tan and to curry, to ferment and to fertilize (Gilles, 1986). The old city, it seems, was the epitome of circulation.

### The Conduit

So, if not circulation, what is it about the modern city plan that distinguishes it in its modernity? Gilles answers that it is circulation in its modern sense. A broader set of meanings began to emerge from the first half of the 19th century, nicely evinced in the

French imperative, 'Circulez!' ('Move on!') (Gilles, 1986, p. 242). It is a command *not* to mill around, a directive to go elsewhere, and fast. Circulation, in its modern sense has acquired the coefficients of speed and direction—the coefficients of the conduit.

The city of the *ancien regime* was, first and foremost, a fortress. But the problematic of shoring up territorial strength was one that extended to the field beyond its walls—the militarized *campagne*. The ideal territorial space of the lord was the glacis—flat and smooth, so that 'no accident troubles the eye of the maneuver', and hence the problematic of the lord was one of 'smoothing the territory'. With the development of a more complex mercantile economy, new sets of problems emerged to do with negotiating the burgeoning gap between production and consumption, a movement very different from the spread of manoeuvres across a smooth field, as the ideal display of sovereign strength: 'It is just the opposite: it is a period of weakness and vulnerability ... The merchant's ideal of displacement is an instantaneous transfer ... without loss or waste' (Gilles, 1986, p. 257). The glacis, as a means of legitimating and maintaining sovereign power, though the ideal that comes closest to the merchant's need of speed, lacks direction:

A glacis limited to the junctions between cities would be more suitable to him and could even accomplish the aims of the lord ... Easy direct routes, an escort, a convoy of armed men, a protective belt or a protected 'conduit' ... The deployment of merchant activity requires a space striated with conduits. (Gilles, 1986, p. 258)

The conduit, though it emerges from a demonstration of sovereign power, manages to displace it, to acquire its own rationality. Gilles' account allows for the possibility of thinking the conduit an effect distinct from a blanket solution to the retention of power, underscoring its productive rather than repressive effects. As the technical solution to the problem of going elsewhere fast, the conduit becomes the mark of the modern city. Nineteenth-century sanitary science would endeavour to convert the street to a conduit, bringing it under the regulative ideal of 'laminar displacement'. Far from arriving at something singular of purpose, the modern street emerges as the end point in the conversion of an imbroglio into a proliferation of new dimensions a burgeoning of specialized ordered vectors separating pedestrians from carriageway, footpaths from underground sewers, alongside progressively more and more specialist conduits for water, gas, trains, electricity and telephone (Gilles, 1986).

## Conduct

The proliferation of conduits meant new specialists under new and specific administrative agencies, responsible for maintaining orderly flow, from street sweeper to traffic warden to nuisance inspector, and so on. In Melbourne, with the constitution of the Central Board of Health in 1855, the role of nuisance inspector would first be carried out by the street constable. But in 1862 specialist police sergeants were appointed to the position (Victoria, 1856-1857; Victoria, 1862-1863). Their job was to hunt down and remove impediments to the regulative principle of good flow. The first nuisance inspector for the greater City of Sydney gives the following account of his work:

for the present week ... 1,007 loads of street sweepings, ... 25 loads of refuse from the city markets ... and 190 loads of street refuse from gully shafts ... Dead" animals for the same week, 542; of all sorts—fowls, rats, cats,

dogs, etc. I have a book [producing it] which shows everything. (Fitzgerald, 1987, p. 76)

With the principles of the conduit firmly in place, good flow could be invoked as a precondition of the street as street. It was only a street in terms of its capacity to bestow speed and direction upon that which fell in its domain. Otherwise, it was not really a street at all. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted in 1858,

parts of this city ... like parts of all other cities, may be termed 'social cesspools', the habitual resorts of vicious and filthy humanity, from which the malaria of crime and disease incessantly arises and taints the social atmosphere ... The 'Rocks' are occupied by several so-called streets ... But in reality these *streets* are ... scarcely traversable by vehicles, and destitute of all signs of forming, metalling, guttering, sewerage. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1858)

The solution to the elimination of this *social* cesspool lay in the extension of those principles that allow for the elimination of other cesspools; conduits 'for removing filthy matter which consequently lies where it is' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1858). But inasmuch as among its accumulations of 'filthy matter' the street accumulates a 'filthy humanity', the population too begins to fall under the regulative ideal of the conduit, as an impediment to good flow.

The Parkes Royal Commission, reporting in Sydney in 1860 *On the Condition of the Working Classes of the Metropolis* (New South Wales, 1860), further exemplifies the association between the principles of the conduit and the ideals of good conduct. The former serves in the report as a taken-for-granted principle through which to achieve the latter. 'I have seen', notes one witness, 'the greatest possible effect by destroying a court which was a *cul-de-sac*, by knocking down the end houses and making it a common thoroughfare' (New South Wales, 1860, para. 1435). And the science of engineering a speedy direct flow through the city will also provide the terms through which an administration can view the conduct of a particular street population of vagrant children, describing them as the problematic accumulated contents of an unchannelled pool:

The streets of Sydney are infested by a large number of vagrant children; ... the evidence abundantly shews that a large class exists to whom the possession of parents is of no value in giving direction to their lives, and who are growing up to be an incumbrance and a curse to society. In the language of one witness, they are 'floating about the streets and lanes like fish in a pond'. (New South Wales, 1860, p. 10)

The vocabulary of street conduction would also provide the generic terms 'gutter class' and 'gutter children' (Victoria, 1884), whose administration—directing them into the socially sanctioned thoroughfares that connected home to school to work—was often couched in the vocabulary of 'channelling', 'sweeping' and 'driving'. Finding a means of 'sweeping these children into our schools' (Victoria, 1884, para. 3206) would see the emergence of a new kind of street orderly—the truant officer. But unlike, say, the nuisance inspector, who could account with a deal of precision for the removal and disposal of '1,007 loads of street sweepings ... Dead animals, 542' and so on, accounting for the truant proved no straightforward matter. Melbourne truant officer Daniel Evans gives testimony, in 1884, as to his means of calculating '1,700 children not attending school':

I would stand at the corner of the street and count the children that I could see during the school hours. I would then go as fast as I could to another point

and do the same thing ... I counted the same numbers over twice. The children were as active as myself ... I would find them in Spencer Street in the morning, and at the Prahran brick-kilns in the afternoon, but though the impression on my mind is that there are those numbers, the basis on which I arrive at them is a dubious one, a doubtful one, but I have no doubt myself. (Victoria, 1884, para. 3668).

Truant officer Robert Dermott offers an even more haphazard account:

I knock about the streets and by-lanes and vacant lands, and the children I find knocking about in school hours, I ascertain their name and address, call on their parents, and find out whether they are attending school or not. (Victoria, 1884, para. 3810)

A form of calculation that relied principally on the coincidence of bodies 'knocking about' the street would never obtain a firm fix on its population. The uncertainty was compounded by the fact that, should they coincide, the truant officer had to rely upon the child for information about where and whence he or she was heading, and 'Of course very often we get anything than truthful answers' (Victoria, 1884, para. 3433).

But there was also a question of whether those 'popularly known as "gutter children"' did indeed constitute one population, in need of singular direction and being channelled, in its entirety, into the school. Some argued that such a solution created new forms of turbulence and residuum in a system whose own smooth management pivoted on moving the school population in, through a series of sequential grades, and out. 'I have had', notes truant officer Philip Salmon, 'to drive even young thieves into a State school, and because of their want of education, those children ... are sent into the first and second classes with a lot of little children, and the result is frightful' (Victoria, 1884, para. 3472). The commissioners aired the possibility of a special place for gutter children perhaps 'some school of a special nature' (Victoria, 1884). Certainly they proposed expelling the 'incurable' in a different direction: in regard to 'the vicious or incorrigible children, the power of expulsion under certain circumstances ... will tend to prevent the contamination of the better children' (Victoria, 1884, p. 22).

## Direction

The mode of operation of the truant officer is only one in a field of dispersed practices from which emerged the administrative question of how to break down an anonymous mass of 'gutter children' and obtain a firm fix on this street population. The administrative business of placing those children formally charged with a criminal act, or with being neglected, had also become the site of a series of disaggregations and redirections; the vagrant from the offender, and, among the latter, those guilty of slighter offences from those deemed incorrigible. Reformatory and industrial schools provided the administrative space and conceptual framework for intensifying the gaze upon young bodies, and recording differences. With this proliferation of distinctions, the 1880s saw the collapse of the large-scale barrack-type accommodation that existed in reformatory and industrial schools, leaving in place only a small-scale 'depot' as a place to redirect wards, along more discriminating lines. A new system of boarding out with foster families and of private charitable cottage-style 'homes' was established along lines more amenable to the management of what was coming to be understood as, first and foremost, a childish population (McCallum, 1993).

Historians have tended to treat the move from barrack-style institutions to more

'homely' environments as, self-evidently, an enlightened recognition of the very particular needs of children (McCallum, 1993). However, the very possibility of making this judgement rests on the historical and political fact that the essentially childish nature of the child is a product of 'the social administrative practices which sired it' (Minson, 1985, p. 207). Further, given the plurality of agencies dealing with the administration of children found on the streets—as truants, as vagrants and as neglected, as delinquents in more or less need of reform—their government is managed over a range of intersecting precincts, at dispersed locations, by a variety of agencies. They cannot be understood simply as playing out the functions of government on behalf of a more fundamental spirit of reform. While the gutter child might be constituted within one administrative precinct as especially deviant, he or she would emerge in another as, in essence, a child-like-any-other, a consequence of different kinds of technologies employed, producing different kinds of knowledge claims.

In the mid-1880s, at the same time as education policy was entertaining the possibility of special places to cater for the special deviance of the gutter child, there was a call from the Department of Reformatory and Industrial Schools for special schools to cater for gutter children in their essential childishness, as an alternative to institutions established for the management of deviance (Victoria, 1885). The Secretary for the Department includes an extract from Woolmer's *Great Army of the London Poor*, through which to pitch this proposal. From a 'swarm' of 'gutter children' one 'Kiddy' is singled out for interview in the backstreets of London. Kiddy's parents had deserted him. In the past he had attended school irregularly and only 'for the sake o' the grub ... If there had been tea as well as breakfast, I'd have gone reg'lr; but if yer grubs yerself ... you must stop out of school to look for it' (Victoria, 1885). As to what he would do in the future:

'Oh, I dunno', answered Kiddy, rather cheerfully than otherwise. Then, after a pause, he added, 'A coster, or summat o' that kind, if I'm lucky'.

'And if you're not lucky?', I put in.

'If I ain't lucky', he repeated hesitatingly. 'Well, if I ain't lucky, I must *take my chance. I have to live somehow*, same as others'. (Victoria, 1885, pp. 55-56)

Andrew Tolson argues that the emergence in the 19th century of the interview as a specific form of social inquiry, does the work of converting type into character, and character into the bearer of useful testimony. The interview, as first developed by Henry Mayhew, takes an active part in the production of 'social individuals', and hence the enterprise itself, Tolson argues, is involved in transforming the individual rather than simply studying it (Tolson, 1990). The interviewer imposes the conditions under which any particular character emerges as 'typical': we know the individual is representative because the interviewer tells us so. But at one and the same time, type is fashioned as a unique character, the bearer of an indelible truth that is able to be read off the individual, in terms of what governing agencies need to know.

Here, the interview singles Kiddy out from a 'swarm' of like individuals. He is typical—but he is also a unique character. And, in contrast to the truant officer's encounter with a gutter child who will tell him only falsehoods, Kiddy has a unique truth to reveal:

Unconsciously he had grasped the ultimatum of the gutter-child problem as the conditions of it stood. He felt that for him the outlook of life was *either* hard, precarious, ill-paid labour; *or* criminality with the chances inclining more to the latter than to the former. (Victoria, 1885, p. 66)

The explanation for Kiddy taking `either' this 'or' that direction is grounded in a 'childish capacity' that Kiddy's character serves to reveal:

To the undisciplined minds of gutter children, the run of the streets is a valuable and joyous privilege ... The childish capacity for enjoyment and forgetfulness is in their nature and will assert itself, causing them at times to be oblivious of the miseries of their lot, and happy in their dirt and freedom from restraint; and this is why I say it is less the sight of them as they are ... than the thought of *what they are growing up to be* that makes them objects for saddest contemplation and misery. (Victoria, 1885, p. 66)

Kiddy's revelation of his 'undisciplined mind' is a knowledge useful to an administration, helping it to think a new institutional space a special school through which to channel a 'normal' capacity for childish behaviour. It also signals the possibility of identifying the direction an individual will take *in the individual* themselves, independent of the 'gutter' from whence the child emerged. There is no certainty here, but the gutter-child begins to bear, within themselves, and to reveal to those who are expert in reading the signs of typification a capacity for this or that direction.

### **A Capacity for Waywardness**

By 1913 the first 'special school' had opened in Melbourne. It was announced in the Victorian *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid* (Office of the Public Service Commissioner, Victoria, 1912) as a 'School for Feeble-Minded Children' not the kind of place, surely, that the Secretary for the Department of Reform and Industrial Schools had in mind, forty years earlier, as catering for the quick-witted gutter child 'Kiddy', whose childish passion for freedom, left uncontrolled, is what drove him into the street. Kiddy's passion for waywardness would be preserved but it would intersect with new knowledge claims, arising from different administrative sites, whose juxtaposition produced an ambivalence about the cause of wayward conduct which served to haunt administrative agencies well into the 20th century (McCallum, 2001).

At the turn of the century, R.R. Stawell (1900) estimated that there were at least 2,000 children in Victoria receiving no education. They 'formed the bulk of the truants and incorrigibles'. Stawell drew on the 'assumption' of an English Select Committee that `childrep exist who, on the one hand, are too feeble-minded to be properly taught in ordinary elementary schools ... and on the other, are not so feeble-minded to be imbecile or idiotic'. Neither this nor that, a population of children is conceived of as existing somewhere between the administrative precincts of the education department and the idiot asylum:

They are practically ignored by the educational authorities, and are allowed to drift downwards to the gutter and the gaol, for though they are intellectually feeble, their passions are often strong, and always uncontrolled. (Stawell, 1900, p. 88)

Here uncontrolled passions and feeble-mindedness reside in the individual as both complementary and contradictory. Along with feeble-mindedness go uncontrolled passions—but then again, *despite* their feeble-mindedness, their passions are strong.

The 'basis of classification' to which Stawell alludes was to achieve formal status through the 1908 British Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded. The Commission recommended formalizing a sequence of words for the



purpose of new administrative classifications of a population hitherto managed under the umbrella term 'lunacy'. The idiot, the imbecile and the feeble-minded represented a scale, from the person who, since birth or infancy, was so 'deeply defective in mind' as to be unable to guard against 'common physical dangers', to one 'capable of earning a living under favourable circumstances, but ... incapable ... of managing himself and his affairs with ordinary prudence' (Great Britain, 1908).

A fourth category, the 'moral imbecile', included those 'who, from an early age, display some mental defect, coupled with strong vicious or criminal propensities, on which punishment has little or no deterrent effect' (Great Britain, 1908). The 'strong vicious propensities' that most mark the moral imbecile belong to a register altogether different from the degrees of 'enfeeblement' that register the other categories. The phrase 'some degree of mental defect' serves both to keep open and to diminish the possibility that the moral imbecile belongs to the scale of the mentally defective: idiot; imbecile; feeble-minded. As Cyril Burt would note some years later, the 'curious paradox of legal grammar' contained in the phrase 'some mental defect' would result in two irreconcilable definitions: 'a moral imbecile would be an imbecile whose behavior is not moral; ... he would be an intelligent person whose morals are imbecile ... The one is an immoral defective; the other is defective morally' (Burt, 1945, p. 31).

The categories of the 1908 Royal Commission were borrowed, word for word, by a committee established in 1911 to carry out a census of the mentally defective in Australia, with a view to separating them from the 'normal' school population (Central Committee of Australasian Medical Congress, 1914). But the classifications proved unwieldy and imprecise. Doctors criticized the findings as 'ridiculous', showing 'the complete fallacy of expecting teachers ... to make anything like a reliable diagnosis' (Willis, 1914). When it came to distinguishing the moral imbecile, the committee decided that it was 'impracticable to give sufficient instructions by means of memoranda to enable this class to be identified' (Central Committee of Australasian Medical Congress, 1914, p. 702). And yet doctors themselves could not afford 'to spend the time necessary to discover the mentality of each pupil in every school' (Willis, 1914).

The census had little to say about a population not captured by the school. But concern continued to be invoked publicly, and by the medical fraternity in particular, over a population who lived 'wayward and irresponsible lives', who 'follow the lines of least resistance', who 'drift' and 'roam', 'at large' and 'in our midst', a population described often as not through the vocabulary of feeble-mindedness and mental defectiveness, but remaining ill-defined, undetectable and elusive (Fishbourne, 1911; Sutton, 1911; Ernest Jones, 1913; Australasian Medical Congress, 1914; Lind, 1916).

Clearly, what was needed was a technology that would not be limited to the administrative domain of either the medical clinic or the school, and yet one capable of encasing the necessary clinical acumen needed to draw sharp distinctions between categories. Moreover, it needed to overcome the inherent incommensurability in the relationships between weak minds and strong propensities to wayward conduct. A partial solution would be found in the technology of the intelligence test, as developed by Binet and Simon in the first decade of the 20th century, though, ironically, they themselves would declare their technology unfit for the purpose of identifying the group that 'certain alienists called moral imbeciles'. They would set aside the question of the 'turbulent, vicious, rebellious to all discipline' and 'consider only ... those who are backward in intelligence' (Binet & Simon [1905], 1948, pp. 412-413). Nevertheless, the intelligence test would serve to better know those marked out by misconduct, in the negative, so to speak. The application of the technology revealed what was fast to become a truism;

problematic conduct did not necessarily correlate with intellectual capacity. Separate and distinct tools of inscription and calibration were required.

### Calibrating Conduct

Stanley Porteus, principal of the first 'special school' in Victoria, and formerly a country school teacher, recalls that, on his arrival, his first job was to sort a population of disparate types: the 'slow'; the 'rebellious or delinquent'; the 'halt and the lame'; 'even those with adenoids and those who preferred truancy to the confines of the classrooms found a place on the list'; Porteus was to be 'a psychologist of sorts' (Porteus, 1969, p. 36). Though all of his pupils were categorized as 'mentally retarded', intelligence tests served only to conceal differences 'under a blanket index of mental age'. Intelligence tests 'did not reflect temperamental or behavioural oddities' (Porteus, 1969, p. 41).

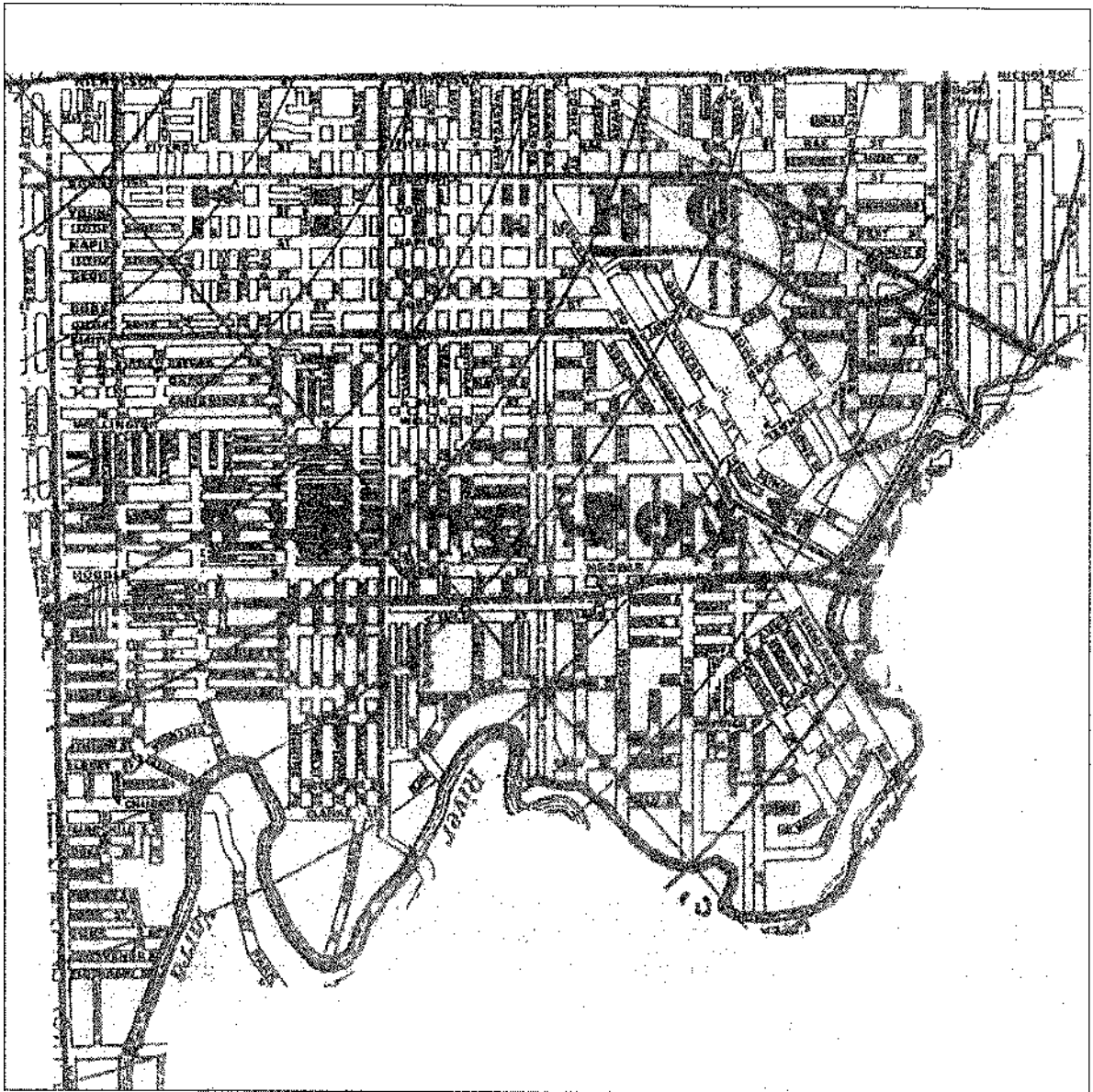
The Bell Street Special School was situated in Fitzroy, an inner urban industrial area of Melbourne (see Figure 1). Through their low Binet scores the pupils had already emerged as displaced from regular schooling, but their fit to the surrounding space of industry was a question beyond the scope of existing educational technologies. What was needed was a set of tools capable of distinguishing a group of the 'social inefficient', who were 'not necessarily mental defectives at all', but who were nevertheless rendered 'incapable of taking their part in the common life of the community' (Berry & Porteus, 1918, p. 87). How could one effectively gauge an individual's conduct, once it is lost to the space beyond the confines of the schoolyard? Take the case of the boy 'of very normal appearance' who, given any opportunity, 'would be off like a shot and be lost to the sight of traffic' (Porteus, 1969, p. 42).

On the other hand there were pupils who, despite their low Binet scores, showed themselves adept at managing in the space beyond the school. Claude was a case in point. His low Binet score sat at odds with a kind of 'practical intelligence' exhibited in, for instance, his ability to run errands in the surrounding streets, 'if a simple plan was drawn for him':

If he failed to find the place, he had sense enough to return and re-examine the map and try again. If the situation were too complicated I would send the instructor with him to correct any obvious misdirection. Incidentally, I once sent a woman teacher with Claude and both of them got lost in a maze of side streets ... A flash of insight hit me. That was what we needed a printed maze of streets which could be graded in difficulty by multiplying the blind alleys and introducing false openings. (Porteus, 1969, pp. 43-44)

And so the Porteus Maze test was born.

According to Porteus his invention of the Maze was the logical, indeed the natural outcome of his Bell Street experience: because the space surrounding the school is, in reality, a maze, it might be represented on paper as such. Michael Lynch (1985) offers an alternative way of reading the coming into being of those maps and grids that serve as the 'geometric workplace' of those who study a particular field of life. Lynch argues that the map or the grid does not simply draw a 'natural setting' into its graphic confines, but acts as an interface whereby 'mathematical space comes to dwell within the "natural" terrain'. The question we need to ask, according to Lynch, is not 'How do objective properties correspond to graphic devices for isolating and ordering those properties?'; it is 'How do graphic properties *merge* with and come to embody the "natural object"?' (Lynch, 1985, p. 43). We might apply this question to the Maze test.



**Figure 1.** Map of Fitzroy. *Source: New Map of Melbourne and Suburbs*, Melbourne, Sands and McDougall's Pty Ltd, 1915. Courtesy of State Library of Victoria.

Porteus wanted a way of measuring an individual's ability to manage in the context of 'the wider life of the community', as a test of the individual's 'social efficiency'. But his aspiration required a way of fixing social space in manageable form. The Maze offered a means of fixing the surrounding inchoate urban space surrounding the school, rendering it docile, to use Lynch's terminology. Reduced in dimension and scale, social space is inscribed by Porteus as a small plane, striated with a series of conduits. Of this social space, the street is all that is preserved, and of the street, the regulative ideal of the conduit—speedy, direct conduction is enhanced and reified as the property that counts. Within this reified social space, conduct becomes a matter of situating one's pencil at the entrance of the conduit and negotiating the few inches of plane within its confines in as fast and direct a fashion as possible. That is, 'social conduct' too is rendered docile—made linear, tractable, calculable and able to be calibrated: 'The next step was to devise a series graduated in difficulty; in short, a scale' (Porteus, 1969, p. 45). (See Figure 2.)

But the Maze also acts as an interface, allowing the properties of the conduit to merge

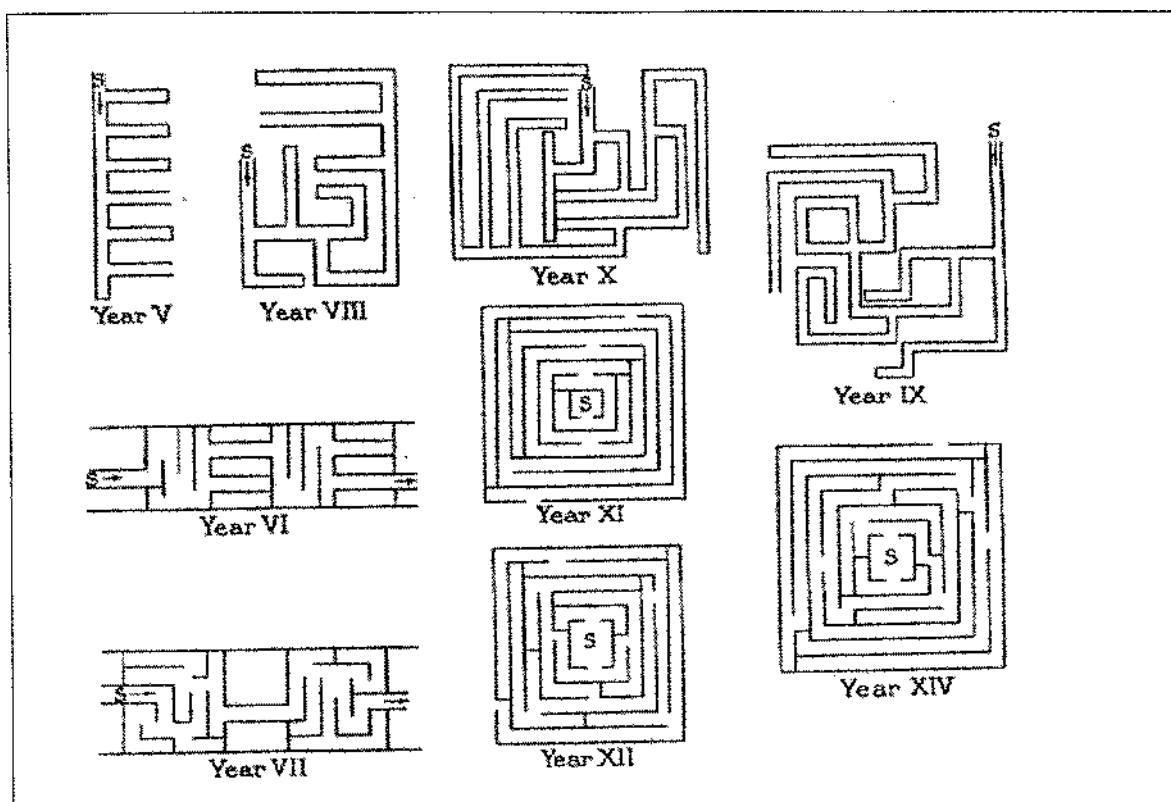


Figure 2. The Porteus Maze. Source: Stanley Porteus, *The Psychology of a Primitive People*, London, Edward Arnold, 1931, p. 353.

with those of the individual who enters its space. The conduit's capacity—to direct elsewhere, with speed—is translocated, through the maze, into a property of the individual. The individual emerges from the maze with a newly embodied, newly measurable capacity for conduct a capacity 'to trace with his eye the course before he committed himself to it' (Porteus, 1969, p. 44).

Porteus's act of aligning conduct with the regulative ideal of the street does not, in effect, clamp down on conduct. Its effect is quite the opposite. It offered a positive knowledge of those hitherto identified 'in the negative' as having a propensity to wander the paths of least resistance. Those who had eluded categorization, being neither this nor that, could now be fashioned as a new positive category of being. The Maze offered the possibility of reconciling contradictory accounts of moral and intellectual defect. It reduced waywardness to a discrete, tractable form, so that it could feature alongside but separate from a capacity for intelligence.

The Maze test juxtaposes itself to an index of intelligence; it offers 'a measure of those abilities that were not adequately tested by the Binet' (Porteus, 1918, p. 62). At the same time, it offers a return of that group 'set aside' by Binet—the missing page, so to speak, that can be slipped alongside a register of intelligence, as complementary, but distinct. A newly composite subject with a capacity for intelligence and a capacity for 'social efficiency' could emerge. Each capacity would contain a quantum measure, and each would be calibrated in a way fitted to tasks arising from the aspirations of specific administrative sites.

Further, Porteus's work represents an exemplary instance of the opening up of a vast psycho-educational field, understood as an internal topography, but colonized by an accumulated assemblage of expertise. It was an assemblage aligned upon something of a common plane upon which the doctor, the psychologist and the educationist could

collaborate in charting a course through which to source the cause of disorderly conduct 'in the individual'.

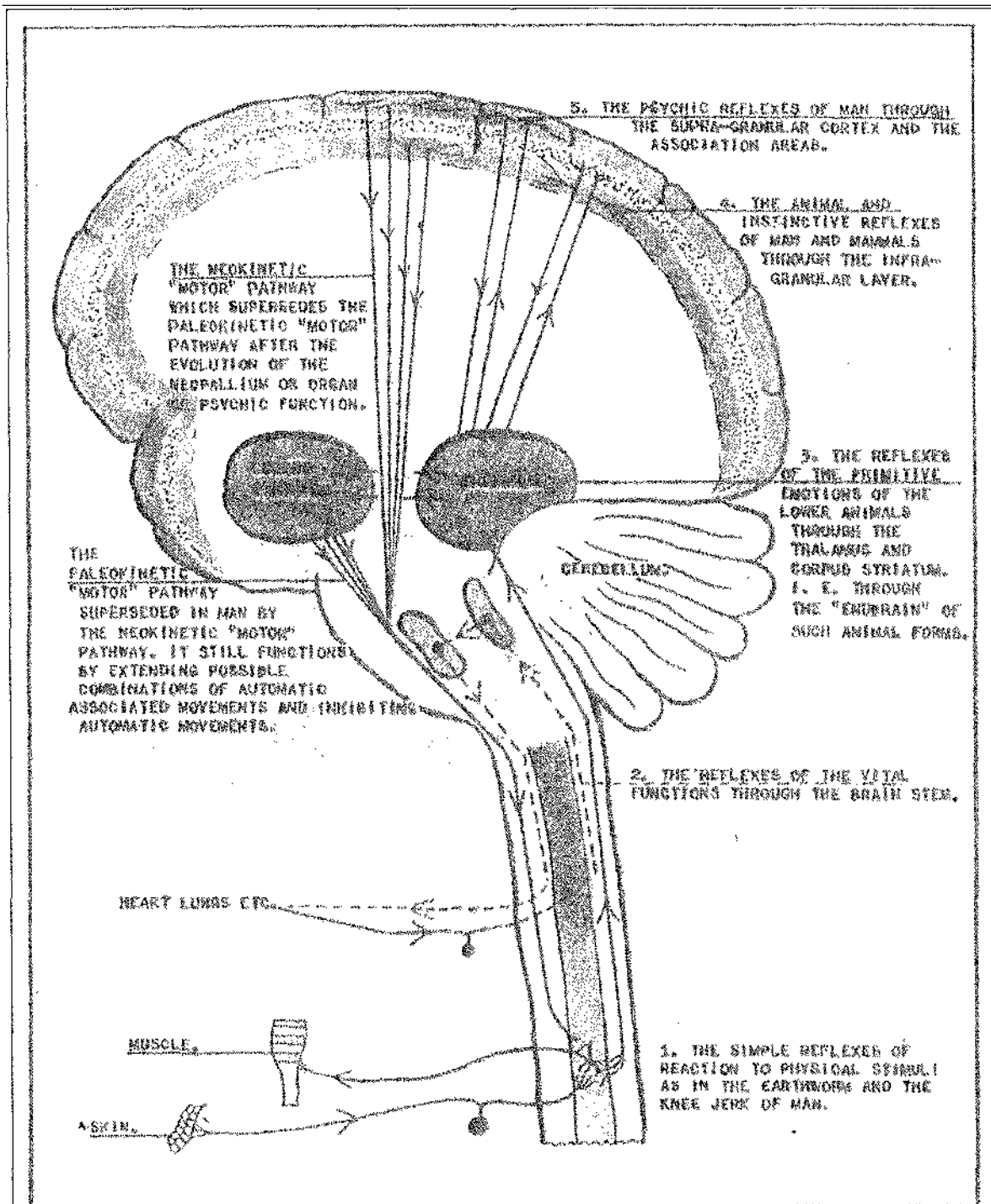
### **Achieving a Diagnosis**

Psychologist-of-sorts Stanley Porteus would align himself and his Maze test with anatomist, histologist, 'psychiatrist' and influential member of the Victorian branch of the British Medical Association, R.J.A. Berry (1928). In Australia, Berry pursued a much publicized interest in cranial capacity well into the 1920s, probing Aboriginal heads in pursuit of the anatomical key to 'the infinitely greater "intellectuality" of the higher races' (Berry, 1910-1911), and carrying his social Darwinist pursuits into a study of the cubic capacity of the skulls of criminals, 'a class. ... presumably of an inferior position in the human scale of society' (Berry & Buchner, 1913). He was also an outspoken advocate of the separation of the feeble-minded so as to prevent the reproduction and proliferation of the socially inefficient, and here again his head callipers were on hand (Melbourne Paediatric Society, 1925).

In the first decade of the 20th century biometricians such as Karl Pearson (1906-1907) and his associate Alice Lee had proclaimed success in convincing the 'old school' that there was no 'obvious relationship between skull capacity and current appreciation of intellectual ability'. The key to differences in 'brain power' lay not in its volume but in 'the complexity of the convolutions of the brain, and the variety and efficiency of its commissures' (Lee, 1901, p. 259). Not surprisingly, Berry has been positioned as a doggedly persistent eugenicist ideologue who pursued a 'reductionist methodology, despite a growing critique of his methods (Cawte, 1986). And although it is true that throughout his work Berry would maintain an interest in skull size as a primary signifier of what lay beneath, the significance of what lay beneath the skull would change over the course of his investigations. Pearson's and Lee's gesture to the topographical complexity of the brain rather than its mass signals, for Berry, a need to reintroduce the cubic capacity of the brain, rather than to depart from it, since 'increased complexity of cerebral convolutions means an increased number of brain cells ... and a corresponding increase in the size of the brain' (Berry & Buchner, 1913, p. 242).

From a preoccupation with the mass of the brain, Berry would turn to the individual brain cell as the basic unit of calculation—the 'really one important item, and it is very small and very elusive' (Berry, 1925). Increased size would correlate with 'an increased number of brain cells' but it would also correlate with an increase in the number and complexity of 'axones of cells' (Berry & Buchner, 1913, p. 242)—those long cytoplasmic conduits characteristic only of the neuron, and cells with 'well-established long conducting neurons' would count for more than others (Melbourne Paediatric Society, 1925, p. 352). The number, extension and complexity of these conducting pathways, rendered laminar and insular in their myelin sheath, would determine the thickness of that layer of the brain responsible for carrying out 'higher level' cerebral functions (Berry, 1918). In short, the longer and more complex the conducting pathways along which impulses must travel, the higher the psychic functioning of the individual (Berry, 1924; 1925). (See Figures 3 and 4.)

The delay of response afforded by the degree of complexity of the conducting pathways and the time taken to navigate them served as the anatomical ground that could bring under biological arrest 'prudence, forethought, planning capacity' as the preconditions of moral conduct. Those with an impulse to waywardness, who shortcut the sanctioned route from home to school to work and as a consequence were 'largely directed into



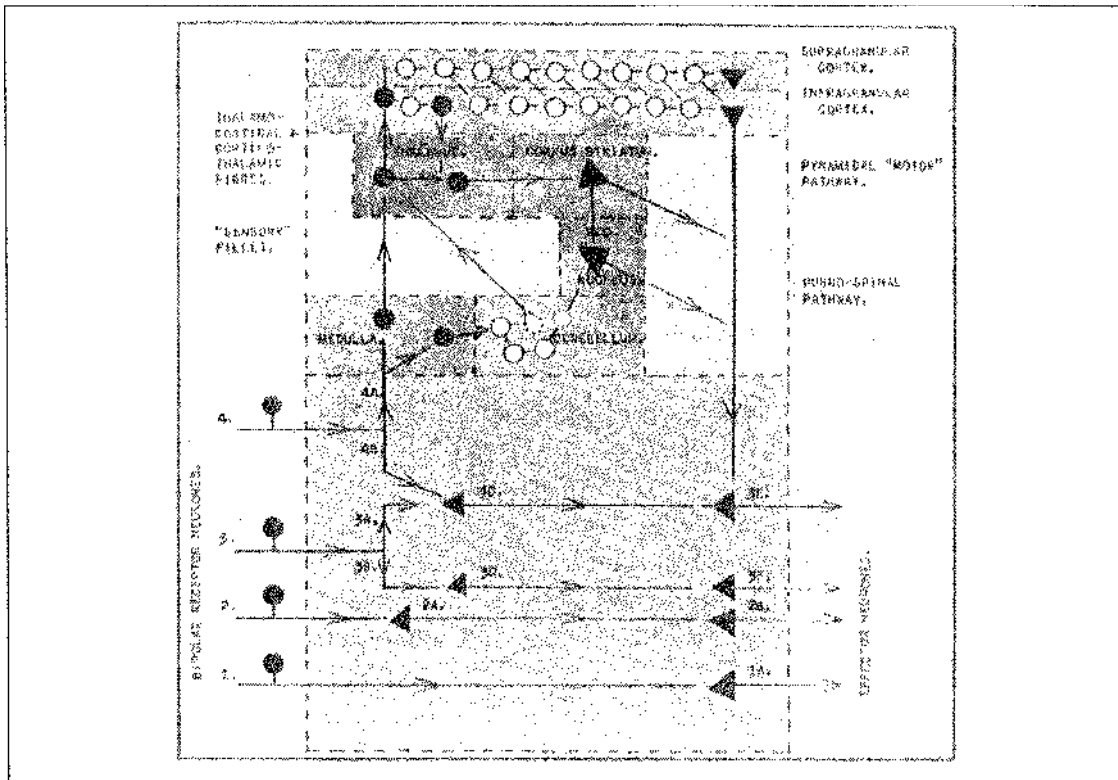
**Figure 3.** 'A diagram to show the five main sites of neuronc reflex arcs in the central nervous system.' *Source:* Richard J.A. Berry, *Practical Anatomy*, Vol. 3, Melbourne, Robertson & Mullens, 1922, p. 195.

channels of delinquency' (Stewart, 1920), could now be accounted for in terms of a similarly wayward impulse, internal to their own biology, the result of a truncated deviation from the length and complexity of the normal neuronal route.

Berry and Porteus both inscribed a maze of conduits of graduating complexity; both mapped onto conduct of graduating complexity—from wayward and impulsive to prudent and planned. An equivalence could be established between those conduits

internal to a biological topography and those which made up the social grid, effectively

We do not suggest that the work of Porteus and Berry alone provided anything like a direct route to the contemporary diagnosis of 'conduct disorder', or to the kind of



**Figure 4.** 'A diagram showing (a) the various types of neuronal reflex arcs in the central nervous system, and (b) that psychological manifestations of "mind" are to be sought in combinations of neuronal arcs of a complex pattern.' *Source:* Richard J.A. Berry, *Practical Anatomy*, Vol. 3, Melbourne, Robertson & Mullens, 1922, p. 49.

creating a continuum of social, psychological and anatomical space, and allowing the investigator to interface an internal and external topography. Berry provides a demonstration of how, through the correct alignment of technologies, the expert might chart such a course. He cites an example of a ten-year old boy who 'could not be left alone with impunity and always required watching. He has twice wandered away from school' (Berry, 1924). Through the application of head measurements, the Binet—Simon test and the Porteus Maze test, and by 'entering the same on the chart', a 'final inference' is drawn:

that, in this case we are dealing with a boy of underneurotic development who is incapable of exercising control over his neurotic effector responses. That this inference is correct is supported by the failure of the boy at the Porteus maze test and is borne out by a personal history that he is 'mischievous, destructive and wants constant watching ...' The boy has no planning capacity, no foresight ... It is therefore quite possible that the patient may some day find his way either into a police court or a mental hospital. (Berry, 1924, p. 399)

The investigator moves from the street, inside the child's head, wherein to claim the source of disorder, and then back out again, re-placing a disordered individual in a problematic future beyond the disciplinary boundaries of the institutions of home, school and workplace.

**Conduct Disorder**



institution that figured in the representation with which we began. Their work represents an instance of the emergence of an array of technologies that offered a bureaucracy the possibility of viewing the child with problem conduct as separate and distinct from administrative concerns to do with feeble-mindedness and educability. The Victorian government reported, in 1933, on the creation of Travancore as a special school for 'the reception of children who, although mentally defective, are capable of receiving benefit from special instruction' (Victoria, 1933). It was staffed by teachers; a nurse and medical services were supplied by Royal Park Mental Hospital. The next year it is described as a home for children with a particular 'intelligence range', which should be developed as 'a clinic for feeble-minded and problem children' (Victoria, 1934). In 1938, it was proposed to appoint a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a social worker to carry out the study of mental deficiency and additional staff were proposed, based on suggestions that the clinic be made available for the examination of 'problem children and young delinquents' brought before the courts (Victoria, 1938). By 1940 Travancore had come to specialize in 'the examination of problem children', for the majority of whom mental defect was not understood as the root cause of 'behaviour problems', now conceptualized as 'often grounded on failure and mal-adjustment in school, employment or community life' (Victoria, 1939).

The following year's reports on Travancore records that 'whilst the clinic was established to deal mainly with the conditions of mental deficiency', it had 'many potentialities in the prevention and treatment of many and varied types of emotional mal-adjustment, which are frequently the forerunners of delinquency, crime, nervous and mental disorder and social inefficiency'. A widening of activities in this direction was deemed 'very desirable' (Victoria, 1940).

By 1945, the priorities Travancore gave its activities had about-faced since its original establishment, its functions having 'developed rapidly in the treatment of nervous disorders and behavioural problems in both normal and retarded children and adolescents' (Victoria, 1945). It was strongly recommended that the 'stable mentally retarded' be sent elsewhere, leaving Travancore to specialize 'as a guidance and treatment hostel' for children with 'severe conduct disorders' (Victoria, 1946).

## **Conclusion**

We began with a polarization of opinion, in which the problem of disorder in youth is conceived on the one hand as an individual's struggle against the imposition of a punitive social space, and on the other as a struggle emanating from a disordered 'psychological or biological' space within the individual. We suggest that such dichotomies are not reducible to prior, fundamental antagonisms between the biological or the psychological and the social domains. Rather, they are produced by means of common technologies of calculation and the mundane administrative aspirations that underpin them. Taking a particular category of 'disruptive behaviour disorder' as a case in point, we have looked at the child with a 'conduct disorder' as an artefact shaped from shifting and dispersed administrative needs to govern particular populations. The possibility of thinking and acting upon modern categories of disorder arose from governmental attempts to know and understand disruption and disorder by means of techniques of calculability and through the deployment of an array of technologies that carved out a new psychobiological space 'in the individual' for the operation of power.

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## NOTES

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