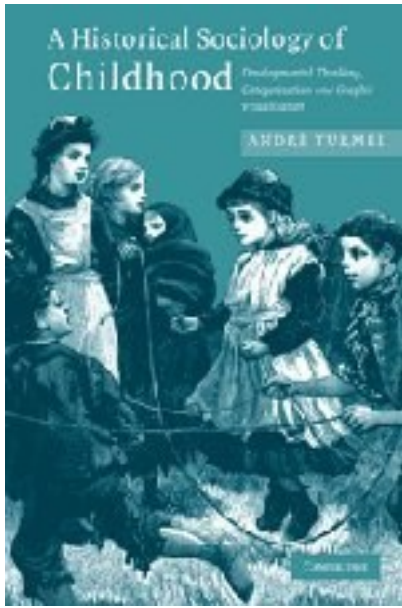


A Historical Sociology of Childhood



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著者:Turmel, Andre

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What constitutes a 'normal' child? Throughout the nineteenth century public health and paediatrics played a leading role in the image and conception of children. By the twentieth century psychology had moved to the forefront, transforming our thinking and understanding. Andre Turmel investigates these transformations both from the perspective of the scientific observation of children (public hygiene, paediatrics, psychology and education) and from a public policy standpoint (child welfare, health policy, education and compulsory schooling). Using detailed historical accounts from Britain, the USA and France, Turmel studies how historical sequential development and statistical reasoning have led to a concept of what constitutes a 'normal' child and resulted in a form of standardization by which we monitor children. He shows how western society has become a child-centred culture and asks whether we continue to base parenting and teaching on a view of children that is no longer appropriate.

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