



Skehill, Caroline (2004): History of the Present of Child Protection and Welfare Social Work in Ireland. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, pp. 377.

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This unique book has at least three significant strengths. First, it offers an interesting angle on Irish social history and how social work and child protection and welfare services have been developed from the 1860s to the 1990s. Secondly, the author uses the 'history of the present' method of Michel Foucault in a promising manner, incorporating his concepts of archaeo-logy, genealogy and discourse. Most of all she has succeeded in further developing Michel Foucault's concepts and strategies of writing. Although this is a national history, she has made a remarkable contribution to social work research. Her conceptual and methodological innovations are undoubtedly fully applicable to other social and societal contexts. This book is recommendable to those who want to implement genealogical analysis in their own research. Thirdly, her skill in writing and the way she renders the difficult language and concepts of Michel Foucault accessible means that here is a book that can also be read with ease by those whose mother tongue is not English. From the viewpoint of women and women's research the focus in this book is minor but if you are interested in social work history and genealogical analysis, this is a book you have to read!

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