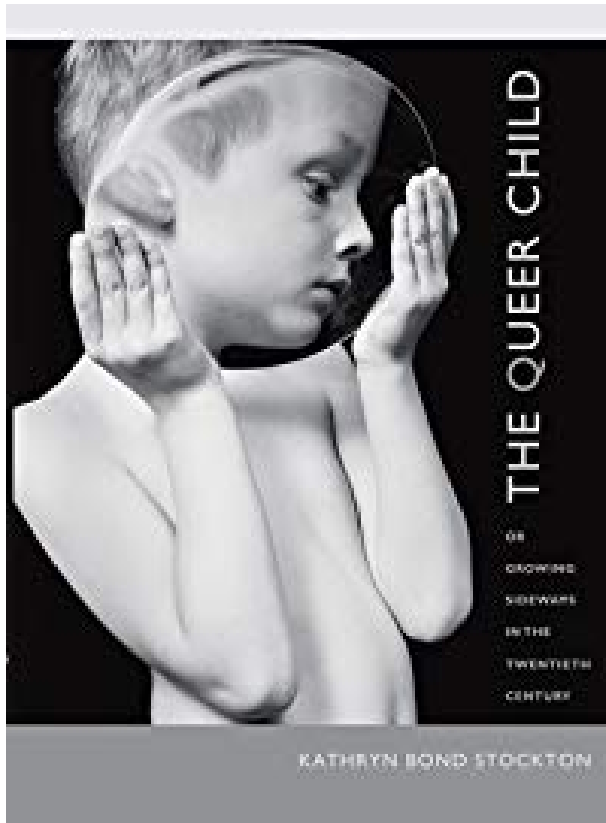


# The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century



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Children are thoroughly, shockingly queer, as Kathryn Bond Stockton explains in *The Queer Child*, where she examines children's strangeness, even some children's subliminal "gayness," in the twentieth century. Estranging, broadening, darkening forms of children emerge as this book illuminates the child queered by innocence, the child queered by color, the child queered by Freud, the child queered by money, and the grown homosexual metaphorically seen as a child (or as an animal), alongside the gay child. What might the notion of a "gay" child do to conceptions of the child? How might it outline the pain, closets, emotional labors, sexual motives, and sideways movements that attend all children, however we deny it? Engaging and challenging the work of sociologists, legal theorists, and historians, Stockton coins the term "growing sideways" to describe ways of growing that defy the usual sense of growing "up" in a linear trajectory toward full stature, marriage, reproduction, and the relinquishing of childish ways. Growing sideways is a mode of irregular growth involving odd lingerings, wayward paths, and fertile delays. Contending that children's queerness is rendered and explored best in fictional forms, including literature, film, and television, Stockton offers dazzling readings of works ranging from novels by Henry James, Radclyffe Hall, Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes, and Vladimir Nabokov to the movies *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *The Hanging Garden*, *Heavenly Creatures*, *Hoop Dreams*, and the 2005 remake of *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. The result is a fascinating look at children's masochism, their interactions with pedophiles and animals, their unfathomable, hazy motives (leading them at times into sex, seduction, delinquency, and murder), their interracial appetites, and their love of consumption and destruction through the alluring economy of candy.