



Lost and Othered Children in Contemporary Cinema

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Children have been a part of the cinematic landscape since the silent film era, yet children are rarely a part of the theoretical landscape of film analysis. *Lost and Othered Children in Contemporary Cinema*, edited by Debbie C. Olson and Andrew Scahill, seeks to remedy that oversight. Throughout the over one-hundred year history of cinema, the image of the child has been inextricably bound to filmic storytelling and has been equally bound to notions of romantic innocence and purity. This collection reveals, however, that there is a body of work that provides a counter note of darkness to the traditional portraits of sweetness and light. Particularly since the mid-twentieth century, there are a growing number of cinematic works that depict childhood as a site of knowingness, despair, sexuality, death, and madness. *Lost and Othered Children in Contemporary Cinema* challenges notions of the innocent child through an exploration of the dark side of childhood in contemporary cinema. The contributors to this multidisciplinary study offer a global perspective that explores the multiple conditions of marginalized childhood as cinematically imagined within political, geographical, sociological, and cultural contexts.

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Editorial Review

Review

This new volume offers insightful analyses of troubled and troubling children in the movies. Olson and Scahill have collected an impressive array of scholarship, focusing not just on how the child is figured in Western horror and fantasy traditions, but also within African, Asian, and Middle Eastern contexts. This volume will be of interest to anyone studying film genre, the sociocultural constructions of childhood, and the vagaries of globalization. (Harry Benshoff, University of North Texas)

The explosion of childhood studies benefits all of us, directing us to see familiar texts in new ways. Why does the figure of the lost or different child affect us? Ambiguous, threatening, pitiful, too familiar...these children wander through our films out of and into our imaginations. *Lost and Othered Children in Contemporary Cinema* is an excellent and provocative collection that will stimulate further insights, and hopefully more research, into the use and abuse of the figure of the child. (Janet Staiger, University of Texas at Austin)

Here is an excellent, invigorating collection dealing with children in the cinema, specifically, children who do not seem to fit into the normal family scenario. Olson (Univ. of Texas, Arlington) and Scahill (George Mason Univ.) have collected a wide variety of essays that deal with, among other things, children in horror films; "adolescent outsiders" in modern British cinema; Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*; the Omen series of horror films; the controversial Harmony Korine film *Gummo*; and Ken Loach's film *Sweet Sixteen*. Also discussed are *The Birds*, *City of Lost Children*, and other key films that offer fragmented, disturbing visions of childhood in the cinema. The lack of stills is a drawback, but the essays are clear, well written, and absolutely knowledgeable (vis-à-vis the various films, filmmakers, and thematic obsessions they pursue). The book as a whole offers the reader a comprehensive overview of the children who really "don't belong" anywhere, often through no fault of their own. This is meticulously detailed scholarship covering a wide range of topics. A valuable resource for those interested in this aspect of film aesthetics and history.
Summing Up: Highly recommended. (*CHOICE*)

About the Author

Debbie C. Olson is a PhD candidate at Oklahoma State University and lecturer at University of Texas at Arlington.

Andrew Scahill is assistant professor in the Department of English at George Mason University.

Users Review

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Preston Sloan:

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