



Bad Seeds and Holy Terrors: The Child Villains of Horror Film (SUNY series, Horizons of Cinema)

Dominic Lennard

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Examines the complexities and contradictions that arise when the monsters in the movies are children.

Since the 1950s, children have provided some of horror's most effective and enduring villains, from dainty psychopath Rhoda Penmark of *The Bad Seed* (1956) and spectacularly possessed Regan MacNeil of *The Exorcist* (1973) to psychic ghost-girl Samara of *The Ring* (2002) and adopted terror Esther of *Orphan* (2009). Using a variety of critical approaches, including those of cinema studies, cultural studies, gender studies, and psychoanalysis, *Bad Seeds and Holy Terrors* offers the first full-length study of these child monsters. In doing so, the book highlights horror as a topic of analysis that is especially pertinent socially and politically, exposing the genre as a site of deep ambivalence toward—and even hatred of—children.

“Deftly organized, elegantly written, and graced throughout with numerous stills and frame blowups, *Bad Seeds and Holy Terrors* has something to offer both the lay reader and the scholar.” — *CHOICE*

“This is impeccably well researched and presented. It holds its own at the top of film studies scholarship. Sprightly in its survey across key areas of cultural anxiety and able to draw on a range of lucid examples, Lennard produces sophisticated and complex extended analyses where necessary. A pleasure to read.” — Linda Ruth Williams, University of Southampton, United Kingdom

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