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**An in-depth study of children's images in works
of audiovisual art in the genre of horror**

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**Ґрунтовне дослідження дитячих образів
у творах аудіовізуального мистецтва в жанрі хоррор**



Баталіна Х. Ф. Дитина як втілення зла у фільмах жахів ХХ–ХХІ ст. : монографія. Київ : Вид. центр КУК, 2023. 216 с.

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[The Child as the Embodiment of Evil in Horror Films of the XX-XXI Centuries]. Kyiv: KUK Publishing Center.

In 2023, the publishing centre of the Kyiv University of Culture published an interesting and perhaps unusual monograph by Khrystyna Batalina entitled *The Child as the Embodiment of Evil in Horror Films of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*. This scholar's study of children's images in the world and Ukrainian works of audiovisual art in the horror genre will help to reveal the deep aspects of human psychology and cultural stereotypes associated with the depiction of children in horror films as the embodiment of evil and its accidental carriers. While babies are mostly associated with innocence and safety, they can also sometimes represent threat and fear, particularly in the context of verbal and on-screen narratives.

The book contains eleven chapters: "Philosophical and Aesthetic Aspects of the Embodiment of the Defining Categories of Horror in Cinema" (Chapter 1), "Differentiating Horror Films of the Last Third of the Twentieth and the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century" (Chapter 2), "Ethno-cultural Foundations for Interpreting the Image of a Child as a Potential

Embodiment of Evil" (Chapter 3), "Mysterious Pregnancy as a Major Thematic Aspect of the 1960s" (Chapter 4), (Chapter 5), The Image of the Child Villain on the Soviet Screen (Chapter 6), The 1990s: Reasonable Cruelty (Chapter 7), Context and Interpretations of the 2000s: Child Victim and Child Manipulator" (Chapter 8), "Children from the Otherworld and Changes/Replacement of the Child's Essence" (Chapter 9), "A Scary Tale: Manifestations in the Genre Context of Horror" (Chapter 10), "Images of Children in Neo-Cuffs and Their Hollywood Rereading" (Chapter 11). The book is richly illustrated with stills from the films discussed in the text.

Genres in audiovisual art have been studied by many Ukrainian scholars, including H. Chmil (Myslavskiy, Chmil, Bezruchko, and Cherkasova, 2020; Myslavskiy, Chmil, Bezruchko, and Markhaichuk, 2020; Myslavskiy, Chmil, Bezruchko, and Kupriichuk, 2021), V. Myslavskiy (Myslavskiy, Chmil, Bezruchko, and Cherkasova, 2020; Myslavskiy, Chmil, Bezruchko, and Markhaichuk, 2020; Myslavskiy and Bezruchko, 2021; Myslavskiy, Chmil, Bezruchko, and Kupriichuk, 2021),

O. Bezruchko et. al, 2020; Bezruchko and Kachmar, 2021; Bezruchko and Sukhin, 2023), I. Gavran (Bezruchko, Gavran, Hrabarchuk, Kostiuk, and Kot, 2020; Gavran, Levchenko and Pasichnyk, 2021), S. Kotliar (Kotliar, Mykhalov and Pereiaslavets, 2022), A. Medvedieva and Chernenko, 2021, O. Levchenko, Gavran, Levchenko and Pasichnyk, 2021; V. Mikhailov, Kotliar, Mykhalov and Pereiaslavets, 2022, G. Kot (Bezruchko, Gavran, Hrabarchuk, Kostiuk and Kot, 2020), N. Kostiuk (Bezruchko, Gavran, Hrabarchuk, Kostiuk and Kot, 2020, Batalina and Kostiuk, 2022), O. Hrabarchuk (Bezruchko, Gavran, Hrabarchuk, Kostiuk and Kot, 2020), V. Kupriichuk (Myslavskiyi, Chmil, Bezruchko and Kupriichuk, 2021), N. Markhaichuk (Myslavskiyi, Chmil, Bezruchko, and Markhaichuk, 2020), N. Cherkasova (Myslavskiyi, Chmil, Bezruchko and Cherkasova, 2020), and others.

However, no one in Ukraine, except for Kh. Batalina has studied the horror genre so thoroughly over the years. This can be confirmed by only a part of her publications listed below, which, as the titles suggest, are identical to the topic under study. Articles by Khrystyna Batalina (Kostiuk, Sichna) in Ukrainian professional Art Studies journals ("Researches of the Fine Arts: Theatre. Music. Cinema", "Almanac of Ukrainian Studies", "Academic Bulletin of Kyiv National Karpenko-Karyi University of Theatre, Cinema and Television", "Bulletin of the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts. Series: Audiovisual Art and Production" etc.): "On the History of the Creation and Interpretation of One of the Myths of Modern Cinematic 'Horror'" (Kostiuk, 2011b), "On the History of the Development of the Image of the Child in Horror Films" (Kostiuk, 2012a), "Prerequisites for the Emergence of the Image of the

Child as a Carrier of Evil in Contemporary Ukrainian and Russian Cinema" (Kostiuk, 2012d), "Mystical Motifs in the Works of Yuri Ilyenko" (Kostiuk, 2013d), "Screen Arts as a Means of Forming Modern Mythological Consciousness" (Kostiuk, 2013c), "Italian Horror of the 60s: Irrational Horror on the Screen" (Kostiuk, 2016c), and others.

Articles in foreign professional journals on art history and audiovisual art ("European philosophical and historical discourse"): "The Concept of Evil in the Image of a Child: Cinematic Variations in Horror Films" (January, 2017a), etc.

Chapters in collective monographs ("Cinema Studies, Cultural Studies and Art Studies (Social and Communication Aspect)", "Actual Issues of Screen Creativity", "Scientific and Practical Research on the Development of the Creative Process in Various Art Forms (Cinema, Television, Theatre, Media)", "Genesis of Ideas and Dynamics of Screen Arts Development", "Art Studies. Social Communications. Media Pedagogy"): "Features of the screen interpretation of the mythology of the 'evil' child within the horror genre in the 1990s-2000s" (Kostiuk, 2013e), "Genres of cinema" (Kostiuk, 2013a), "Contemporary genre cinema as a carrier of mythological principles" (Kostiuk, 2014), "Problems of genre definition of horror: Peculiarities of Differentiation and Multiple Interpretations" (Kostiuk, 2016f), "Screen Interpretation of the Monster Child Motif in the First Decade of the 2000s" (Kostiuk, 2016b), etc.

Publications in academic journals on audiovisual art ("Ukrainian Cinema: Past, Present, Prospects", "Prospects for the Development of Screen Arts in Ukraine", "Cultural and Artistic Environment: Creativity and Technology", "Chubasiv Readings", "Prospects for the Development of

Audiovisual Art", "Discursive Dimension of Contemporary Art: Dialogue of Cultures"): "The Impact of Screen Violence on Child and Adolescent Cruelty" (Kostiuk, 2011a), "Prospects for the Development of Horror in Ukraine" (Kostiuk, 2011c), "'Negative' Roles of Ivan Mykolaichuk" (Kostiuk, 2012c), "Violence as a Screen Technology" (Kostiuk, 2012b), "The Problem of Violence on the Contemporary TV Screen" (Kostiuk, 2012e), "Genre Cinema as a Means of Contemporary Mythmaking" (Kostiuk, 2013b), "On the Problem of the Genre Definition of Horror" (Kostiuk, 2015a), "The Italian Gothic Film" (Kostiuk, 2015b), "Categories of the Terrible and the Horrible in Horror" (Kostiuk, 2016d), "The Conservatism of the Horror Film: The Problem of Multiculturalism" (Kostiuk, 2016e), "On the Issue of Distinguishing the Genres of Thriller, Horror and Fantasy in Contemporary Cinema" (Kostiuk, 2016a), "Archetypal Fears in Contemporary Horror Film" (Kostiuk, 2017), "The Concept of the Evil-Bound Child in Japanese Neo-Classical Film" (Sichna, 2017b), etc.

The dissertation "The Image of the Child as a Central Character in Horror Films of the Second Half of the 20th – Early 21st Century" ("Sichna, 2018b") for the degree of Candidate of Arts in the speciality 17.00. 04 "Cinema, Television", Khrystyna Sichna (Batalina) prepared her thesis during her Master's degree ("Development of the Child's Image as a Negative Character within the Horror Genre") and postgraduate studies at the Department of Cinematography of the Institute of Screen Arts of the I. K. Karpenko-Kyiv National University of Theatre, Cinema and Television. Karpenko-Kary, and then brilliantly defended her thesis on 30 January 2019 at the Dissertation Council D 26.227.02 at the Rylsky Institute of Art

History, Folklore and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

According to the information from the abstract ("Sichna, 2018a"), the official opponents of the thesis defence were well-known scholars in Ukraine: Doctor of Philology, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Journalism at the Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University Oleksandr Kholod and PhD in Art Studies, Associate Professor, Press Secretary of the NATO Representation to Ukraine Oksana Musiienko. Khrystyna Sichna's (Batalina's) thesis was supervised by Oleksandr Bezruchko, Doctor of Study of Art, Professor, Professor of the Department of Cinema and Television Arts at the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Vice-Rector for Research at the Kyiv University of Culture.

After defending her dissertation, Kh. Batalina continued to work on the above topics, significantly supplementing and expanding her previous research (as an example, we will cite only two articles in English published in the scientific professional journal of Ukraine on Audiovisual Art and Production: "On the Question of Differentiating the Main Philosophical and Aesthetic Categories of Horror Films" (Sichna, 2019) and "Violence in the Context of the History of World Cinema" (Batalina and Kostiuk, 2022).

As a logical conclusion of her work over more than a decade and a half, Khrystyna Batalina (2023) published a long-awaited individual monograph *The Child as the Embodiment of Evil in Horror Films of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries* at the Kyiv University of Culture.

It should be noted that this book could have been published much earlier, but the COVID-19 pandemic and then the full-scale war in Ukraine delayed its release. However, despite all the troubles and dif-

faculties of our turbulent times, the management of the Kyiv University of Culture cares not only about the quality and stability of the educational process at this higher education establishment but also makes great efforts to encourage its employees to engage in scientific research, including the publication of articles and books. Khrystyna Batalina's monograph *The Child as the Embodiment of Evil in Horror Films of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries* is a clear confirmation of this work.

The book under review by Khrystyna Batalina will help fill in the gaps in Ukrainian

film studies, focusing on the specifics of under-researched genres and types of films. The relevance of this study lies in its ability to highlight and analyse under-researched phenomena and trends in world and national cinema, as well as to make a significant contribution to the development of film studies in Ukraine.

In conclusion, I would like to recommend Khrystyna Friedrichivna Batalina's monograph *The Child as the Embodiment of Evil in Horror Films of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* to audiovisual art and production professionals and anyone interested in the history and theory of cinema.

Keywords: genre; horror; child; image; work; audiovisual art; cultural studies; character; evil

Ключові слова: жанр; жах; дитина; зображення; робота; аудіовізуальне мистецтво; культурологія; характер; зло

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