



# The Revolting Child in Horror Cinema: Youth Rebellion and Queer Spectatorship

*Andrew Scahill*

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Drawing together film theory, queer theory, childhood studies, and reception studies, *The Revolting Child in Horror Cinema* examines the "revolting child" in such films as *The Bad Seed*, *Village of the Damned*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist*, and *The Omen*. It argues that monstrous child stands in for the queer child by taking on its various incarnations: the child with a secret, the child "taken over" by monstrosity in adolescence, the changeling child, and the cabal of queer youth. The child monster is both revolting and repellent, and yet is also a body in revolt against patriarchal institutions like state, family, and religion. As such, they offer a variety of subject positions for the spectator: from a pedophobic rage directed at children to a queer identification with the revolting child and against a heteronormative culture. Indeed, the cinema of revolting children allows us to have our child and beat it too.



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