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Tema:

Det estetiskes betydning i medier, kunst og kultur for barn.

Språk:

Presentasjonen vil bli holdt på norsk med Power Point presentasjon

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The evil Child

In his book *The Cute and the Cool* Gary Cross traces the changes in attitudes towards children in the US back to the Great Depression just as they appeared in the representation of children in the movies from the 1940s and 50s. During the years of the depression people feared that the child's innocence was endangered as the children of the modern urban society did not get to experience the same kind of childhood as their parents. To that Hollywood answered with two representations of child's innocence: Shirley Temple – a cute child and “America's Sweetheart” and brats – immoral on the surface but good at heart. Both types were ambiguous, even manipulative and seductive and consequently the gap between children and parents grew wider.

Hostility towards children who were portrayed as “bad” by nature is nothing new. The figure of the bad and corrupted child of the Original sin and the immoral one from the cautionary tales of the Enlightenment were a much earlier cultural production than the sublime child of Romanticism. The image of the bad child occurred regularly in different periods and during the 1980s the cinematic representations of evil children were discussed as a sign of growing tension between generations.

A number of interesting young adult books came out in Iceland in the last decade. Mikael Torfason writes about teenage subcultures in the suburbs of Reykjavík, about drugs (*Falskur fugl*, ‘A Fake Bird’) and peculiar crisis of sexuality (*Saga af stúlku*, ‘Story of a Girl’) while Auður Jónsdóttir captures the lives of neglected children. The first novel of a young author Jökull Valsson, *Börnin í Húmdölum* (The Children of the Dusk Valley) abounds in violence and displays influences from Stephen King and other thriller authors. Adults, parents who neglect their children are punished in horrible way out of some strange sense of justice which says that wrongdoing of any kind should be reciprocated with double cruelty so that justice is meted out. This type of ethics is held in high esteem in Stine's Goosflesh series. In *Börnunum í Húmdölum* one can find countless intertextual references to other children and teenage cultures. We encounter, for instance, Alfons Åberg and Evil Dead, Torbjörn Egner and the Japanese Manga culture. According to Úlfhildur Dagsdóttir intertextual references are like blood in the veins of the horror tales and mass culture in general and they feast on other genres like vampires. The same description can be applied to sarcastic and brutal comic series and plays of Huggleikur Dagsson.

These and other Icelandic young adult novels embrace not only rage and revolt but also a great deal of creative energy and joy which finds its inspirations in the whole world and fuses them in a new form of art, a new, bewildering and dynamic aesthetics where all kinds of art forms converge.