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BOOK REVIEW OF "HORROR AT THE DRIVE-IN ESSAYS IN POPULAR AMERICANA"

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unpublished. This wealth of photographic material alone easily makes this book a valuable addition to any Hemingway library. I do wish that the photos of some of Hemingway's letters and notes were presented large enough to actually read; instead, they seem to merely decorate the margins. As with the aforementioned copper-colored ink, the beautiful presentation of this text sometimes comes at the expense of readability. Minor quibbles aside—and they are minor—this is a book that popular culture scholars and fans of Papa will enjoy.

—Marc Seals
University of South Florida

Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon

Anthony Harkins. New York: Oxford, 2003.

People outside the United States, unless they carry the same necessity, might wonder why, from the earliest diverse settlement in the New World, the South was claimed to be divided into two classes: the wealthy, educated landowners and the ignorant, poor “white trash” who came to be known by various names, the most lasting of which is “hillbilly.” Through the decades, the term, originally carrying with it embarrassment and resentment, has come to be, at the same time, still exasperating, infuriating, and amusing.

Harkins, a professor of history, has worked on this icon for years, from the earliest manifestations to the latest threat of its use on TV. His book stirs many memories in those of us who remember the pleasure we got from Simon Suggs, Sut Lovingood, The Arkansaw Traveler, Barney Google, Snuffy Smith, Li'l Abner, and on through “country music,” early radio shows, and movies, down to what some people are calling the finest series ever produced on television, *The Beverly Hillbillies*. The question with the last-named

representation of the gullible but wealthy mountaineers is, Who was being satirized, Hollywood and the residents' pretensions, or the honest, gullible, but always triumphant people from the mountains? Some index might be drawn from the sadness that rose from the announcement that Irene Ryan was dead of cancer. But perhaps art is art only after it has been proved to be such, for CBS's proposal (based on MTV's success with *The Osbournes*) to bring back a TV series called *The Real Beverly Hillbillies* met with such organized opposition from congressmen and across the board that the whole idea had to be scrapped like a mountain liquor still minutes before revenueurs arrive. Perhaps the series would have proved again that one icon in America can and should be kept alive. In a society where everybody would rather be rich and famous than iconic and loved, perhaps the hillbilly should not be paraded forever, but as regionalism and pride in section of origin grow in importance in America, the concept of the iconic nature of the hillbilly will not fade away. Harkins's book is a balanced and prideful revelation of the role of this icon in America, and really makes us delighted to have been and to continue to be a part of it.

—Ray B. Browne
Bowling Green, Ohio

Horror at the Drive-In: Essays in Popular Americana

Gary Rhodes, Editor. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003.

The drive-in theater, during its heyday, which lasted from the late 1940s through the 1970s, exemplifies the American spirit of independence. Although many of the corporate theaters were hurting for business during the 1950s because of the popularity of television, the drive-ins always did brisk business. They were usually indepen-

dently owned and not part of the corporate theater structure. Drive-in theaters during the 1980s and early 1990s all but died out, but recently there has been a nostalgic resurgence of the drive-in with new ones opening up all across America. Editor Gary Rhodes's recent volume, *Horror at the Drive-In: Essays in Popular Americana*, is a timely addition to film scholarship. (Rhodes also wrote the definitive study of the Bela Lugosi film *White Zombie* [1932]). The book contains eighteen varied essays looking at all aspects of drive-in horror movies from their beginnings and brings to light several obscure and often overlooked films.

Rock Colvatio's essay looks at how horror-movie rhetoric in the trailers often enticed people to come to low-budget monster flicks like *Reptilicus* and *I Bury the Living*, usually putting all of the best scenes in the trailers themselves. Recently, a fan culture has risen that, in addition to watching the films, watches the trailers. (Several popular DVDs have been released containing just trailers from early drive-in horrors.) Editor Rhodes documents the first showing of the independently released *Hideous Sun Demon*. This unique film directed by and starring Robert Clarke was first shown in Amarillo, Texas, in August 1958. It's an amazing story, and Rhodes's documentation of the event includes a transcript of a radio interview with Clarke. Michael Lee compares the ideology behind the British *Curse of the Demon* (1957) with the American *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958). Although one film deals with a form of Satanism and the other is an alien invasion story typical of the 1950s films, they both have interesting parallel themes.

Two of the most brutal drive-in films from the 1970s are Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left* (1972) and Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1973). The films are examined in detail in two separate essays. Both films were "must sees" for teenagers in the 1970s and were still being shown at drive-ins through the early 1980s. Both films have had a profound impact on popular culture, with *Last House on the Left* being called "a rite of passage for a whole

generation of teenagers." The remake of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was released in 2003.

Obscure independent films like *Dementia (Daughter of Horror)* (1953) are also given in-depth examination. *Dementia* was originally an experiment in film noir and was silent, with just the images and soundtrack. The producers rereleased the film as *Daughter of Horror* by adding narration by Ed McMahon and marketing it as a horror movie in 1956. The author argues that the film may not be a document of feminist ideology, but it is rather a work of art that addresses certain truths about insanity and deserves a wider viewership.

The most detailed article is Karola's essay on Italian director Mario Bava's films. Today, Italian horror films are almost never shown in theaters and usually go straight to video. However, during the 1960s, Italian horror films like Bava's *Kill Baby Kill* (1966) and *Blood and Black Lace* (1964) were typical fodder for American drive-ins (albeit usually in cut form). Karola's piece brings respectability and scholarly reevaluation to this often overlooked director.

No book on drive-in horrors would be complete with some discussion of director Herschell Gordon Lewis (also known as the Godfather of Gore or the Father of the Splatter Film). Although there have been two academic book-length studies recently published, there is always room for more discussion of his films. Lewis, whose film *Blood Feast* started the "Gore Revolution" in 1963, was a perennial favorite across drive-in theaters in the South throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Lewis never intended to make high art or anything other than money. His films, while shocking for the 1960s, nowadays are enjoyable for their humor and bad acting rather than the gore. Editor Rhodes writes a philosophical piece about Lewis's film *Wizard of Gore* and its use of nonlinear time (or metaphysical time). Anyone studying the philosophy of film will find a great deal to ponder in Rhodes's essay. Lewis's film *2000 Maniacs* (1964), which is currently being remade for 2004 release, is discussed alongside *Attack of the Giant Leeches* (1959) in another essay by Stephen Budney. The

author looks at how both of these films fared in the South and represent Southern American culture to a large extent.

Other films discussed in this volume include *I Drink Your Blood* (1970), *Creature Walks Among Us* (1956), Ed Wood's famous transvestite commentary *Glen or Glenda* (1953), *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* (1962), and *Cat Women of the Moon* (1953), among others. One article discusses the social impact for posters of horror movies featuring woman as the prominent monster such as *The She Demons* (1958) and *Devil Girl from Mars* (1955), among others. Additional essay topics include the influence of American drive-in culture on Austrian drive-ins and horror films made in Mexico but shown in American drive-ins. Examples include *Samson Versus the Vampire Women* (1962) and *La Momia Azteca* (1957). The Mexican wrestler El Santo was featured in many films fighting a monster of some sort. His films are currently experiencing resurgence due to rereleases on DVD.

Horror at the Drive-In is a fine collection and deserves a wide readership. Each essay is well researched and highly readable for both the layperson and the film scholar. This book would certainly be a good textbook for film classes, sociology classes, or even history classes. All of the essays taken together provide a glimpse into this unique form of American culture. Recommended for both public and academic libraries.

—Robert G. Weiner
Lubbock, Texas

In Praise of Nepotism: A Natural History

Adam Bellow. New York: Doubleday, 2003.

Nepotism has negative overtones. The dictionary calls it favoritism shown to a relative,

often undeserved. The term *nepotismo* was coined in the fifteenth century to describe the corrupt practice of appointing papal relatives, usually illegitimate, to papal offices. Today it often implies hiring one who is grossly incompetent. This violates our sense of fairness, a way for the rich to warehouse their unemployable relatives. It leads to class domination.

That was the old nepotism. The new nepotism of our generation thinks of nepotism as creating elites that are a practical necessity for any society. But what kind of elite should we have? Should it be closed and exclusive, or open to the bright upstarts? Should you inherit power or grab it? Was the Bush-Gore campaign in 2000 the tip of a dynastic iceberg in American politics?

Think of the many things that now negate the old nepotistic formula: abortion, divorce, single parenthood, cloning, gay marriage, day care, interracial adoption, fostering—the list goes on and on. Having stumbled onto this large but untreated subject, Bellow tries to do it justice.

There are twelve chapters, starting with “We’re All Good Fellas Now” and ending with “The Art of Nepotism,” as well as a postscript on “American Nepotism Today.” We read of Nepotism in the Christian West, and the Golden Age of Nepotism, the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. The chapter centers on three families that rose to the heights of European nobility: Borgia, Bonaparte, and Rothschild. They practiced nepotism with unbridled zest.

Crossing the Atlantic to America, we deal with the Nepotism of the Founders; the Roosevelts, heading up the middle-class revolt against nepotism; and heirs apparent such as John F. Kennedy. Will we end up with a Bush dynasty in the twenty-first century?

Bellow believes in what he calls The Art of Nepotism. Instead of hating it, we should bring it out into the open and subject it to the highest possible standards. There are three obligations: to give, to receive, and to repay. Our society is a riot of old and new kinship forms, a nepotistic petri dish in which new answers must be found. We have a duty to be nepotistic. If we fail to put our

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