



The Rural Gothic in American Popular Culture: Backwoods Horror and Terror in the Wilderness

Bernice M. Murphy

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From the very beginnings of an independent literary culture, the North American wilderness has often served as the setting for narratives in which the boundaries between order and chaos, savagery and civilization are torn down, and the natural world – as well as the individuals and creatures associated with it – becomes a threat to physical and moral safety. *The Rural Gothic in American Popular Culture* argues that complex and often negative initial responses early European settlers expressed toward the North American Wilderness continue to influence American horror and gothic narratives to this day. The book undertakes a detailed and historically grounded analysis of key literary and filmic texts. The works of canonical authors such as Mary Rowlandson, Charles Brockden Brown and Nathaniel Hawthorne are discussed, as are the origins and characteristics of the backwoods horror film tradition and the post-1960 eco-horror narrative.

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