



Peckinpah: An Ultraviolet Romance

D. Harlan Wilson

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Life in Dreamfield, Indiana, is a daily harangue of pigs, cornfields, pigs, fast food joints, pigs, Dollar Stores, motorcycles, pigs, and good old-fashioned Amerikan redneckery. The decidedly estranged yet complacent occupants of this proverbial smalltown go about their business like geriatrics in a casino ... until their business is interrupted by a sinister gang of outsiders. Angry, slick-talking, and ultraviolent to the core, Samson Thataway and the Fuming Garcias commit art-for-art's-sake in the form of hideous, unmotivated serial killings. When an unsuspecting everyman's wife is murdered by the throng, it is up to Felix Soandso to avenge her death and return Dreamfield to its natural state of absurdity.

Peckinpah: An Ultraviolent Romance Details

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From Reader Review Peckinpah: An Ultraviolent Romance for online ebook

Vincenzo Bilof says

Filmstrip inserted into the projector of the subconscious, the raw violence of a land where law has been murdered for the sake of art; “Peckinpah” is a beautiful Leone-Tarantino hybrid that might be a glimpse into the lingering fantasies—or nightmares—of artistic vision desensitized and transfigured by shades of blood in the glare of a rising sun. The “philosophy” of ultraviolence is more about the poetry of ultraviolence—the aesthetics of prose and chaos swirling through sentences that are chapters, or chapters that become sentences. D. Harlan Wilson has constructed a wonderfully designed piece of art—it almost doesn’t make sense to say that he’s “written” a great story.

There is indeed a story and a plot—it’s located in the synopsis on the back of the book, and in the description. To explain what Peckinpah is or means is to ruin the concept and scar its beauty. Wilson may have found a roll of film and described what he found on each frame. Our culture is obsessed with violence and has been attempting to “remedy” the situation by blaming all the entertainment mediums rather than being held accountable for this question: Why do people want to buy it? In the wake of major video game releases that feature protagonists who can beat up police officers and soldiers who can kill random people with well-aimed headshots, I find it interesting that readers would find parts of this book funny. I perceived moments of ironic hilarity that might provoke laughter, but instead, I found myself wondering why I should think this is funny in the first place.

Several sentences are woven into the narrative that seem to bind the piece in a theater of splatter rather than a medium that’s exposed and “open”; I mean to say that the structure underlines, defies, and defines the properties of violent art and our attraction to it. This book, in its own way, is anti-art and anti-violence. This is one of those few works for which I might be able to write an entire essay; I could dissect individual phrases and deconstruct the book to find more depth and meaning, a sign that Wilson’s intelligent work can withstand the test of time.

Wilson may not have intended this to be anything more than an entertaining, wild ride through an ultraviolent-romance story. Part of the book’s package is the cover art—yeah, I’m analyzing the cover art, which seems to be “shot” from far away by the camera, rather than the extreme-close-ups Leone (and in homage, Tarantino) have used for dramatic purposes. This makes me think that Samson Thataway and the Fuming Garcias are the shark-toothed, metaphoric reflection of America’s chivalric knights (cowboys). Each chapter in this book is a poem, a swimming pool full of blood that Plato and Aristotle would have jumped into without bathing suits.

Nicolas Garceau says

Will have to read this one again. It deserves it.

J. Osborne says

In 1994 Alan Moore wrote a short story about a woman named Maureen Cooper, a bartender who slowly comes to realize she exists only as a character on a popular TV soap. The story was dense, verbose, brilliant

metafiction, blending the story of Maureen with that of the actress who played her (who was herself not who she seemed) with a vicious polemic on television and its effects on society. It was called “Light of Thy Countenance” and there are two reasons I bring it up: first, because I feel that it is the spiritual predecessor to D. Harlan Wilson’s amazing “Peckinpah”, and secondly, because of Alan Moore himself, who felt strongly enough about this book to provide a blurb on the cover.

“Peckinpah” is difficult to categorize, a satirical meta mash up of microfiction and microcriticism into something that maybe resembles a novel but is, I think, something much more interesting.

The back cover blurb does its best: it tells us “Peckinpah” is about Felix Soandso, the husband of a murdered woman who must wreak righteous vengeance on her killer, Samson Thataway, the hyperviolent leader of the Fuming Garcias, a Reservoir Dogs-esque clone army. Sure thing, back cover, but I’d argue that the story is just as much about a man who tears pigs in half or a shoe store clerk witnessing his coworkers disappearing beneath a stampeding tractor or corn stalks that open to reveal chainsaws.

Amidst all the absurdity, a wide variety of film motifs come under fire, such as rape scenes, lazy endings, and the fetishism of weaponry and violence. But it’s the oversized role of film and television in our lives that seems to be the biggest target: pay attention to the chapter in which Felix Soandso is introduced to the single worst moment in his life through the screenplay excerpt that we have just read. Or the only chapter in which a book makes an appearance, the cover depicting an alien riding the blast of a nuclear explosion.

Throughout its entirety Wilson manages to keep the language terse and punchy. It is a brief novel made briefer by the force of its language, but if you’re like me, you’ll pick it back up and read through it again, slower the second time. And once again it will entertain and, more importantly, once again it will get you thinking.

Nick Cato says

Wilson's surreal view of a midwestern town called Dreamfield features the author's trademark prose which goes from violent to hysterical to bizarre--sometimes within the same sentence (see chapter 11) all the while leaving behind witty commentary and observances on the rural lifestyle.

Inbetween the strangely-developing story, we're exposed to "Theories of Ultraviolence," one chapter which sheds a little light on the fascination with director Sam Peckinpah (hence the book's title and inspiration).

If you've read Wilson before, you'll be glad to know everything that has made his past collections and novels work are on display here, albeit in a quick, mini-chapter format; if you're new to Wilson, strap yourself in and prepare to laugh your ass off, then get set to re-read the same section over again to get the full effect.

Wilson continues to be a leading voice in the bizarro movement, and PECKINPAH is a fine example why: it doesn't get stranger--or more interesting--than this.

R.A. Harris says

This book sits neatly in between Dr. Identity and Codename Prague - two of Wilson's novel length works. I

can see the themes in both books being examined and played with in this work.
That is in no way a critical statement, I happen to find Wilson's work refreshing.

This story doesn't even run like a normal story, half of it is just setting the scene, the second half kind of follows a narrative, but with many tangents along the way.

I think Wilson wanted to say that he likes Sam Peckinpah, but couldn't help himself but write a fascinating and bizarre tale as he did so. Typically strong Wilson style prose and absurdity with almost comic ultra-violence.

If you've not read D. Harlan Wilson before then you really owe it to yourself to check his work out. The violence is not pornographic, it is really quite beautiful or funny. If you can't laugh at yourself (or mankind) then what can you laugh at?

Stephen Theaker says

Bad, strange people come to an American town and start killing people in lots of little chapters.

An unusual book! It's impossible for me to say whether it's good or not; I've read nothing similar to judge it against. By the end it made a kind of sense, but pictures would have helped; it was rather like reading a transcript of a Grant Morrison comic like *The Filth*.

Like the Rhys Hughes book I've been reading recently (*The Smell of Telescopes*), this is a book where every word counts - it's more like a prose poem than a novel - and since I do most of my reading at bedtime I tend to struggle with such books.

So this was quite hard work, but by the end I felt the effort had been worthwhile.

Dustin Reade says

this is one of those books that makes you redefine the way you read. The story is interspersed with facts about the films of Sam Peckinpah, and laid out like scene descriptions which explode with violence and some truly arresting prose. D. Wilson's voice is unique, and this book really shows you what he can do, which is quite a bit. The type of book that kicks you in the teeth--in a good way.

Anthony Chavez says

I just don't know what to think after this. An unusual book, for sure! An homage/mock homage to legendary director Sam Peckinpah who directed ultraviolent movies such as: *The Wild Bunch*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, *Ride the High Country*, *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*, etc.

It's hard for me to say whether I truly liked it or not. The book is structured in jagged bits and pieces, and it covers a whole lot; however, only a little more than half of the chapters actually involve the story and characters mentioned in the summary. The rest of "Peckinpah" includes theories on the nature of

ultraviolence, short essays about Sam Peckinpah himself, and random filler. It can be a challenge if you don't know what you're in for, and I sure didn't until I did some research on Sam Peckinpah on my own. By the end it made a kind of sense, it was rather like reading a transcript to a violent comic or movie script.

The story feels like a novella spaced with descriptive word slam poetry in between. This is definitely a book where every word counts, and at times when the story wasn't center stage it felt more like a poem than a novel. D. Harlan uses great language when describing scenes. At times the images that assault your mind are at a rapid speed, with short chapters, like a ultraviolent Peckinpah directed scene. I felt that if I didn't read it all in one sitting I would lose the image and pace of the story. I had to trudge on.

I gotta say once I understood what the story was about I really appreciated D. Harlan Wilson's writing format. Setting up scenes with camera angles, moving shots, close-ups, fade-outs, sound effects, etc. really giving it a movie director touch and bringing the chapters/scenes to life. It was a definite challenge of a read which took some work and rereading on my part but I think it was worth it in the end. Definitely a unique read. Recommended for fans of violence and bizarro!

Dan Schwent says

When a psychopath named Samson Thataway and his gang, the Fuming Garcias, ride into Dreamfield, Indiana, it means trouble for the small town. During an orgy of rape and murder, they made two mistakes: they raped and murdered Felix Soandso's wife, and they left Felix alive...

Peckinpah is an absurdist tribute to the films of Sam Peckinpah. While my summary makes it seem like a fairly standard revenge tale, it's not. It's so weird that even though it was less than 110 pages, I couldn't have taken much more.

Peckinpah seems to take place in the same world as DHW's SciKungFi trilogy. Amerika was mentioned a few times, as were the goat-headed men. Since the book was a tribute to Peckinpah films, I knew how it would end but it was still fun getting there.

That's about all I can articulate about Peckinpah right now. It's slightly less weird than Dr. Identity and way less weird than Codename Prague. It's an enjoyable little book and a good way to spend a couple hours.

Oscar Westerholm says

A bizarro, deleuzian prose poem. Fantastic!

David Barbee says

D Harlan Wilson's Peckinpah is one of his best works, and that's saying a lot. Wilson takes his own flare for high-minded weirdness and jacks it up a billion notches. The book is structured in jagged bits and pieces, and it covers a wide variety of topics. Only about half of the chapters involve the actual story and characters. The rest of Peckinpah includes theories on the nature of ultraviolence and short essays about Sam Peckinpah himself. It can be daunting if you don't know what you're in for.

Part of *Peckinpah* is a classical revenge tragedy starring Samson Thataway and Felix Soandso. Thataway is a surreal character. He and his Fuming Garcias are almost the living embodiment of ultraviolence. They carve a trail through the earth with their LeBarons, performing gruesome executions and epic acts of random destruction. Felix Soandso's wife is killed during the massacre, and naturally he sets out to take revenge on the Fuming Garcias' insane leader, Samson Thataway. Along the way we learn more about who Sam Peckinpah was and some sophisticated theories on ultraviolence.

In my opinion, Wilson really flexes his muscles when he shows us his violent scenes using film references. *Peckinpah* is like a literary version of *Natural Born Killers*, *Kill Bill*, and some of the more violent anime out there. Certain scenes are described with camera angles, moving shots, close-ups, fade-outs, and sound effects. These scenes are some of the most vivid stuff I've ever read. Overall, D Harlan Wilson isn't content to write a revenge story. Instead, he uses his sharp and colorful style to examine and dissect a dead director and his love affair with ultraviolence. Truly, *Peckinpah* is an ultraviolent romance.

D. Wilson says

"A bludgeoning celluloid rush of language and ideas served from an action-painter's bucket of fluorescent spatter, D. Harlan Wilson's *Peckinpah* is an incendiary gem and very probably the most extraordinary new novel you will read this year." ALAN MOORE, author of *Watchmen*, *V for Vendetta*, *From Hell* and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*

"D. Harlan Wilson's latest romp of a book, *Peckinpah: An Ultravoilent Romance*, proves that Wilson is either a genius or a madman, in all likelihood a crazed hybrid of both. A book that will delight Wilson's fans and mortally shock the uninitiated." ERIC MILES WILLIAMSON, author of *Welcome to Oakland* and *East Bay Grease*

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Peckinpah: An Ultraviolent Romance , D. Harlan Wilson

Garrett Cook says

Find out just why and how much I loved this in the next issue of *Bust Down the Door and Eat All the Chickens*.

S.T. Cartledge says

After *Blankety Blank*, I had to read more of this guy, just to be sure his brilliance wasn't a one-off thing. I'm ashamed to admit I haven't yet seen a Sam Peckinpah film, as much as I want to. However, I could still make enough sense of the book without being overly familiar with his work. The book is short. The chapters are short. And while it doesn't feel as intricate or as clever as *Blankety Blank*, it's still a fantastic book. It's filled

with scenes that are at times ultraviolent, surreal, strangely awkward, absurdly exaggerated, and occasionally filmic. And it's got illustrations. Flicking through the book just now, I came across a page that had something startlingly appropriate written on it. "It was as comical as it was dead serious." It's pretty fucking awesome. I love the way D. Harlan Wilson writes books.
