

## Judge Holden and the Violence of Erasure: *Blood Meridian's* Historical Skepticism

Shawn Mark Jasinski

Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* is deeply concerned with the representation of American history and the violent manipulation of historical records. Focusing on the gruesome events that follow the Mexican/American War, McCarthy depicts a world in which the physical violence of Manifest Destiny is accompanied by the violence of the discourse that arises from the justification of an American "calling," which results in the brutality of American expansionism sweeping across the landscape as swiftly as the shadows of the Glanton Gang. However, this novel is not merely an attempt to revisit a forgotten American history, but also an exploration of the relationship between violence and history, and the ways that the grand narrative of American exceptionalism reflects the violence of rarefied discourse. In addition to this re-envisioning of American history, in the novel Judge Holden provides a liaison between the violent actions presented to the reader and the broader historical implications of an exceptionalist model of nation building.

The historical significance of *Blood Meridian* lies in the way McCarthy's narrative diverges from the traditional mythology of American westward movement. In contrast to Bill Brown's claim that "the narration of the west aestheticizes the genocidal foundation of the nation, turning conquest into a literary enterprise that screens out other violent episodes in the nation's history" (qtd. in Eaton 156), McCarthy attempts to create a less rarefied version of the American grand narrative. Unlike traditional westerns, McCarthy's novel makes "visible those violent episodes that accompanied the fight over land" (Eaton 157), and reveals a different kind of violence: the violence of cultural amnesia. After all, the problem with southwestern mythology is not only that the "myth was easier to swallow than the reality" (Eaton 157), but that the American national identity was grounded in a willed forgetting of the violence of these events. For Dana Phillips, McCarthy's "violence tends to be just that; it is not a sign or symbol of something else" (435), and, in turn, *Blood Meridian* cannot be said to contain any sort of moral insight along the lines of "scalp hunting is imperialism by other means" (449). However, while Phillips is right to suggest this is clearly not a novel with any sort of explicit moral agenda, the novel does offer a critique of the American exceptionalist project in the southwest and the destructive manipulation of American history. Unlike Phillips, Mark Eaton claims *Blood Meridian* can be seen as "McCarthy's attempt to contest in his work the official story of Manifest Destiny, according to which American interests took precedence over the claims of the indigenous peoples" (Eaton 157). Eaton may, in fact, be too willing to impose this framework upon the novel, but to deny this component of McCarthy's work is far more problematic.

While published criticism has amply recognized the judge's celebration of violence, and the historical elements of McCarthy's novel, even these critics have not clearly explored the relationship between violence and history, or violence and the erasure of its own traces. This tradition of collectively dis-remembering violent events is not merely an American tradition, though one might argue the U.S. has perfected the practice, but is instead a standard component of nation-building. As Ernest Renan says in his discussion of what forms a nation, "forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of

a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for the principle of nationality. Indeed, historical enquiry brings light to deeds of violence which took place at the origins of all political formations” (50). The “historical error” Renan addresses is not merely a matter of “historical record,” in terms of revisiting the distant past, but also the way discursive historical practices will always produce a teleological version of history tailored to serve the desired ends of the dominant order. While McCarthy’s novel as a whole serves to bring the “light” Renan speaks of, Judge Holden, as a character, serves to illustrate the active pursuit of historical erasure. The judge is not a “ventriloquist’s dummy perched on the novelist’s knee,” as Phillips warns, but is clearly a vehicle for McCarthy’s discussion of the nature of both physical and discursive violence in the borderland frontier.

The southwest of the mid-nineteenth century is the perfect setting for a story like *Blood Meridian* to play out because it has no clearly defined boundaries. Within the novel, the violence of the borderlands is framed by Captain White’s description of the Mexicans as a “race of degenerates” who are “manifestly incapable of governing themselves” (34). Even as the bulk of the novel takes place on the Mexican side of the border, this rhetoric of American expansionism provides the justification for the Glanton Gang’s presence, as well as their brand of violence. White continues, “we are to be the instruments of liberation in a dark and troubled land” (34), which, when combined with his earlier statements, demonstrates the belief that the U.S. is not only justified in its actions, but performing its destined role as a redeemer nation. Following the annexation of Texas and California in 1845, the Mexican border was redrawn far south of a large number of Mexicans. This left the southwest in utter chaos as borders were still uncertain; American settlers, Mexicans, Native Americans, and soldiers left from the war populated the territory. The undefined and flexible quality of the borderlands seems to be reflected in the almost mythical quality of Judge Holden. Mark Eaton reads *Blood Meridian* as “counter-narrative to the overly sanitized rhetoric of Manifest Destiny” (159), but through the specter of the judge, McCarthy’s novel also becomes an exploration of the historical erasure that precipitates his need to provide a counter-narrative. The judge’s embodiment of the violence of discourse is amplified by his willful understanding of the process he is taking part in.

From the moment we are introduced to him, Judge Holden seems to be the perfect character to embody this commentary on history and violence, just like the Mexican borderland is the perfect setting. While the judge is undoubtedly the most violent and horrifying of McCarthy’s characters, he is also the most intelligent and learned member of the Glanton Gang. The judge’s knowledge is so far beyond that of the other gang members that he is thought to be lying. After giving an “extemporary lecture in geology,” members of the gang summoned quotes of “scripture to confound his ordering up of eons out of the ancient chaos” (116). McCarthy’s inclusion of this moment serves to reiterate the judge’s ability to comprehend a far more expansive understanding of the world around him than the other members of the gang. In turn, Holden seems to have a firm grasp on the violent nature of history, which in many ways serves as an extension of his interest in violence of any kind. In his discussion of collective amnesia’s role in nation building, Mark Eaton writes that the “real violence in the borderlands is followed by the virtual violence of a sort of willed forgetting” (158). The judge actively participates in both forms of violence, as can be seen in his treatment of history throughout the novel. We must always remember the judge, as well as an historian, is also, according to Joshua J. Masters, “an author,” and, as an author, “an expunger” (26). His sketching and then

destroying of both objects and people is indicative of his own grasp on the importance of controlling the historical record.

The judge's sketching seems rather out of place for a murdering pedophile with a seemingly insatiable lust for blood, but viewed as a process of historical revision, his obsessive note taking becomes nothing more than his participation in a different form of violence, the violence of discourse. McCarthy seems to fall in line with Michel Foucault here, as Foucault suggests we must "recognize the negative activity of the cutting-out and the rarefaction of discourse," and to "conceive discourse as a violence that we do to things" (229). The judge seems to be fully aware, if not personally invested, in this form of violence, as he strives to maintain a record of everything around him.

This point is reflected in the nature of McCarthy's source material as well. Dana Phillips suggests the consideration of McCarthy's sources does not offer any real "hermeneutic advantage" (436), but, within this discussion of discursive violence, Chamberlain's source material does illustrate the trend of historical manipulation. Samuel Chamberlain's memoir, *My Confession*, provides one of the only surviving descriptions of the characters McCarthy depicts, and while the work of John Sepich catalogues a variety of other sources from newspaper correspondents like Theodoro Goodman who reported on the ferry-massacre, to John Woodhouse Audobon's *Western Journal*, Chamberlain's *Confession* is the most intriguing. Unlike McCarthy's version, Chamberlain's narrative is marked by justifications for violence, such as justifying Glanton's actions by highlighting the murder of his wife and daughter at the hands of the Lipan warriors. Chamberlain argues, "from this tragic scene Glanton returned a changed man," and "any other man in Texas would have been lynched, but his terrible loss, his services in the Mexican and Indian wars, made him respected by the masses and gave him strong friends of men in power" (269). McCarthy mentions that Glanton looks out over the desert and remembers "the wife and child he would not see again" (172), yet he offers no further explanation that would serve as a justification of Glanton's apparent hatred of Native Americans. Chamberlain, on the other hand, goes beyond simply justifying the gang's actions by suggesting the gang was opposed to carrying out Glanton's orders. In Chamberlain's version, before the slaughter of innocent women and children many of the men "not only opposed this cruel massacre but swore it should not take place" (Chamberlain 285). In recollecting the scene at the ferry, Chamberlain writes of the members of the gang, "they were as disgusted as myself," and had every intention of departing before the massacre (290). Chamberlain's control over the discourse allows him to present a version of history that excuses his actions and places him at odds with some of the gang's more egregious acts. In turn, Chamberlain portrays himself as the one who sketches as they go, which draws a direct parallel between his and the judge's desire to both document and control the historical discourse (Chamberlain 258).

Chamberlain's "sketching" provides the basis for his version of the Glanton gang's activities, in which he is repeatedly a reluctant participant in a string of atrocities. This cycle of manipulation is not only reflected in the judge's actions and in Chamberlain's memoir, but also in the creation of McCarthy's novel. As Chamberlain seeks to manipulate the record in his favor by justifying the gang's actions while simultaneously positioning himself as an outsider amongst Glanton's crew, the judge works to expunge the elements he finds undesirable from both the face of the earth and historical record through a process of erasure, and McCarthy struggles to draw these preceding rarefied discourses into question by presenting a narrative of westward

expansion that does not seek to justify or erase. As Mark Eaton suggests, unlike Chamberlain, McCarthy “appears to neither condone nor condemn the horrific actions he describes, refusing to editorialize or explain away the violence” (162). McCarthy’s work is clearly fiction, but the use of these historical underpinnings suggests that history always already includes a fictive element.

This discussion of history does not aim to position McCarthy as a historian, or even as one who seeks to correct the historical record, but rather as one who intends to encourage historical skepticism by depicting the judge as a character capable of controlling both physical and discursive violence. In *Language and Historical Representation*, Hans Kellner speaks of “getting the story crooked,” which is an expression of the inability of historians to record any form of history that is not in some way skewed, even as their supposed duty is to get the story “straight” (vii). While one might believe “to get the story ‘crooked’ can only entail dishonesty, incompetence, or devious willfulness” the real problem is the belief that history “can be told straight by an honest, industrious historian using the right methods” (viii). While Kellner’s argument is concerned primarily with historical sources, the logic of getting the story “crooked” provides the perfect model for understanding the judge’s actions. Unlike the honest historian who is not employing a “devious willfulness” in his historical method, the judge is very clearly both devious and willful. The violent treatment of historical discourse as a product of erasure is the judge’s method of reducing history to the type of singular “story” that Kellner argues does not exist. In this sense, the Judge’s notion of history aligns with Kellner’s, in that it is the inherent multiplicity of possible historical narratives that motivates his own attempt to frame the record of his own actions. In turn, the significance of the judge’s actions lies both in this willful element, as well as his position as one of the novel’s few characters knowledgeable of how historical record can be actively made “crooked.”

Within the novel, the violence of a willed forgetting becomes even clearer when the judge’s actions are first questioned. While making their way through “the ruins of an older culture” (139), the “judge all day had made forays among the rocks” to search for artifacts that he could catalogue. Returning to the fire “he held the leather ledger book,” with the items spread out before him, and “took up each piece, flint or potsherd or tool of bone, and deftly sketched it into the book” (140). The most impressive of these items was the “foot piece from a suit of armor hammered out in a shop in Toledo three centuries before” (140). After he has sketched each item, complete with “marginal notes,” the judge “gathered up the other artifacts and cast them into the fire” (140). The careful documentation and destruction marks the Judge’s peculiar position of being both part of the violent acts that are eventually forgotten and the violence of a conscious erasure. After the fire has consumed his findings, Webster asks, “what he aimed to do with those notes and sketches and the judge smiled and said it was his intention to expunge them from the memory of man” (140). The judge is completely aware that he is in no way removed from either form of violence, which suggests that the one cannot exist without the other. The judge’s physical violence is accompanied by a promise of being forgotten, which he actively cultivates. However, his actions do not depend on forgetting as a form of justification, because it is not an excuse the judge seeks, but rather control over the historical record itself. By documenting and destroying not only artifacts, but entire villages and cultures, the judge demonstrates how the victor is given control over the representation of the events that have taken place *and* the conquered themselves, especially if none of them remain

to speak out. Following the judge's response, Webster replies, "But no man can put all the world in a book. No more than everything drawn in a book is so," to which the Judge agrees, but not without the addition of his claim that "what is to be deviates no jot from the book wherein it's writ" (141). This is not a claim of some prophetic wisdom, but rather an indication of the judge's understanding of the nature of history. What is to be does not differ from the way it is "writ" because it "would be a false book and a false book is no book at all" (141). This is not to say that everything written is true, but, rather, what is written becomes all that is known. This is why the primary American memory of the southwest is one of triumphant expansion, even as McCarthy's work serves to demonstrate the bloody and violent nature of the events that took place there.

The judge's manipulation of history exists not only on the larger scale of historical discourse, but also within the immediate narrative of the Glanton gang. After the gang is massacred at the ferry, the kid ends up in prison, while the judge ends up in a new suit, because, when questioned by the authorities, the judge "told them the truth" (306). The "truth" the judge speaks of is the lie that the kid was "the person responsible" (306), but only the judge's version of the story exists. In line with Hans Kellner's description of the historian as one who seeks out the singular "story" of history, the judge values the "man who sets himself the task of singling out the thread of order from the tapestry" because he "will by decision alone have taken charge of the world and it is only by such taking charge that he will effect a way to dictate the terms of his own fate" (199). The "thread" the judge speaks of is in no way representative of the tapestry as a whole, just as the judge's version of history depends upon erasure and exclusion. The judge has taken "charge," even as those around him continue to seem unaware there is anything of which to take charge. After intervening with Sergeant Aguilar on behalf of the gang, Jackson asks Holden what he said, to which Holden replies, "It is not necessary...that the principals here be in possession of the facts concerning their case, for their acts will ultimately accommodate history with or without their understanding" (85). This is one of the first instances in the novel where Holden expresses the inability of the gang to grasp his understanding of the nature of history and the violence of discourse. The judge suggests, that unlike himself, Jackson and the rest of the men are taking part in a history, the nature of which is known by the judge alone. In essence, these men are passive components of history, while the judge is actively shaping the historical discourse. The most troubling component of several readings of *Blood Meridian* is the notion that, as Dana Phillips puts it, this is "a novel in which none of the protagonists has anything remotely like a 'sense of himself'" (444). Adam Parkes makes a similar observation in his discussion of the judge's dancing at the novel's conclusion, and suggests that for the judge to dance "is to participate in history," but "participation, moreover, does not require self-consciousness; we may be dancers without knowing it, like the dancing bear, which is shot for no apparent reason" (109). Parkes' claims here are astute, but do not place enough emphasis on the level of self-consciousness Holden demonstrates. The rest of the gang clearly demonstrate a similarity to the bear that is taking part in the dance unaware of the dance's significance, but Holden becomes the dance, and the kid seems to be at least aware of the dance's importance.

The kid creates an alternative to the judge's treatment of historical discourse, but by no means an opposite. The judge's respect for the boy seems to stem from the kid's ability to understand what the judge is doing in terms of history and his ontology of violence. The judge is

a constant force behind the manipulation of historical discourse, and the “kid threatens to comprehend what lies beneath these manipulations” of history (Wallach 11). Just as the judge consciously interacts with the discourse of violence, the kid seems to work, deliberately, against the manipulation of the historical record through the process of erasure of which the judge is so fond. This explains why the kid does not follow through in the erasure of Shelby and Taft when he is selected to execute the wounded. The kid is not only problematic for the judge because he will not allow himself to be spoken for by the judge, who frequently speaks for other members of the gang in languages they cannot even understand, but he is also the only member of the gang who demonstrates any awareness of the power that is granted to the judge as he is allowed to ventriloquize the others. When the judge visits the boy in prison he points out the similarity between the two of them when he says, “you were a witness against yourself. You sat in judgment on your own deeds. You put your allowances before the judgments of history” (307). Unlike the judge, who is a “witness” for a version of history that he is actively constructing, the kid is a witness of a history that has not been subject to erasure. Despite this obvious disparity, the understanding of history as malleable seems to be the predominant bond between the judges and the kid.

The judge is intimately aware of this bond between them. He claims to have “recognized” the kid when he first saw him (328), and even suggests he could have “loved [him] like a son” (306). This fatherly component seems to clearly demonstrate the judge’s ability to see something of himself in the kid, a greater awareness of the inner workings of the human artifice. This is what makes the kid particularly dangerous for the judge. The kid not only understands the nature of history, but what is gained from the control of it. The kid’s final scene in the novel, when the judge “gathered him in his arms against his immense and terrible flesh” (333), is not only the judge’s final act of erasure, but also an act of hegemonic homogenization. The judge embraces the kid as if he were consuming him into his own flesh, which literally draws all other possible histories into the judge’s sphere of influence. This preserves the judge’s control over history while simultaneously eliminating the only other character in the novel capable of recognizing this act’s significance.

McCarthy emphasizes the point that physical violence is accompanied by a violence of forgetting throughout the novel. After the gang destroys a peaceful Native American village, “the destruction of these people would be erased. The desert wind would salt their ruins and there would be nothing, nor ghost nor scribe, to tell to any pilgrim in his passing how it was that people had lived in this place and in this place died” (174). These people have been physically expunged from the face of the earth, and yet that is not enough for the judge, or American history, as their violent ends must be expunged from the “memory of man” as well. The judge’s commentary on history is a mix of careful record and historical manipulation, which is almost perfectly stated near the conclusion of the novel as he says, “Men’s memories are uncertain and the past that was differs little from the past that was not” (330). This final point seems to be the undertone in all of the conversations about history throughout the novel for both McCarthy and Judge Holden. The only certainty in regard to history is the uncertainty of its representation, which is why the judge is granted such power by creating the only record of the artifacts and events he catalogues before, through violence, he insures that no other record can exist. Above all else, history is a luxury afforded to the victor, which, in this case, grants the

judge the ability to succeed in his efforts to “expunge” certain events, people, places, and artifacts from “the memory of man” (140).

When the judge discusses the nature of existence he says, “The truth about the world...is that anything is possible,” because it is nothing more than “a hat trick in a medicine show,” which the judge aptly demonstrates with an unexplained coin trick. Parkes looks to this scene as a demonstration of how the judge “emphasizes the performativity of American selfhood” (107), but this episode also relates the performativity of history as the judge understands it. History is a “hat trick” because there is no element of historical record that is not a performance designed to suit the needs of the performer. The parallel between the performativity of the judge and the manipulation of the history of American expansion may be complicated by the immediacy of his violent actions, because it is far more difficult to imagine an immediate form of forgetting that does not rely on time and distance as elements of its process of erasure. The judge does offer an explanation for his actions, though, which places him in direct relation not only to American history, but western civilization as a whole. While passing through the jungle the judge remarks, “only nature can enslave man and only when the existence of each last entity is routed out and made to stand naked before him will he be properly suzerain of the earth” (198); the judge hopes to master nature itself.

In her discussion of the banality of evil, Hannah Arendt places herself within a historical understanding of modernity and western civilization that falls in line with Foucault’s argument concerning the secularization that takes place during the enlightenment; man becomes more concerned with the process of fabricating the human artifice through hegemonic processes once he begins to understand his ability to do so. Arendt’s discussion of *homo faber* clarifies this point further as she writes that within the process of creating the human artifice, “*Homo faber* becomes lord and master of nature herself insofar that he violates and partly destroys what was given to him” (*Portable* 174), because an “element of violation and violence is present in all fabrication, and man as creator of the human artifice has always been a destroyer of nature” (*Portable* 174). This understanding of the process of constructing the human artifice seems to align directly with the judge’s understanding of the power garnered from controlling historical discourse. Control becomes a form of power that allows for the continuation of a form of imperialism, the violence of which is excused by exceptionalism. The judge’s violation of nature, as representative of the American westward expansion, allows human beings to be stripped of political identity and agency, which, in this case, explains the extermination of both Native Americans and Mexicans throughout the entirety of *Blood Meridian* and American history.

Westward expansion advocated a process of re-making the world in the image of American imperium, which reflects Arendt’s analysis of the logic that allowed for the Third Reich to come to power, as men like Adolph Eichmann treated humans as components of nature to be mastered in the process of achieving larger goals. For Arendt, the conception of evil as a banal process, a justifiable form of means, is most disturbing because it removes the sense of chaos or mayhem that is usually associated with actions that are perceived as evil. Instead, a new understanding of evil is created that can be readily applied not only to events like the Holocaust, but to the judge’s actions, and the exceptionalist politics of Manifest Destiny as well. The judge’s willfulness separates him from Eichmann’s docility, and instead he seems to envision himself as the source of interpellation, which is why the boy’s failure to accept his call

is treated as a punishable offense. However, the Glanton Gang, with its roots in the legally sanctioned extermination of Native Americans, is made up of subjects very similar to Eichmann. Eichmann is simply a willing cog, an interpellated subject who accepts all means as justified, even if it requires him to “ship millions of men, women, and children to their death with great zeal and the most meticulous care” (*Eichmann* 25). Thus, seemingly evil events like the extermination of Jews during the Holocaust, or the elimination of Native Americans and Mexicans occupying annexed territory after the Mexican/American War, becomes nothing more than a logical extension of homo faber’s process of constructing the human artifice.

This banality is in many ways the theme of *Blood Meridian*, which is even more fully emphasized by Arendt’s notion that “The process of making is itself entirely determined by the categories of means and end” (*Portable* 174), and the perpetrator always believes the “end justifies the violence” of the means (*Portable* 176). In his “Critique of Violence,” Walter Benjamin says, in terms of “natural law,” which seems to be all the judge is interested in, the law “perceives in the use of violent means to just ends no greater problem than a man sees in his ‘right’ to move his body in the direction of a desired goal,” and this use of violence “is in no way problematical, unless force is misused for unjust ends” (277-278). This leads to what Benjamin refers to as the “circular argument” of whether or not an end can truly justify any means, but the judge is not interested in justifications, as he instead focuses on controlling the historical erasure of the means.

The history the judge hopes to both bring about and record is concerned with a perpetual accumulation of means, which may be why he claims “means and ends are of little importance,” because they are merely “idle speculations” (306). This is not to suggest that the means and ends are not important, but the judge believes that he is the only one concerned with them, and attempts to keep others from seeing the truth about either. In historical terms, both the judge and the novel seem to portray no particular *telos* other than the endless continuation of American expansion. This notion that the violence is endless and unjustified is reflected in the most repeated sentence in the novel: “They rode on.” There is no end to the violence, just as there is no clear origin, and the epilogue depicts a continued mastery of the human artifice, as the west is fenced in, and a new frontier looms on the horizon. In McCarthy’s history of the southwest, the violence of American exceptionalism is nothing more than a continuation of the grand human narrative, which has no specific *telos*, aside from the perpetuation of violence. The judge seems more concerned with a sort of “will to power” focused on mastering nature, but this mastery is yet another form of violence, which positions violence as both means and end. The manipulation of history is, therefore, nothing more than a continuation of the violence reflected in almost all of the judge’s actions.

The judge is so obsessed with violence and aware of the power of history that he looks to the violence of discourse as an extension of his already bloody lifestyle. McCarthy seems to be examining the formation of *homo faber* in a world governed by violence, which, in 1985, could easily represent lingering attitudes about Vietnam similar to those depicted in *No Country for Old Men*. Cormac McCarthy seems particularly aware of the dangers of globalized exceptionalism, and this novel reflects the “specters of Vietnam” that drew into question the plausibility of the United States continuing the tradition of acting as a “chosen nation.” Just as Judge Holden is aware of the immediacy of the power of discourse, McCarthy’s novel marks the importance of maintaining an intimate awareness of how history, shaped as democracy, is

spread around the globe by a model of U.S. imperialism that has become ingrained in global politics. This world is a product not only of American expansionism, but also of western civilization and the underlying role of violence throughout. The novel seeks to highlight the violence of historical record, while also examining the danger of allowing these events to remain forgotten. *Blood Meridian* does not reject “history as a meaningful category” (440), as Phillips suggests, but rather stresses the importance of recognizing history as a construction that requires constant critical examination. The judge is not some unapproachable monster, nor is he a man acting in the service of some higher order; he is simply the fulfillment of the logic of *homo faber* in a world governed by a logic of violence. McCarthy’s own attempts to revisit the histories the judge sought to expunge represent the ability of history to constantly be rewritten, which is as problematic as it is promising. Today we remember the violence, while, perhaps, tomorrow we will remember the pleasure of extermination. In this age of globalization, the questioning of historical record is of a greater importance than ever before, as shifting borders and boundaries will increase the opportunity for both physical and discursive violence.

## Works Cited

- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.
- . *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. Ed. Peter Baehner. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. Ed. Peter Demetz. New York: Schocken Books, 2007. Print.
- Chamberlain, Samuel E. *My Confession*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956. Print.
- Eaton, Mark A. “Dis(re)membered Bodies: Cormac McCarthy’s Border Fiction.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 49.1 (2003): 155-180. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972. Print.
- Kellner, Hans. *Language and Historical Representation: Getting the Story Crooked*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989. Print.
- Masters, Joshua J. “‘Witness to the Uttermost Edge of the World’: Judge Holden’s Textual Enterprise in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.” *Critique* 40.1 (1998): 25-37. Print.
- McCarthy, Cormac. *Blood Meridian: Or the Evening Redness in the West*. New York: Vintage Books, 1985. Print.
- Parkes, Adam. “History, Bloodshed, and the Spectacle of American Identity in *Blood Meridian*.” *Cormac McCarthy: New Directions*. Ed. James D. Lilley. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. Print.
- Phillips, Dana. “History and the Ugly Facts of Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.” *American Literature* 68.2 (1996): 433-460. Print.
- Rawley, James M. “The Myth that Loses, the Truth that Wins.” *Southwestern American Literature* 25.1 (1999): 92-104. Print.
- Renan, Ernest. “What is a Nation?” *Nationalism in Europe 1815 to the Present*. Ed. Stuart Woolf. New York: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Sepich, John. *Notes on Blood Meridian*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. Print.

Wallach, Rick. "Judge Holden, Blood Meridian's Evil Archon." *Sacred Violence: Cormac McCarthy's Western Novel*. Ed. Wade H. Hall and Rich Wallach. Texas Western Press, 2002. 125-136. Print.