

THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
ABDERRAHMANE MIRA UNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA  
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**Gothicism in McCarthy's *Blood Meridian, or  
the Evening Redness in the West*(1985).**

*A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for a Master degree in English Language,  
Literature, and Civilization*

**Candidate:**

**Ms. Meriem AIT ABBAS**

**Supervisor:**

**Mrs. Sihem SAIBI**

**Panel of Examiners:**

- Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Nassera SENHADJI
- Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Sihem SAIBI
- Examiner 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Assia MOHDEB
- Examiner 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Naima ARAB

**Academic Year: 2015 -2016**

## Declaration

This is to certify that the material embodied in the present work is based on my original research work. It has not been submitted, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any other university. My indebtedness to other works has been duly acknowledged in relevant places.

Department

Candidate

Committee

Supervisor

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

The dearest person in my life –may her soul rest in peace-, my sweet mother, you had been encouraging me, listening to my productions though you could not understand a word.

To my beloved father who has always been proud of me and to my treasured brothers Yacine and Hocine for giving me the comfort, necessary needs and care.

To my dearest sister Zouina and her husband, who had always shown faith in my abilities, and supported me to continue working hard.

To my nephew and nieces Mohamed Rayan, Chahinez and Malak for delighting and entertaining me.

To my precious stepmother: Fatima and to my beautiful sisters: Akila, Nassima and Yasmine for helping me a lot.

I also dedicate this work to:

All my best friends who have always encouraged and supported me.

All my cousins, (especially Naima and her husband Zahir) aunts, all the members of my family and all those who encouraged me in a way or another.

## **Acknowledgments**

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Almighty God for providing me with strength, patience, and health to strive and face all the difficulties that crossed my path in achieving this work.

And I would like to thank my supervisor Mrs. SAIBI from the bottom of my heart for her help, guidance, and her precious time in the process of writing and concluding this dissertation. Words are powerless to express my earnest thanks.

Special thanks to:

Mrs. Assia MOHDEB who cleared things when I was confused.

All my teachers especially Mr. MAKHLOUFI Arab, Mr. and Mrs. ARAB who gave me the novel.

The English department and its staff for giving us the opportunities to experience this wonderful experience and extend our knowledge.

## Table of Content

<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>General Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Background to the Research Topic.....	2
Review of Relevant Literature.....	3
The Importance of the Proposed Research .....	6
Aims and Objectives.....	7
Research Problem Statement and Research Questions.....	8
Overview of the Structure of the Paper .....	8
<b>Chapter one: <i>Blood Meridian</i> and its Background</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Introduction... ..	10
1. Biography .....	10
2. <i>Blood Meridian</i> .....	12
2.1. Summary.....	12
2.2. Reception of the Novel .....	17
2.3. Style.....	21
2.4. Genre .....	22
2.4.1. Western and Anti-Western.....	22
2.4.2. Postmodernism .....	24
2.4.2.1. Definition of Postmodernim .....	24
2.4.1.2. Elements of Postmodernism... ..	24
2.4.1.2.1. Histtorigraphic metafiction.....	24
2.4.1.2.2. Maximalism.....	25
2.4.1.2.3. Intertextuality .....	26
Conclusion.....	27
<b>Chapter Two: Gothicism</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Introduction .....	<b>30</b>
1. Definition and History of Gothicism .....	30
2. Elements of Gothicism .....	40

2.1. Clash of Civilization.....	40
2.2. Imprisonment.....	41
2.3. Gothic Women.....	42
Conclusion.....	<b>44</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Gothicism in <i>Blood Meridian</i> .....</b>	<b>46</b>
Introduction .....	<b>47</b>
<b>1. Analysis .....</b>	<b>47</b>
1.1. Clash of civilization.....	47
1.2. Imprisonment.....	52
1.3. Gothic Women.....	56
1.4. Supernatural Elements .....	67
1.5. Metonymy of Gloom .....	72
1.6. Suspense and Mystery .....	75
1.7. The Frontier .....	78
Conclusion.....	84
<b>General Conclusion .....</b>	<b>85</b>
Bibliography.....	90

## **Abstract**

This work studies Cormac McCarthy's novel *Blood Meridan, or the Evening Redness of the West* through the lenses of Gothicism. Following elements of the Gothic (mainly American and Southern Gothic), the present work strives to give a better understanding of the genre and how its elements are used in order to express fearful threads of this vogue in the novel. The objective of this work is also to explain the origins of Gothicism and explore its elements that are mostly cast in *Blood Meridian* which is not a conventional gothic work. It also aims at shedding a new light to this masterpiece as a historical fiction as most critics label it and provide its fans with more information.

**Key Words:** Gothic Literature, Southern Gothic, Frontier, *Blood Meridian*, Mystery, Cormac McCarthy.





## **General Introduction**

# General Introduction

## Background to the Research Topic

Since its discovery, many people who wanted to forget much of their past and make a fresh start wrote several records about the New Continent that intrigued them at that time, with its wilderness and beauty. America was then the promising cradle of optimism and wealth. This new atmosphere was the framework that compelled writers' imagination to create works to be evidence of America's splendors and imperfections.

American literature has not accidentally appeared. Many literary genres, in fact, emerged like fiction, nonfiction, prose, and poetry. Accordingly, this body of literary works about America forms what we call today 'American Literature'. Since its establishment, writers were influenced by many philosophical, cultural, and artistic trends and styles that reformed and (re)shaped the American literary canon. For that reason, Gothicism, a style and mode of writing, flourished in America to explore the notions of wilderness and frontier and deal with extreme fascination of melancholia, madness, crime, and horror. In her *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Leslie A. Fielder says that:

Our fiction is not merely in flight from the physical data of the actual world... it is, bewilderingly and embarrassingly, a gothic fiction, nonrealistic and negative, sadist and melodramatic – a literature of darkness and the grotesque in a land of light and affirmation...our classic [American] literature is a literature of horror for boys. (xxv)<sup>1</sup>

American literature does not seek to run away from the cruel American setting; in reality, it deals with what American society generally always tries to smother. This literature is, then, seen as dark as it opposes their mythic history.

---

<sup>1</sup> Leslie A. Fielder, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, New York: Criterion Books ,(1960).

In short, American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it. Cormac McCarthy is one of the most outstanding American modernist and postmodernist writers, his books have the finest, exquisite, and powerful language. In fact, his intricate and high-minded style is what makes his novels unique and inimitable.

In his fifth brilliant novel, *Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West* (1985), McCarthy painted a strikingly gory landscape of Western America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the first decades of his career, McCarthy wrote novels which can be classified as Southern Gothic because of their setting as well as the writers' use of Gothic elements like incest, necrophilia, and doppelgangers. This genius was not satisfied; he played with the genre more in his *Blood Meridian* (1985)<sup>2</sup> and *No Country for Old Men* (2005).

## **Review of Relevant Literature**

By putting McCarthy's book in historical perspective in his *Notes on Blood Meridian* (1993), John Sepich examines in detail historical and biographical sources from which McCarthy drew his narrative. Later on, Sepich brought the book back into print in 2008 and 2013 to make it more available. He revised and expanded *Notes* with a new preface and Edwin T. Arnold's foreword. This amplified edition of *Notes on Blood Meridian* is the essential guide for all who seek a complete understanding and appreciation of this novel and the writer's inspiration to write it.

In his *Modern Critical Views: Cormac McCarthy, New Edition* (2009) Harold Bloom explores in his introduction the master of darkness that has been compared to all the devilish characters of English literatures such as Iago and Ahab. Likewise, he analyses some passages and both the subtitle *Or the Evening Redness of the West* and the epilogue. Indeed, this volume gathers some of the best literary criticism devoted to the works of Cormac McCarthy including

---

<sup>2</sup>All subsequent references are to this edition.

“The Very Life of the Darkness: A Reading of *Blood Meridian*” by Steven Shaviro and “The Foundation of Empire: The Sacred Hunter and the Eucharist of the Wilderness in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*” written by Sara L. Spurgeon. Furthermore, it offers a fresh selection of full-length critical essays discussing the works of this McCarthy, as well as an editor’s note from the literary scholar Harold Bloom, a chronology, a bibliography, and notes on the contributors. Thus, this book is helpful to McCarthy scholars and readers.

In his *Cormac McCarthy: A Literary Companion*, Erik Hage closes both the readers and scholars who seek a comprehensive understanding of the author’s body of works. Organized by alphabetical entries, he offers analyses of the stories, characters, motifs, allusions, themes and McCarthy’s whole novels including *Blood Meridian* in which he narrates and analyses at the same time the historical events that occurred in the novel. Besides, he provides a commentary on corresponding events, places, and people related to McCarthy’s scholarship.

The McCarthy field of criticism had made of Cormac McCarthy the most famous writer who challenged critics with new themes. While Inger - Anne Søvting hailed *Blood Meridian* as an apocalyptic western in her essay “Desert Pandemonium: Cormac McCarthy’s Apocalyptic ‘Western’ in *Blood Meridian*” (1999), Barceley Owens explained in his critical book *Cormac McCarthy’s Western Novels* (2000) that the novel could be considered as a continuation of Naturalism<sup>3</sup>; a literary movement that flourished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in France and reached all the rest of the world.

Critics were not satisfied by studying these sides of the novel and went far as to study its ecopastoral<sup>4</sup> perspectives and the way its features echoed all along the novel. Georg Guillemain was among the prominent critics in the McCarthy field of criticism who examined this genre in

---

<sup>3</sup> Influenced by Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution, it is an American literary tradition that attempts to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to its study of human beings. It suggested that the role of family background, social conditions and environment in shaping human character.

<sup>4</sup> It is a genre of literature that studies the free rural life from the urban corruption in which nature and all what is rural and natural are harmonious. It mainly deals with the representation of an ecological balance in literature.

his *the Pastoral Vision of Cormac McCarthy* (2004). He used in-depth textual interpretations to analyze not only *Blood Meridian* but also *Suttree* and *The Border Trilogy*. He focused on anti-anthropocentric pastoralism through the novels' aestheticism, characters and the plots. He even studied another genre to accentuate the former within his novels; the Picaresque is mainly represented through the relationship between the Kid and the Judge Holdon. This contribution is, in fact, another angle in the McCarthy criticism and a good example for those who want to study the evolution of ecopastoralism in McCarthy's novels. Leo Daugherty is another prominent critic who studied *Blood Meridian's* gnosticism as a central thought among his characters (the Judge, the Kid, the Graver and the mysterious man of the epilogue), in his essay "Gravers False and True: *Blood Meridian* as Gnostic Tragedy" in *Perspectives on Cormac McCarthy* (2012) elaborated by Edwin T. Arnold and Dianne C. Luce. Petra Mundik, another scholar, investigated the relationship between Gnosticism and the Perennial Philosophy in her essay "this Luminosity in Beings So Endarkened": Gnostic Soteriology in *Blood Meridian*" in *A Bloody and Barbarous God: the Metaphysics of Cormac McCarthy* (2016) upon which the novel was woven and influenced. Similarly, in his *A Companion to the American gothic* (2013), Charles L. Crow gives the reader an updated compilation of the topics that have constituted the gothic novel throughout the years. It includes two prominent articles about studying *Blood Meridian* as a gothic novel. In the first article entitled "American Ruins and the Ghost Town Syndrome", Martin Procházka (2012) studies the gothic town syndrome through the ruins of Anasazi town and the quasi-eternity of evil and violence by using tarot symbolism through characterization like the first hermit (slaver), the family of magicians and Judge Holdon. In the second article entitled "When the Blood Trail Comes Full Circle", Ronja Vieth<sup>5</sup> states that

---

<sup>5</sup>She is the most prominent critic who studied Gothicism in Cormac McCarthy's works mainly *Blood Meridian* which is not a novel about the frontier but a frontier novel that explores the journey motif that we find in most gothic novels alongside the sublime and the grotesque resented by the setting and the character of judge Holden in her "A Frontier Myth turns Gothic: *Blood Meridian: Or, the Evening Redness in the West*" (2010).

While McCarthy's earlier works set in the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee investigate personal guilt in light of moral ambiguity, and their Gothic tropes exemplify more and more clearly society's involvement with and even responsibility for that guilt, *Blood Meridian* and *The Road* explore in greater detail the interconnectedness between personal, societal, and national guilt. (393)

She mainly focused on historical guilt that emerged through the process of realizing Manifest Destiny at the expense of African slaves and the genocide of Native peoples.

It is clear that although this novel has been indeed woven within the gothic stance as I will show later in my research, McCarthy's gothicism has been rarely acknowledged. I will support my own interpretation of this novel with works of Catherine Spooner (2006) who gave an insight to postmodern Gothicism, and Fred Botting (1996) who studied the Gothic origins, forms, and its heydays within our postmodern era (2012).

## **The Importance of the Proposed Research**

Being interested in American historical literature as it is my favorite genre beside romance, my teacher of literary theory advised me to read *Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness of the West* (called hereafter *BM*). While reading, some elements of Gothicism caught my attention and its terror intermingled with the grotesque was so beautiful that it encouraged me to further the reading even though it was so difficult to understand everything. The first time I read the novel, I was disgusted by the violence's scale, but I wanted to know more about the characters and this genius who carefully described the American West.

Choosing *BM* as a gothic novel did not come at random but because of several reasons. The first one that I can mention is that it is related to my interest in supernatural elements in this novel. It is a real picture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Gothic fiction in which McCarthy describes and analyses the dark side of human existence. This historical novel contains genuine and real events of Mexican War, scalp-hunting, gold-seeking and the persecution of Indians. By categorizing it

within a gothic sphere, the novel's extent of violence could be seen as what people mostly fear to occur and not indeed what actually happened. This trend had spread its limbs all over the world which has been sobered in darkness because of wars that bred chaotic landscapes, famine, and economical crisis. We, thus, will get in touch with our innermost fears, desires and impulses to act violently, and reduce it in order not to fall in the same trap. As Karl Marx have said "history repeats itself" (no pagination) we, the new generations, are witnessing what our forefathers lived in a new angle that fits better our contemporary society. Consequently, we may find some solutions to cease all these ignominies in order to avoid an apocalyptic earthly hell.

The present research is a small contribution that will demonstrate that the writer uses cleverly yet not openly some elements of the gothic novel. He also plays with the genre to create a new one which is both modern and American.

## **Aims and Objectives**

Our main objective through this study is to classify McCarthy's fifth novel *BM* along his previous gothic works and literature. Since the genesis of the genre, elements of Gothicism were clearly easy to understand as they are recurrent in most 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries gothic novels. Nonetheless, the gothic itself varies from one literature to another as each country develops its own concepts of the genre. Yet, European and American (and more precisely Southern) Gothicism share some traits such as mystery and suspense.

Impressed by the way McCarthy built the atmosphere of Gothicism in the novel our aims do not only stop here, but further to enhance people's understanding of this *chef-d'oeuvre* and make them aware of its beauty and real meaning. Furthermore, this present research seeks to shed a new light on this text and support Vieth's and Procházka's ideas that, in fact, this challenging masterpiece is a gothic novel despite its many historical references.

Defining the Gothic is not as easy. Its elements can be either found in the works' characters and/or their fears or what they stand for. Besides, as we dig deeper into the genre, perhaps Gothicism can be represented in the novels' settings themselves. Elements of Gothicism can also be found in the themes that the novels convey or deal with as we will see later.

## **Research Problem Statement and Research Questions**

This study investigates, as the title shows, aspects of Gothicism in the selected text *Blood Meridian*. The questions addressed in the present research are the following:

1. What is *Blood Meridian* about?
2. What do we mean by Gothicism and what are its main elements?
3. How can a book about scalp-hunting and the Mexican war such as *Blood Meridian* be a gothic novel?

## **Overview of the Structure of the Paper**

This research paper is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is devoted to answer the first question as we introduce McCarthy and his work, the reception of the selected novel, and some of its aspects. The second chapter attempts to answer the second question as we define Gothicism and study its history, its evolution, and its main elements. The last chapter analyzes the elements of the gothic novel in *Blood Meridian* as an attempt to answer to the third question.



## **Chapter One**

### ***Blood Meridian* and its Background**

## Introduction

American western literature is as vast as the land about which it was written. It comprises all forms of popular and literary fiction like nature writing, personal essays, memoirs, and historical studies written in the English language about the American West. The western is better documented as a film genre rather than as a literary genre since it draws an authentic visual picture of the borderlines between civilization and wilderness.

The Old West or the Wild West as it is often called has bewildered many writers with its nature, horses, guns, and cowboy life. Its common features are the exploration of history and the landscape in addition to the quest of identity. In his thesis titled *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893), Frederick Turner interpreted the American past and promoted new methods in historical research. He put emphasis on the frontier's importance in creating national and ideal identity and deduced that the American western identity was rooted in the frontier. It mostly became the modal of identity for all Americans. By its disappearance in the 19th century, the frontier anxiety rose to spread the loss of identity notion.

Cormac McCarty is among the prominent writers who tackled this kind of literature in four novels. The first is *Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness of the West*, which is our main concern, and the second is *The Border Trilogy* that comprises three novels: *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), and *Cities of the Plain* (1998).

### 1. Biography

It is so hard to write about a writer who guards his privacy like Cormac McCarthy; a name that seeds mystery in the mind of every person who has already heard about him or read one of his novels. Indeed, this turn over author has been considered as an important voice in literature and a subject of study and criticism.

McCarthy came to the court of fame thanks to his novels *The Road* and *Border Trilogy* that have been first of all initiated by *Blood Meridian*. Later on, critics, researchers, and a huge number of his fans put much attention to his first works like *Blood Meridian* that was considered as his *chef-d'oeuvre*. Susan Kollin called him “one of the South's most famous living writers [who] have emerged in recent years as one of the West's most important storytellers” (67).

McCarthy kept all information about his life and preferred to seclude his personal life away from society's eyes. We only know some information from his editors as they include a short biography when they release his novels. This gives him the mysterious and gothic characteristic which he embedded in his works. It is not very easy to find information about his life since he was protected by his previous editor and friend, Albert Erskine, to whom he dedicated *Blood Meridian*. In short, he left his readers with eager to know more about him.

For most of his adult life, he has spurned media attention and bankable offers to speak about his life. Even when his young family lived in poor conditions, McCarthy refused any interview for the sake of money. He left Knoxville (east Tennessee) for good to El Paso Texas, like the main character “the kid”, to research *Blood Meridian*. Apparently, he learned Spanish and searched southwest history, along his way. Up till today, McCarthy has never accepted any interviews except few countable ones. The first was in 1992 with *The New York Times* magazine, the second was a profile/interview he did in 1992 with *Der Spiegel*, the third was in 2005 with *Vanity Fair* magazine, the fourth with *The Wall Street Journal* in 2007, and the fifth with *The Rolling Stone* magazine in December 2007. McCarthy did also a rare and the first TV interview with Oprah Winfrey in June 2007 at the Santa Fe Institute, and another video interview with Mario-Paul Martinez in 2012.

## ***2. Blood Meridian***

### **2.1. Summary**

*Blood Meridian or the Evening Redness of the West* is Cormac McCarthy's first novel to be set on the U.S-Mexico borderlands around the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the ground work set for his later works of *the Border Trilogy*. The novel chronicles the closing of the frontier and the cowboy life initiated in *Blood Meridian*. This novel with maleficent characters is composed of 23 chapters that are summarized in few words at each chapter's heading, with a short epilogue and three opening epigraphs of Paul Valery, Jacob Boehme, and the Yuma Daily Sun Newspaper, respectively which foreshadow the premise of his tale. Written in archaic, poetic, and beautiful English, the text contains pockets or passages of untranslated Spanish that show McCarthy's mastery of both languages. He also employs many historical and mystical details, in the years following the Mexican-American war and fortune-seekers who exploited the frontier for their own gains. The novel has been claimed as unfilmable since it contains too much violence. Nonetheless, in 2012, James Franco succeeded in recording a very short movie of 32 minutes and 32 seconds.

Partially based on historical facts and real life events, the novel narrates the story of a nameless protagonist (the kid) who faces death several times throughout his living inferno. This young orphan, who is born in 1833, during the Leonids' meteor shower, runs away from his homeland of Tennessee<sup>6</sup>, at the age of fourteen and "wanders west as far as Memphis" (1) where he becomes a fighter. He labors different works from which he earns an old mule that would take him to Nacogdoches<sup>7</sup>, Texas, where he meets up with Reverend Green in Fredonia<sup>8</sup>. This latter is

---

<sup>6</sup> It is a constituent state of the United States of America. It is located in the upper South of eastern U.S. and became the 16<sup>th</sup> state of the Union in 1796. Nashville is its capital and Memphis is its largest city.

<sup>7</sup> Located in the East U.S. state of Texas, it is a county that was created in 1826 as a municipality of Mexico and was organized as a county in 1837. (Texas became the 28<sup>th</sup> state of the Union in 1845. It occupies the south-central segment of the country and is the second largest state in the United States by both area and population).

a passionate preacher whom the Judge Holden; an enormous hairless man accused of pedophilia, debauchery, and bestiality. Soon after, this public revelation turns the religious revival into a battlefield in which the Reverend becomes their targeting foe.

Running away from this atmosphere, the kid ends up in a bar where a man inquires the omnipresent judge about Green's sins. Nevertheless, this latter's answer astounds the audience that bursts into laughter. Sober, the kid encounters Toadvine with whom he fights, but ends up scheming together the following day to beat a man to death, burn a hotel, and kill its clerk. The kid runs away once again and continues his journey across the prairie where he encounters a hermit who shelters him from a storm. Setting westward again, the kid runs into a group of cattle herders who helped and guided him to Bexar<sup>9</sup> where he goes to a cantina to do manual chores in exchange of a drink but ends up brutalizing the bartender since he tricked him. On his trail, he came across a dead cart transporting cadavers of gold diggers.

Along the novel, the kid joins two groups: the Filibusters<sup>10</sup> and the Glanton Gang. He meets new people and experiences an adventurous life. Sergeant Trammel, a recruit under Captain White's regime, is seeking after the kid to convince him to join the Filibusters whose expedition is toward Mexico<sup>11</sup>. On their way back to camp after shopping, the group stops at a tavern where they made acquaintance with an old Mennonite who warns them from waking "the wrath of God" (40); obviously, this prophecy created chaos and one of White's men dies. Led by a Mexican guide, luck was not their ally since drought has spread its tentacles over the area.

---

<sup>8</sup> The Republic of Fredonia (December 1826 – January 1827) was located near Nacogdoches, Texas, and was the first attempt by Anglo settlers in Texas to secede from Mexico

<sup>9</sup> San Antonio de Bexar was the former name of the city of San Antonio, Texas. It is officially the seventh most populated city in the United States of America and the second most populated city in the state of Texas.

<sup>10</sup> Also called as freebooter, they are United States citizens who engaged in an unauthorized military expedition in Latin America in the mid-19th century.

<sup>11</sup> It is a federal republic country of North America and the third largest country in Latin America, after Brazil and Argentina.

There was no warm torch to welcome them, except a sanguinary group of Comanche<sup>12</sup> warriors who brutally decapitates, before scalping them. From this bloodshed, eight people survived, among them the kid who joined forces with the injured Sproule to fetch some food and water which they luckily found in an abandoned Mexican village, decorated with corpses, and surrounded by a bush of dead babies. Within few days, the man dies; the kid was captured by Mexican soldiers and was imprisoned with White's head.

Once in jail at Chihuahua<sup>13</sup>, the kid meets again Toadvine. Under the guidance of Grannyrat<sup>14</sup>, the diabolic pair scheme together, once again, in order to escape from jail. While working, they notice two groups: the Gold-seekers and the Scalp Hunters; a historical group known as the Glanton Gang (who is paid by Mexicans to kill Indians). Led by John Glanton and the satanic Judge Holden, they joined the group after their evasion from prison. The group armed themselves with new Jewish pistols from a Prussian arm dealer named Speyer. With his gifted eloquence, Holden soothes a quarrel between his gang and some Mexican soldiers who allow them to head to Corralitos<sup>15</sup>.

The story becomes episodic; different characters will join the group such as the family of magicians who read their fortunes with tarot cards, the four cups, and warn them about their life-threatening future. In fact, these premonitions become real; the gang is attacked by another group of Apache<sup>16</sup> in Janos<sup>17</sup> where Glanton takes his first scalp. Later on, the black Jackson kills the white (two men from the gang bearing the same name) for denigrating him. Afterwards, the Scalp

---

<sup>12</sup> They are Native Americans whose historic range consisted of present-day eastern New Mexico, southern Colorado, northeastern Arizona, southern Kansas, all of Oklahoma, and most of northwest Texas and are reputed for their ferocity.

<sup>13</sup> It is the Free and Sovereign State of Chihuahua whose capital is Chihuahua City. It is located in Northwestern Mexico and is considered as one of the 31 states which, with the Federal District, comprise the 32 Federal Entities of Mexico.

<sup>14</sup> In the novel, he is a Kentuckian veteran who fought at Mier and served in the Mexican-American War. John Sepich says that he "appears to be a conflated rather than a particular historical character" (40). For more information see John Sepich's *Notes on Blood Meridian* (2008).

<sup>15</sup> It is located in the foothills of Santa Cruz Mountains, California which is located in the western part of the United States, its most populous state and one of its constituent from 1850.

<sup>16</sup> They are another tribe of Native Americans who originally lived in North America, but were chased to the Southwestern of United States and Northern Mexico.

<sup>17</sup> It is a municipality that is located in the extreme northwest in the Mexican state of Chihuahua.

Hunters ride to the mountains where they spend the night with some Squatters and a young Mexican boy who were attacked by Indians and the Judge started to preach about geology. Nonetheless, as the dark rose his beastly thirst for blood raises and casts a spell over nature to stop the storm. Thus, he kills the Mexican boy after raping him and the gang continues its Odyssey. Tobin; an ex-priest within Glanton's gang tells the kid Judge Holden's mythical story, his weird habits, his encounter with Glanton and his painstaking magical prowess to craft gunpowder with natural resources. As the company continues its journey into the mountains, a bear welcomes it by eating one of the Delawares<sup>18</sup>. At a camp fire, the Judge sketches all what is unknown to him, burns it in order "to expunge [it] from the memory of man" (140) and tells a story of an old harness maker's family and a historical narrative about the Anasazi<sup>19</sup>.

The Glanton Gang plunge into the South where they discover a whole village of Gilenos<sup>20</sup> they savagely slaughter while sleeping. Their cruelty does not stop here; they even swing babies into stones. Alas Gomez<sup>21</sup>, the leader of the Apache and whose price is higher, was not there; this is what annoyed Glanton the most. This savage carnage does not slake their thirst for blood. They even exterminate a group of Apaches they encounter en route, but a larger troop chased them to seek revenge. Luck was by their side, the Gang reached Chihuahua where it was hailed as heroes to receive its prize and are invited by governor Trias<sup>22</sup> to celebrate their trophies. They eat, drink mainly and dance with prostitutes; an earthly Eden that was soon sobered into a debauched hell as they perpetuated this scenery every night. Not welcomed anymore, the group vacates the village where Glanton was demanded by law as he kills innocents. Thus, they ride to

---

<sup>18</sup> They represent another tribe of Native Americans who settled in Oklahoma. In the novel two Delawares join the Glanton Gang as guides.

<sup>19</sup> They were Ancestral Puebloans; Native Americans who lived in the Southwestern of United States (southeastern Utah, northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico, and southwestern Colorado). They were called Anasazi, by the Navajo (another tribe of Native Americans), for historical purposes.

<sup>20</sup> It is a term used as a collective name for different Apache groups living along the Gila River; sometimes for all Chiricahua who are a band of Apache Native Americans. They lived in the Southern Plains and Southwest of United States.

<sup>21</sup> He is a powerful southern Mescalero (an Apache tribe of Southern Athabaskan Native Americans) chief during the mid 19th century.

<sup>22</sup> Trias Angel Alvarez is one of Chihuahua's governors (1809 -1867) who hired Glanton for scalp hunting. In 1844, he became the initiator of the Chihuahuan liberalism.

the South where massacre after massacre is atrociously done until they reached Jesus Maria<sup>23</sup> where they drink in a bodega run by an American, Frank Carroll. The following days, the village celebrates a religious feast while the Judge helps the drunken Glanton to sleep then heads to town to buy puppies for the sake of drowning them. Awake, Glanton explodes a fight with some Mexicans and the whole village torches all the remaining Americans while he flies with his group.

*En route*, the Scalp Hunters escort the Bell brothers; Cloyce and James Roberts alias the idiot (who is in a cage chewing feces for money) to California in exchange of money. As they reach the Colorado River, they meet Doctor Lincoln who owns a ferry and Sarah Borginis who helps the idiot but fails in freeing him. The Gang conspires with the Yumas<sup>24</sup> to take the ferry but tricks them to enrich themselves. Indeed, The Yumas lost a battle but not the war. Thereafter, they counter attack and kill almost all the gang's members while they were drunk, except the judge and the idiot who escapes to the woods, in addition to the kid and Toadvine who evade to the desert. The pairs meet Tobin, later on, in the desert where they fight. Badly injured, the kid goes to San Diego<sup>25</sup> to seek for a doctor but gets imprisoned. The Judge declares his fatherly love and blames him for poisoning the scalp hunter's heart and mind through helping them. Baptized and treated by a doctor, the kid bribes a soldier to escape from the prison with Glanton's treasure and goes to Los Angeles<sup>26</sup> where he eyewitnesses the public hanging of his previous mates: Toadvine and Davy Brown. Wandering aimlessly around the west, he is haunted by the same scenes of death and murder that plagued not only his life but also earth overly, even when he is 28 years old.

---

<sup>23</sup> It is a town in the region of Los Altos of the Mexican state of Jalisco (whose capital city is Guadalajara; it is located in Western Mexico and is divided into 125 municipalities).

<sup>24</sup> Also called the Quechan, they are a Native Americans who live on the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation in the Colorado River, Arizona, and California.

<sup>25</sup> It is a major city in California and the eighth-largest city in the United States.

<sup>26</sup> Known by its initials L.A., it was founded on September 4, 1781, by Spanish governor Felipe de Neve. It is the second-largest city in the United States after New York City and the most populous city in the state of California.



By 1878, the kid is referred to as The Man, who is now 45 years old. He encounters the ageless Judge in Fort Griffin<sup>27</sup>, Texas, for the last time. This latter informs him that they are the last survivors of the Glanton Gang and, as usual, started to lecture on fate and dancing. The Man ignores him and stays away from him but as he goes to the saloon outhouse, the Judge waited for him and took the Man into his “immense and terrible flesh” (333). Two men discovered him savagely assassinated (presumably) and the Judge is said to be dancing naked among the whores and other men claiming that “he never sleeps ... and will never die” (335). This nightmarish and ghastly novel ends with an epilogue about a nameless and promethean-like wholes-maker with “an implement with two handles” made of steel, setting fire to each whole he makes while “behind him are the wanderers”(337) following.

## 2.1. Reception of the Novel

*Blood Meridian or the Evening Redness of the West* was originally published in 1985<sup>28</sup> by Random House, New York. Caryn James (1985) wrote in *The New York Times* that the novel:

Comes at the reader like a slap in the face, an affront that asks us to endure a vision of the Old West full of charred human skulls, blood-soaked scalps, a tree hung with the bodies of dead infants. But while Cormac McCarthy's fifth novel is hard to get through, it is harder to ignore. (no pagination)

People see McCarthy as a difficult writer since his works deal with the grisly and the grotesque intermingled with extremely violent and haunting characters. Yet, he is quietly admired and loved since his revisionist works are written in a unique style. Ralph Ellison considered him as “a writer to be read, to be admired and quietly honestly envied” (no pagination) while Robert

---

<sup>27</sup> It was a US Cavalry fort established on 31 July 1867. Originally called Camp Wilson, it was later named after Charles Griffin, a former Civil War Union general who had commanded, the Department of Texas during the early years of Reconstruction. It is located in the northern part of western Texas in Shackelford County, specifically, to protect settlers from early Comanche and Kiowa raids.

<sup>28</sup> Before this date, there was no author who masterfully created a unique violent historical western novel, except Cormac McCarthy who established this McCarthian tradition.

Pen Warren saw him as “a born narrator, and his writing has, line by line, the stab of actuality. He is here to stay”. (no pagination)

Puzzling as his works, many writers and editions have been intrigued by this genius who lightens the American canon with his refined works. Eric Hage defines him as “a cult figure” and “writer’s writer”(11) , and *The New York Times* writes that “Mr. McCarthy has the best kind of southern style, one that fuses risky eloquence, intricate rhythms and dead-to-rights accuracy”. (no pagination). Most of McCarthy’s works have been unknown until the release of his *Border Trilogy*, mainly with his *All the Pretty Horses* that shed light more on his writings. At the time of its release, the novel received little critical attention and was sold for only few thousand copies. In the subsequent years that followed, it was discovered by many readers, and its reputation grew steadily over the years to the point where in 2010 *Time Magazine* included it in its list of the hundred best novels of all time. (Grossman and Lacayo no pagination)

After its discovery, *Blood Meridian* was later on published by several editions that reviewed and gave it more credit. John Banville, an Irish novelist; screenwriter; and sub-editor, reviewed the book for *The Independent* saying that this book is like a mixture of “Inferno”, *The Iliad*, and *Moby Dick*, an unusual and spectacular success. In the front cover of First Vintage Edition (1992), Michael Herr writes that it is: “A classic American novel of regeneration through violence. McCarthy can only be compared with our greatest writers, [...] and this is his masterpiece”.

Most of all his fans and critics have failed in their first attempts to read the novel. It was beyond people’s imagination of the harshness, violence, and bloodshed of many innocent American Indians and Mexicans. These thwarting trials did not even spare the great modern critic Harold Bloom who viewed the novel as:

[t]he authentic American apocalyptic novel, more relevant even in 2010 than it was twenty-five years ago. I venture that no other living American

novelist, not even Pynchon, has given us a book as strong and memorable as *Blood Meridian* [since] it is the ultimate Western, not to be surpassed. (1)

He also confesses that “[his] first two attempts to read through *Blood Meridian* failed, because [He] flinched from the overwhelming carnage that McCarthy portrays” (ibid). Nevertheless, he “urge[s] the reader to persevere, because *Blood Meridian* is a canonical imaginative achievement, both an American and a universal tragedy of blood” (1). Its magnificence lays in its maleficent characters in addition to “—its language, landscape, persons, conceptions—at last transcends the violence, and convert goriness into terrifying art”(2). Indeed, it is an exploration into the inner depth of dark souls. He also adds that:

Television saturates us with actual as well as imagined violence, and I turn away, either in shock or in disgust. But I cannot turn away from *Blood Meridian*, now that I know how to read it, and why it has to be read. None of its carnage is gratuitous or redundant. (ibid)

Likewise, Peter Josyph says that *Blood Meridian* invites us to imagine a character who is exceptional in contemporary American letters, and this writer guy with a pen and a typewriter is writing without thinking of “the literary police of either the left or the right, and is happy to go to the devil on his own terms and, like Blake, to walk in Hell delighting in the fires of genius” (52).

Jay Ellis, on the other hand, assures that *Blood Meridian* was McCarthy’s first novel that compelled him to write about the writer since he was stuck by his “aesthetic achievement” in which its language has been woven (1). Erik Hage, another admirer and scholar, declared that this novel is “the author’s grand achievement of the 1980s and the product of all of his borderlands immersion” (10-11), and that it was also an immense, epic, and gory narrative that beyond doubt spurred his literary repute. Christopher J. Walsh argues *Blood Meridian* is more intricate and symbolic than the other novels (119) while Edwin T. Arnold and Dianne C. Luce maintain that it is “one of the touchstones by which McCarthy readers define themselves” (21). Tom Nolan, in the same way, calls *Blood Meridian* “a theological purgative and an allegory on

the nature of evil” (Arnold and Luce 22). However, not all readers and critics were charmed by this novel. Writing for *The New Republic*, Terence Moran found it annoying and tedious “despite its chronicling of appalling horrors and its straining for apocalyptic effects” (ibid 21).

All in all, *Blood Meridian* is gloomy and brutal; a pure tour de force that was rather misunderstood when it was first published in 1985. Now, it is hailed as one of the most prominent American novels of the contemporary era and one of the finest pieces of fiction written by a currently living American author.

As a novel, it is ambiguous since, on one hand, it is constituted of beautiful and complex style while, on the other hand, its horrid side of brutal, cruel, horrendous, and horrifying characters is evoked to be the recreation of Satan himself (or even worse). There is no righteous protagonist or completely odious antagonist. Indeed, it is considered as the blessing heaven where many aesthetic literary critics like Steven Shaviro and Jay Ellis have surfeited their hunger of beautiful, difficult, original, and elevated vocabulary or style, and the blasting hell in which many sensitive people have been haunted by the dreadful and fearful scenes of murder, killing, and raping.

McCarthy’s memorable works serve to show that the American nation has been built on the back of many martyrs and history’s corpses. Nevertheless, McCarthy familiarizes us with excessive violence in this novel so that we can “witness evil not in order to understand it but to affirm its inexplicable reality [and alter deep inside us this urge to act violent and sadistic]; his elaborate language invents a world hinged between the real and surreal, jolting us out of complacency”. (Caryn James no pagination) Furthermore, he calls our minds to question this vehement violence and cruelty in order to cease it and keep people away from it.

## 2.2. Style

McCarthy is better known for his beautiful, yet difficult biblical and archaic language that created his own McCarthian jargon. He mostly writes in a very high style “as overtly Shakespearean as it is Faulknerian” (Bloom 533). His prose sounds poetic, but he mingles his texts with real slang jargon as he uses contractions, too. He sometimes writes words and others times whole sentences in Spanish and employs sparse punctuation and other grammatical structures such as run-on sentences. He, in fact, creates a narrative that is starkly stripped to nothingness like the novel's setting itself. Willard P. Greenwood notes that the absence of quotation marks and apostrophes became his signature technique in his works. This can be clearly noticed in the novel as McCarthy writes:

He crossed the polished clay floor past a sleeping dog that opened one eye and looked at him and he stood at the bar and placed both hands on the tiles. The barman nodded to him. Digame, he said...They stopped. Some looked at him, some pursed their mouths or shrugged. The boy turned to the bartender. You got something I could do for a couple of drinks I know damn good and well. (*BM* 23)

We do not know who is speaking to whom unless we re-read those passages. McCarthy himself believes that there is no reason to “blot the page up with weird little marks” (Oprah no pagination) and prefers to write in simple declarative sentences that he mainly used in *Blood Meridian*.

Eric Hage states that McCarthy has a very unique style of writing; he writes in a heightened language that is “both timeless and antiquarian” and uses very long sentences with no semicolons to “sublimate Melville, the Bible, and Ernest Hemingway[’s style]”. (3) He is not a Southern or Western regionalist but an inimitable contemporary American writer who created his own “novelistic world” (*ibid*). The novel is filled with long sentences (a tradition that McCarthy inherited from Faulkner) as he writes:

A legion of horribles, hundreds in number, half naked or clad in costumes attic or biblical or wardrobed out of a fevered dream with the skins of animals and silk finery and pieces of uniform still tracked with the blood of prior owners, coats of slain... from a hell more horrible yet than the brimstone land of Christian reckoning, screeching and yammering and clothed in smoke like those vaporous beings in regions beyond right knowing where the eye wanders and the lip jerks and drools. (*BM* 52)

This reclusive writer also describes in details and sometimes too much that you get lost while reading. In his first televised interview with Oprah, He said that: “you don’t need punctuation if you write properly” since “it makes it easy for people to read” (2007). He believes in periods, in capitals, in occasional comma, and that is it, no more no less.

## **2.3. Genre**

### **2.4.1. Western and Anti-Western**

To a certain degree, Hollywood films are responsible for creating the Western myth to which heroic cowboys who sparkle with youth and masculinity were incorporated. Through time, they became what the cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard calls the “hyper-real” (Mark Poster 166) or the loss of history with the creation of its representation. The real image of that affinity is simulated within its copy, leaving no historical proof of its existence as the mirroring image is substituted to become itself the real. In other words, the real image of these heroic and mythic cowboys has been simulated. Consequently, McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian* is considered as both a western and an anti-western novel.

On the one hand, *Blood meridian* is a western novel since it is first of all referred to in its subordinate title *Or the Evening Redness of the West*. Then, it is written in the language of its setting and surroundings: English and some pockets of Spanish sentences. Furthermore, it is primarily set along the western landscape of the Texas-Mexico border in the mid-nineteenth century where cowboys ride horses along the desert while arming themselves. Indeed, this

bildungsroman<sup>29</sup> teaches its readers the American history since it mainly revolves around Westward expansions, the Spanish war, scalp hunting and quest for gold. It narrates the adventures of a young cowboy who first of all joins the Filibusters and then the Glanton Gang. These groups were mainly dominant in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Old West.

Kenneth Lincoln says that “*Blood Meridian, Or the Evening Redness in the West* is a queer piece of fiction painstakingly researched from the southwest Mexican-American wars spilling across national treaties toward *The Border Trilogy* taking place a century later”(60). No one has succeeded to create a genuine piece of fiction about the American southwest as McCarthy’s novel that initiated the cowboy life which ends in his *Border Trilogy*. The first novel deals with past events as the United States’ war Against Mexico in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and his three sequels deal with modern issues such as corruption of the changing world, romance (mainly for the last book of the *Trilogy*), and the old values’ oblivion besides western life, taking place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Edwin T. Arnold notes that it was McCarthy’s first “western”(Sepich XI) since almost all his first novels are set in the Southeast of U.S. or in Tennessee, mainly, and Bloom labels it as “the ultimate Western, not to be surpassed” (49). In other words, McCarthy has succeeded to create the western novel that he was dreaming about.

On the other hand, it is considered as an anti-western or a revisionist Western since it deconstructs and demythologizes the American western myth of peaceful cowboy life and reveals a darker reality of the foundations of American culture. Sara Spurgeon comments that: “McCarthy presents a counter memory, a sort of anti-myth of the west” (20). The writer, in reality, mirrors the other side of the American mythical history that most Americans buried with them, a myth that no reader recognizes in this novel since the Scalp-hunters are not seen as

---

<sup>29</sup> Also Known as: education novel, formation novel, coming of age novel, it is the combination of two German words: Bildung, meaning "education," and Roman, meaning "novel." It is a novel that deals with the moral education and psychological development of the main character, from his or her youth to adulthood. Such novels start with a loss or a tragedy that disturbs the protagonist and pushes him or her to leave on a journey to fill that vacuum in which he or she gradually gains maturity with difficulty.

heroes as mostly known in history. In *Blood Meridian*, they are rather agents of chaos and destruction as they killed every motions creature they encountered en their route, especially, when they exterminated a whole peaceful tribe of Indians. Furthermore, the kid is the nameless hero who “broods a taste for mindless violence” (*BM* 3) throughout the story and shows that the West was founded on horrific slaughters and senseless attacks by providing a glimpse into the horror stories and violence.

Megan Riley and Robert Jarrets refers to *Blood Meridian*, the first of McCarthy’s four western novels, as a ‘revisionary western’ which corrects and rewords our perception of the western, showing us characters that fundamentally alter all our suppositions about the romanticized western history (120).

## **2.4.2. Postmodernism**

### **2.4.2.1. Definition of Postmodernism**

Postmodernism is an umbrella term that includes different fields like literature, philosophy, art, painting, and architecture. In literature, it describes the use of old stylistic techniques such as historiographic metafiction, intertextuality, parody, and pastiche through different literary periods. Authors have created all the possible combinations of literary techniques, thus postmodern writers return back to the past, alter it, and create a new masterpiece of their own.

### **2.4.2.2. Elements of Postmodernism**

#### **2.4.2.2.1. Historiographic Metafiction**

Elements of postmodernism can be easily pinpointed in *Blood Meridian*. First of all, we have historiographic metafiction which is a term that was coined by Linda Hutcheon<sup>30</sup> to denote postmodern novels that “are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to

---

<sup>30</sup> Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory Fiction*. The Taylor & Francis e-Library. 2004



historical events and personages” (5). In other words, she refers to novels that fictionalize actual historical events, characters or both of them. According to this definition, we can say that this technique constitutes the core of the novel since it deals with historical events such as the Mexican-American war that occurred between the United States and Mexico (April 1846 and February 1848). It is here referred to as “The war's over” (*BM* 29). When Captain White converses with the kid, he later on says: “What do you think of the treaty?” (*BM* 33), which is a reference to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the war. Another element that constituted this technique was the reference to the belief of manifest destiny; a mysterious concept through which America has spread its tentacles to get some parts of the world, when captain white says: “We are dealing with a people manifestly incapable of governing themselves. And do you know what happens with people who cannot govern themselves? That's right. Others come in to govern for them”( *BM* 34).

The scalp hunters or the Glanton Gang, in addition to the Filibusters, are both historical military groups that terrified Americans during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. McCarthy also referred to historical places such as Bexar, Memphis, Tennessee, and other historical characters like: Glanton, Judge Holdon, Sarah Borginnis, Mariano Paredes and the Indian tribes. To illustrate what has been said, Sepich says that in *Blood Meridian* there are historically provable characters, places, and events, despite the fact that few of these correspondences are obvious to the reader (167).

#### **2.4.2.2.2. Maximalism**

Another feature that makes *Blood Meridian* a postmodern novel is maximalism which is a lengthy, highly detailed, and emotionally disconnected writing. We easily notice this feature in the novel since McCarthy is mostly known for careful descriptions of events, landscapes and

sometimes characters such as the Indians' description that was elaborated in a very long sentence along with the savage murders of the Glanton Gang:

Now driving in a wild frieze of headlong horses with eyes walled and teeth cropped and naked riders with clusters of arrows clenched in their jaws and their shields winking in the dust and up the far side of the ruined ranks in a piping of boneflutes and dropping down off the...heads, gutting the strange white torsos and holding up great handfuls of viscera, genitals, some of the savages so slathered up with gore they might have rolled in it like dogs and some who fell upon the dying and sodomized them with loud cries to their fellows. (*BM* 53-54)

### **2.4.2.2.3. Intertextuality**

Intertextuality is another element by which we can classify McCarthy's novel within the postmodern genre. It mainly denotes the interrelationship between literary works. In his novel, McCarthy was strongly influenced by Samuel Chamberlain's memoir which serves as the authentic material and source for *Blood Meridian* especially with the description of Judge Holden. Sepich states that "Chamberlain is McCarthy's source for *Blood Meridian's* lottery-of-arrows" (70) that is to say the scene where Indians (the Comanches) attack the Filibusters. The Bible is another source upon which McCarthy extracted some passages to create his own piece. We notice many references and sentences that are taken from the Bible and are quoted in the novel like "[h]is folk are known for hewers of wood and drawers of water" (*BM* 3) that is originally taken from Joshua 9:23: "[n]ow therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God" [sic]. He also quotes from William Wordsworth's poem "My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold" (1802), the phrase "the child [is] the father of the man" (*BM* 3).

*Blood Meridian* is a postmodern novel that plays with the conventions of the classic Western genre. Once you read it, you can never leave it. This novel creates confusion deep inside its readers since it is a pastiche of different genres. Besides, this masterpiece reveals features of

the epic genre, too, as the nameless hero, the kid, follows the journey or quest motif to seek adventure in the American West. It also represents better the apocalyptic<sup>31</sup> genre that is extended in *the Road* through the notion of loss of faith and the unbalanced forces of good and evil. McCarthy's novels is considered as the upper crust within the western canon that has been magically written by a genius wizard who delves deep inside his writing to give a better understanding of the western culture, in general, and the inner self of the human beings, in specific.

## Conclusion

The western genre has always enthralled writers such as Cormac McCarthy with its beauty. This is no mystery to his fans since he openly said to B. Woodward in an interview that: "I've always been interested in the Southwest. There isn't a place in the world you can go where they don't know about cowboys and Indians and the myth of the West". (Woodward, no pagination) That everybody is fascinated by the American continent is a truth because it is seen as a utopian land and a synonym to success and wealth, and this is exactly what drove McCarthy to write *Blood Meridian*. Indeed, the novel is among the few works that intrigued people about its real meaning. Knowing McCarthy's style, it is obvious that the novel is not just about the Mexican War or the belief of Manifest Destiny, but it is also about human soul and its edge between goodness and evil.

According to McCarthy, a novel can "encompass all the various disciplines and interests of humanity" (Woodward no pagination), and this is what makes his work difficult to read and categorize. The novel focuses essentially on various things as it is about history, religion, philosophy and even chemistry. McCarthy has attributed to each field a meaning that is still

---

<sup>31</sup> For more information about classifying *Blood Meridian* as an apocalyptic novel, see Yvonne-Marie Rogez's *CORMAC MCCARTHY: BLOOD MERIDIAN Western de l'Apocalypse, Apocalypse du western* (2006).

challenging such as Freemasonry<sup>32</sup> and Satanism<sup>33</sup>. For him, there is no mystery; he presents a violent West as it used to be through his characters, especially Judge Holdon.

Starting from its title to its epilogue, the novel is very significant and intricate at the same time. Even though it received little attention when it was first published in 1985, it has become the most read and criticized amidst McCarthy's masterpieces. Yet, the truth is that we know little about the personal life of this writer since he intelligently steers all conversations away from this subject.

---

<sup>32</sup> It is a secret organization that has for object the mutual assistance and the promotion of brotherly love among its members. But, the truth is that it is associated to Satanism in a way or another. McCarthy dealt with this issue, as he described the magician's wife who sat as a Priestess between two towers that we find in King Solomon's temple to show that this organization existed since a long time ago.

<sup>33</sup> It is a group of ideological and philosophical beliefs, based on the character of Satan. People who join this sect venerate and worship Satan or the Devil as a supernatural deity and devote themselves to his evil works.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Gothicism**

## **Introduction**

Like any other subgenre of fiction, the gothic novel has been scaring its readers for a long time. Now, the word “gothic” has many nuances and means different things in different contexts and fields such as art, painting, architecture, calligraphy, history, literature, and even music and political discussions. It is considered as the new fashion that tackles every domain of life by metamorphosing it into a universal style. The term itself, however, blended with new forms, denominations, and techniques that refined the genre. But before digging any deeper into discovering its main elements or what constitutes this new brand, we need to know more about its etymological meaning, where it was first of all used and by whom and how did it spread its roots.

### **1. Definition and History of Gothicism**

In history, the term betokens all that is related to or resembles the Goths; one of the several Germanic or Teutonic pagan tribes that settled in Europe from the third to the fifth centuries AD and the Anglo-Saxons who mainly settled in the British Isles, starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> century (either their civilization, their language or their writings). It first started to be used by Renaissance writers and theoreticians in Italy to refer to a certain period of medieval architecture which these writers consider ugly and tasteless. According to this, William Hughes states that: “the generic term Gothic is derived in part from the tribal name of a warlike Germanic people who, in the declining years of the Roman Empire, swept into southern Europe and reputedly initiated that period in history popularly known as the Dark Ages” (125). In other words, Fred Botting writes that the “Gothic” was used derogatively to signify the lack of reason, morality and beauty of feudal beliefs, customs and works.

The Goths were also known for the creation of the “rebellion myth” that we mainly find in the British legends and myths such as Robin Hood who represents an Anglo-Saxon rebel against the Norman tyranny. This kind of rebellion grew out of a love of freedom which was also manifested through political reforms as the one that occurred in Britain through the conflict between the Tory and the Whig parties. The former linked the gothic with their own values repressing aristocracy, tradition and hierarchy. As a result, the term Gothic was used to represent opposing notions and, therefore, has been seen as an ambiguous and controversial term from the beginning.

In architecture, the term gothic refers to the medieval form of art and architecture characterized by the use of the high pointed arch and vault, flying buttresses, and intricate recesses to create much taller, larger, and lighter spaces than had been heretofore possible. As the Goths settled in their new kingdoms, they brought their own architecture and culture mainly to rebuild the destroyed buildings because of wars. Polishing the western culture, their style collided with the familiar western architecture. This created a new style that vibrates with a terrific uncouth and outlandish feeling.

The defenders of the old style of architecture pointed to the elaborate decoration and unfamiliar shape of these new buildings as barbarous Gothic features, as opposed to the classical Roman architecture. In this context, Andrew Smith states that:

The term refers to a revival (more accurately a cultural reconstruction) of a medieval aesthetic that was in vogue in Britain from the early eighteenth to the late nineteenth century. Such reconstructions of a somewhat fantasized version of the past (combined with a sense of ‘barbaric’ Germanic tribes) provide a context for the emergence of Gothic as a literary mode”. (2)

In literature, however, the term Gothic refers to a genre, a mode, a style of writing, and a literary movement that prospered in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and reached its highest point in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in England. It also alludes to the “Gothic Revival” movement of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

centuries, a period of rebellion against the Age of Reason and Enlightenment. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Romanticism was the dominant trend by which authors had more freedom to express their imagination, feeling, nature and individuality; consequently, Gothicism rose as its subgenre to mainly deal with some aspects of their emotions such as fear, terror, suspense, gloom, and horror that are mainly erected through the use of supernatural elements, dark landscapes, and depressed characters.

Gothicism has influenced and inspired several subgenres of literature, including the supernatural tale, the ghost story, horror fiction, detective fictions, and vampire literature. A Gothic novel revolves around a large, ancient house that conceals a terrible secret that serves as the refuge of an especially frightening and threatening character. It focuses on ruin, decay, death, terror, and chaos. Irrationality and passion are privileged over rationality and reason. Gothic horror, as it is mostly referred to, grew in response to the historical, sociological, psychological, and political contexts of both centuries.

The first seeds of gothic novels go back to the *Letters of Chivalry and Romance* by Richard Hurd in 1761. Subsequently, the first gothic novel that comprised all elements of the gothic tradition was initiated by Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), labeling him as the father of gothic literature. It mainly deals with ghoulish themes in which he combines the supernatural with horror to create a perfect setting in a medieval framework; a foreign location which consists in a dark and drab castle that shows human decay and contains secret doors and subterranean passages to create an atmosphere of mystery and gloom in addition to the use of weird and unexplainable events to lurk suspense.

Soon after, the genre became so popular that it had been arrowed as the main target of several parodies. Still, nothing can delineate the gothic characteristics the best as its mocked version. What made the genre suitable to mockery was not only the aristocratic decadence of style, but also the distant experience of the readers. Later on, it was developed to fit more



people's changing fears in a familiar setting that metamorphosed from the castle to the house drawing inside the female perspective into the focus of gothic stories. Authors were not contented with this and went further to stress the importance between horror and terror which are two main elements of the genre that involve the readers.

British gothic novels were influenced by German literary traditions that eventually prospered at the same time, particularly the works of writers such as Hanns Heinz Ewers and E.T.A. Hoffmann. The Schauerroman or shudder novel (also horror novel) which describes the German gothic fiction shares almost the same plot as the British gothic novel, in addition to Gespensterroman/Geisterroman (ghost novel), Räuberroman (robber novel), and Ritterroman (chivalry novel). Both genres are based on the terrifying side of the Middle Ages, and both frequently feature the same elements like castles, ghosts, monsters among other things. The fiction of Schauerroman such as *The Devil's Elixirs* (1815) received little attention unlike the gothic fiction in Britain. Moreover, the former is more terrific, violent and more pessimistic than the later. According to this, Andrew Smith explains that the shudder novel was a form which influenced the Gothic from other nations, and this illustrates how nationally specific manifestations of the Gothic played an important role in shaping the aesthetic considerations of the Gothic in other countries (4).

As a genre, gothic literature was not really accepted until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but we should not deny that former literary writings had shown some elements of the gothic years before its emergence. One of these precursor writers of gothic fiction is the British dramatist William Shakespeare who introduced sinister settings, mysterious and evil characters, madness, guilt, and tragic as well as super-real plots in his works such as *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Yet, *Beowulf* is fairly considered as the oldest germ of gothic literature that dealt with heroic adventure stories and the presence of supernatural elements with a medieval setting. Other gothic works of equal importance include William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), Anne Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of*

*Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Many other great writers revolutionized the genre and gave it a new light by associating new elements to the medieval setting such as murder, violence, curses, incest, explained supernatural, debauchery, black magic, dangers of science, the notion of gothic female and parodying the genre itself.

These English writers inspired others in America who gave a new touch of the genre by distinguishing and detaching themselves from the British literary tradition (an obsession that haunted them) that influenced this first wave of gothic American writers. This kind of gothic literature delves deep into the *macabre* nature of humanity and explores the antagonism between fear and desire, but we should keep in mind that not all horror literature is conventionally gothic.

American literature was shaped by the chronicles of explorers who went to explore the unknown coasts of the new continent. When the British took control of this land, the Puritans were the first settlers who started to produce a kind of literature that is typically seen as Euro-American and not purely American as first generation writers such as Charles Brockden Brown writes in his works by intermingling between European (mainly British) and American gothic. Indeed, many writers such as Cooper complained that there was no authentic materials for a writer, "no annals for the historian . . . , [and] no obscure fictions for the writer of romance" (64) to write about the new country. Nonetheless, the legends of seventeenth century witchcraft in Salem provided for Hawthorne and John Neal those "annals for the historian" that Cooper required as Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury explained in their *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature* (1992). The first American writer to experiment with the American gothic was Charles Brockden Brown. He, in fact, paved the way to other writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, James

Fennimore Cooper, Herman Melville, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner, to name only a few. In his preface of *Edgar Huntly* (1799), Brockden writes:

America has opened new views to the naturalist and politician, but has seldom furnished themes to the moral painter. That new springs of action and new motives to curiosity should operate,- that the field of investigation, opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe,- may be readily conceived. [...] It is the purpose of this work to profit by some of these sources; to exhibit a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country [...]. Puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed for this end. (No pagination)

America was the proper place for mystery and adventure that opened its arms to writers and write differently from their European counterparts. Brown did not only influence the first generation writers but also many other contemporary writers we know now as pertaining to the American gothic literary canon, through using the American setting that comprised: “The incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the western wilderness as far more suitable” (Brown, no pagination) to establish and give a new breath to the genre. Early writers were particularly concerned with the frontier wilderness, its anxiety<sup>34</sup> and the lasting effects of a Puritanical society. American gothic is partly based on Puritan sermons, which were usually about Hell, Devil, punishments given to sinners, and other darks themes. *The Day of Doom* (1662), by Michael Wigglesworth and *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741), by Jonathan Edwards are the prominent sermons that had a higher influence in American Gothic, as Allan Lloyd-Smith points out in his *Nineteenth-Century American Gothic* (2012). These kinds of sermons made Americans think of virtue and sin as white and black leading their beliefs and writings to Manichean<sup>35</sup> dualism that is represented by good and evil.

---

<sup>34</sup> It is a term that historians dubbed to explain the feeling that Americans had when the frontier line was abolished in 1890 by the 11<sup>th</sup> U.S. Census.

<sup>35</sup> The word is termed after Mani, which is the name of an apostle who lived in Mesopotamia in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. He taught a universal religion based on what we now call dualism; we tend to look at things as having two sides that are opposed.

The British gothic had a tendency to go back to the medieval and scary setting, people feared to reemerge, but Americans had no past to fear since America is a new land that is full of opportunities and optimism. Accordingly, they developed their own literature on its own specific background, and this explains why many works are considered to be gothic. They also yearned to establish their own identity by creating a virtual line called the frontier, between civilization<sup>36</sup> and wilderness. Frontiersmen were either hunters, farmers, ranchers or gold miners who idealized the American West mainly. Doctors, lawyers, preachers, editors and politicians had been merged to the cowboy life to form what we had known as the old vigorous and rigorous American society. Americans mainly sought to purify their old past by demonizing the American setting. Outstanding writers who dealt with this side of the genre include James Fenimore Cooper and Irving Washington. However, when the frontier was abolished in 1890, Americans became anxious as there is no borderline that separated the civilized lands from the frightening wilderness. Moreover, this frontier did not really include the lawless, destructive and anti-social behavior of Americans when dealing with race, gender and environment.

After a long historical struggle with England, Americans endeavored to forge another past other than their evil past back in Mother Country and conceived a new identity through which they could now boast in their literature. In fact, the old continent was considered as their evil past, but because of its long geographical distance, Americans had no other choice but to find new ways to express their fears and desires in their literature. As we dig deeper in their political and social structures, we can notice that the Americans maintain a puritanic<sup>37</sup> belief whose history is unclear. As a result, writers and intellectuals sought to mythologize their own historical past since they had none.

---

<sup>36</sup> We mean by civilization, earth's Eden that western Americans mainly established by creating farms: the log houses they built and the crops they grew.

<sup>37</sup> A term coined by Nathaniel Hawthorn (1804-1864), an American novelist and short story writer.

Writers, then, thematized their own horrific surroundings and barbaric wilderness. They projected their own vices and defects into others such as the Indians and slaves and mythologized their own people as religious and civilized hard workers. Americans saw those who were foreign to their traditions, customs, and religion as “Others” since they have other morals and values. Furthermore, they cannot keep up with American whites’ progress they were making; as a consequence, they were seen as rivals. This self-mythologization constitutes the keystone of the American gothic.

For lack of past villains, American writers chose to focus on contemporary issues such as slavery. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American gothic revealed particular concerns about race which were closely tied to issues of slavery and how it shaped a black identity politics which emerged in post-Civil War period. The American Gothic, then, came to mean what American society did not want to integrate, but this would later ultimately emerge and be dealt with in the fiction of 20<sup>th</sup> century writers such as the crimes of the whites in the works of Toni Morrison, Frederick Douglass, and Hannah Crafts. The specters of slavery became the curse that haunted the American history that often inhabits gothic texts. More importantly, they represent how the United States was built on economic exploitation and racial terror, as Allan Lloyd Smith explains: “four indigenous features were to prove decisive in producing a powerful and long-lasting American variant of the Gothic: the frontier, the Puritan legacy, race, and political utopianism” (163). Indeed, Llyod Smith synthesized the factors that shaped the American gothic that has long excited the genre’s fans.

To sum up, the abovementioned gothic representations manifested in what their society was trying to *restrain*. Thus, starting from captivity narratives, writers tended to incorporate this ignored aspect in their writings. The American gothic fiction helped the gothic genre to evolve since it stepped away from the aristocratic tyrant stories that metamorphosed from physical violence of the setting to the psychological terror of the characters that charmed the reader.

Earlier Gothic fictions, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto, a Gothic Story* (1764), were set in terrifying castles (Castle of Otranto) in which high class tyrants (Lord Manfred in the narrative) terrify female characters (Isabella) and try to imprison them in their terrific mansion. In contrast, the short story of Edgar Allan Poe "The Fall of the House of Usher" narrates the psychological torments and decay of Roderick Usher who suffers from an unnamed disease (hypochondria) and succumbs to darkness.

With the introduction of psychoanalysis to literature, writers tried to give some explanations to those frightful feelings by attacking directly the human psyche. By dismembering themselves from Britain, Americans tried hard to find different topics that were purely American to their writings and literature as a reaction to the British claims that Americans had no literary tradition. To create the 'terror of the soul', Poe introduced the psychological suffering by mingling two fields of study: psychology and literature. Hawthorne, on the other hand, examined the human heart under conditions of fear, vanity, mistrust, and betrayal. He, thus, extended the notion of guilt that terrorized the soul. Allan Smith argues that "Puritan consciousness itself, although waning in this period, had established a profoundly "Gothic" imagination of good and evil, and the perilous human experience" (164).

The American gothic literature has become more difficult to define, but we can abridge it in few words as the imaginative expression of the fears and forbidden desires of Americans to echo Charles L. Crow. It has no limited founding period unlike the British Gothic literature. Also known as dark romanticism, the American gothic was a term first of all coined by Grant Wood's painting "American Gothic" during the 1930s. Then, it was used to refer to the American literary tradition that came as a reaction to transcendentalist movement that supported the idea that everyone has both the ability and opportunity to accomplish and experience greatness. It, thus, mutates across historical, national, and generic boundaries.

The American characters are victims of their own weakness or obsessions. Consequently, the gothic mode has been created to help the readers to see beyond humanity's own masks that hide each human being's secrets. American literature used Gothic conventions to invest with horror the vision of a chaotic and lost world as a means of expressing deep issues like the guilt of the revolutionist and the relationship with the Indian, the Negro, and nature. Catherine Spooner argues that this "contemporary Gothic is fascinated by spaces of absence: spaces where, even within apparently easy reach of civilization, one could disappear without trace" (48).

After the wars erupted in America, people witnessed and experienced the inconceivable: real horrors of mutilated and genocidal scenes. This leads to the failure and decline of suspense, fear, and the impact of the genre mainly. Americans were no longer able to enjoy frightening stories that recollected back their real nightmarish experience of wars. The gothic then lost its popularity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave birth to brilliant writers like William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Tennessee Williams, and Carson McCullers and young writers like Cormac McCarthy, Anne Rice, Stephen King, Kami Garcia, and Margaret Stohl who elaborated what is called now the Southern Gothic<sup>38</sup>.

This new trend is not an extension of the gothic tradition, but it shares some traits such as violence and the supernatural element. It uses some gothic strategies to explore social issues and reveal the cultural characters of the American South with a dark humor. Along the grotesque and the sublime, the features that define Southern Gothic are the supernatural, generational decay, nostalgia for the past, poverty, and racism. Teresa A. Goddu explains that "American Gothic, like Gothic more generally, is haunted by history. Instead of fleeing reality, Gothic registers its culture's anxieties and social problems" (63); in fact, the gothic genre transcended the idea of stirring up suspense for suspense's sake. This kind of literature continues to prosper with new

---

<sup>38</sup>The term "Southern Gothic" was first used by Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Ellen Glasgow during a lecture at the University of Virginia in 1936 as she described a new and disturbing trend in Southern fiction with works of southern writers such as William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell (1903- 1987).

techniques and themes with the new generation of writers like Charlaine Harris, Stephenie Mayer, and Mark Z. Danielewski. The genre is fluctuating as critics have repeatedly stated. This generation of writers developed the genre to fit more the fears of the contemporary era and fusion between subgenres like as fantasy, romance, science fiction, and mystery to create unique pieces. Gradually, gothic literature became regional and female writers joined the mainstream.

## **2. Elements of Gothicism**

### **2.1. Clash of civilization**

As we have mentioned before in the definition of Gothicism, according to history, it is related to the Goths; a Teutonic tribe who made their first incursion in the fifth century into the roman empire territory that led to their downfall and destruction in 410AD, according to Punter and Glennis Byron, establishing later on kingdoms in France and Italy where they sought refuge.

According to their own legend reported by Jordanes<sup>39</sup>, Goths originated from southern Scandinavia. As centuries succeeded, neither their literature nor their art has been left as a historical or cultural heritage, patrimony or testimony of their own civilization. Thus, they are only remembered as the uncivilized; disordered; irrational invaders, and as barbarous destroyers and the opposite representation of the Great Roman civilization and classical style. Punter and Byron (2004) also wrote that during the Renaissance Period, little was known about the Middle Ages; an era which is characterized by darkness and ignorance after the fall of Roman Empire. Consequently, up to the mid-17th century, Gothicism was applied to all what is related to the medieval period and the idea of the Dark Ages.

---

<sup>39</sup> Although not a scholar, Jordanes or Jordanis was a notable Gothic Historian who wrote valuable works on the Germanic tribes. As a 6th-century Roman bureaucrat, he devoted himself to writing history in Latin. He wrote *Romana*, a historical book about Rome, and his best known work: *Getica*, about the Goths. (Written in Constantinople about AD 551, to read this latter, see: [https://archive.org/stream/gothichistoryofj00jorduoft/gothichistoryofj00jorduoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/gothichistoryofj00jorduoft/gothichistoryofj00jorduoft_djvu.txt) ).



“By the eighteenth century, a Goth had come to be defined, in the terms of Dr Johnson’s Dictionary of 1775, as ‘one not civilized, one deficient in general knowledge, a barbarian’, and the medieval or Gothic age as a cultural wasteland, primitive and superstitious”(Punter and Byron 3- 4). They have been labeled as primitive iconoclasts since they represent disunity, violence and reverence to Roman buildings and traditions.

## 2.2. Imprisonment

While reading any gothic work, we notice that this feeling of imprisonment that submerges the reader is one of the prominent features that classify the work within the gothic genre. Entrapment is a favorite horror device that contributes to the claustrophobic psychology of the gothic space by preventing the characters from behaving freely along the narrative since they are confined, captivated or even hidden in some dark places by someone else as in Angela Carter’s *the Bloody Chamber*<sup>40</sup> or immobilized within their own fears, society or even stereotypes as in Ian McEwan’s *Atonement*<sup>41</sup>. Somehow, the characters are engulfed with an abnormal feeling of dread of being in a somber narrow space or the feeling of mental helplessness of a dark destiny that is not filled with joy or any way to go out of gloom. To sum up, claustrophobia can be either physical or mental. This double sensation can be felt in the works of writers such as Edgar Allan Poe’s “the Fall of the House of Usher<sup>42</sup>” (1839) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman “the Yellow Wall

---

<sup>40</sup> Angela Cartter’s *the Bloody Chamber* (1979) was first published in the United Kingdom by Gollancz. It narrates the story of a young girl who marries an old French Marquis who confines her in his castle in which she is forbidden from entering one room. It turns out that her husband keeps his previous dead wives’ bodies in that chamber.

<sup>41</sup> Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* (2001) describes the imprisonment of a young girl in her own torments of regret and remorse as she destroys her loving family out of jealousy. She narrates and confesses her sins in a novel after years to expiate her acts.

<sup>42</sup> Edgar Allan Poe’s “the Fall of house of Usher (1839) is a short story about Roderick Usher whose dead sister comes back to life. He is diagnosed with hyperesthesia (hypersensitivity to textures, light, sounds, smells and tastes) and hypochondria (an excessive preoccupation or worry about having a serious illness) and is imprisoned both physically and mentally in his own decaying house and his own fears that became real.

Paper<sup>43</sup>” (1892). Another form of this notion of imprisonment is also expressed in another form through female characters but this will be mainly extended in the following feature of Gothicism.

### 2.3. Gothic Women

The world has always been led by men because they are seen as strong, powerful and tough. In short, they are often portrayed as the rulers of society who authorized themselves to look down and underestimate women since they are vulnerable by nature. Thus, the clash between society and women rose since they are confined at home under “the Angels of the house” motto in a male-oriented and dominated society. The Victorian doctrine of womanhood was polished by the idea that a perfect woman must be obedient and self-sacrificing. That is why they are generally given traditional roles of wives, mothers and daughters.

‘The female Gothic’ appeared as another subgenre of Gothicism like American and Southern Gothic<sup>44</sup> where female writers and the feminist male writers express “women’s dark protests, fantasies, and fear” within a patriarchal society as Elaine Showalter explains in her book *Sister's Choice: Tradition and Change in American Women's Writing*(1991).

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, women wrote extensively prose<sup>45</sup> to express their thoughts; therefore, they developed what is called Gothic Romance which is mostly referred to as female gothic fiction. Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith (2009) unravel the mysterious birth of this genre as attributed to the Mother of the Gothic Fiction Anne Radcliffe. To establish the features of the genre, Ellen Moers, a critic and scholar of Gothicism; based her analysis on Radcliffe’s works.

---

<sup>43</sup> Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “the Yellow Wallpaper”(1892) is a short story about a young woman’s mental state as she is confined in her own colonial house after giving birth.

<sup>44</sup> Southern Gothic is a style of writing developed by writers such as Flannery O’Connor, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, William Faulkner, Carson McCullers and Cormac McCarthy whose stories are set within the American South and delve in exposing the problems of society, by developing complex characters. One of the most notable features of the genre is "the grotesque."

<sup>45</sup> Dominant genre of 18th century that was considered not an embodiment of male power and masculinity since it is not difficult and complex as poetry.

At first, Ellen Moers coined the term 'female Gothic', by which she meant a genre written by women for women in which it reflects concern for the powerlessness and male domination of heroines within the rigid gender restrictions of society, patriarchal control of wives and daughters and the marginalization of women by regarding them as "the others" in addition to devaluing their concerns of matrimony and childbirth. Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith say in their book, titled *Literary Women* (1975), that Moers discusses two kinds of female archetypes: "the 'travelling heroinism' of Ann Radcliffe's novels, and the 'birth myth' of Frankenstein".(2) The first category is now referred to as the beginnings of gothic women prototypes that live in seclusion, running away from villain "tyrants across fantastical landscapes and in search of lost mothers entombed in womb-like dungeons beneath patriarchal castles". (Wallace and Smith 2) They were expected to be pure, innocent, pleasant, sweet, naive and supportive of men at all times. The second class is mostly referred to as what most recent critics call the "male gothic" that deals with fears of women after childbirth and their imprisonment within the domestic space that implements anxiety and depression in female voices.

In most gothic works, written from male perspectives, female characters are depicted as objects of desire, maternal figures and supernatural beings that either repress their desires or seek to achieve them. But, as reflected by the controversial Gothic novels, these rigid roles were changing. Feminist critics point out the unusual prevalence of strong female characters in Gothic novels, and the way their independent and often sexual behavior was harshly criticized by contemporaries of the novels. Modern critics like Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith (2009) also point out the way in which female sexuality was often used to denote strength, rebelliousness, and evil. Therefore, as the genre developed, gothic females started to transcend the notion of weakness to be more powerful and strong. Over time, the role of women within Gothic romances may have evolved thanks to societal influences and the emergence of stronger and more authoritative female characters. Thus, female figures were even parodied and became a source

for destruction. They are no longer referred to as persecuted maidens but as *femmes fatales* who are generally irresistibly dangerous and rapacious creatures.

## Conclusion

Gothicism is considered as the nightmarish and morbid progenitor of Romanticism, over which people craved for. Reading this kind of literature was gratifying to some as they hunger about discovering more about the unknown part of their crudest desires that they unknowingly bare witness through literature. The gothic literature, as explained in this chapter, represents more or less the dark and scary mirror of our souls since it reflects an extension of humankind's desires and drives such as violence and murder. The main target is to create suspense and isolate the readers in a frightening and abandoned world that makes them feel vulnerable to accentuate the importance of a social life.

The gothic started, originally, with Horace Walpole's works that mirrored a kind of imitation to medievalism. It flourished, then, with Anne Radcliffe's works that revived the genre as female authors led the trend by closing up readers to their present fearful situations and experiences that are showered with the macabre and other disciplines such as science. Until its probable demise during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the genre continued to prosper and reach the American continent that openly welcomed it. Yet, American Authors wanted to Americanize the gothic genre and create their own gothic tradition proper to their American setting.

The first generation of American gothic writers shaped what is known as the traditional gothic, and the second generation established the American gothic tradition that dealt with American setting such as wilderness. After the American Civil war, the gothic tradition lost its fame, but was resurrected during the 20<sup>th</sup> century under another term which is the Southern Gothic. Its stories mainly focus on grotesque themes and damaged or disillusioned characters as

means of dissecting and exposing social problems that the authors like McCrathy saw in the southern American society.

**Chapter Three**  
**Gothicism in *Blood Meridian***

## Introduction

Categorizing *Blood Meridian* as a gothic novel seems to be awkward on its surface because the book contains none of the genre's elements that we have been accustomed and taught to associate with. There are no haunted castles, no damsels in distress, no old manor house, no subterranean labyrinth where mystery lurks or dwells, no venal nobleman and no sinister monk to persecute the innocent heroine. In fact, there is no heroine, no ghosts or specters that rose from darkness to threaten the heroes. Instead, we find real characters and real events within history that it is mostly labeled as a historical fiction rather than a gothic fiction. Nevertheless, All that glitters is not gold (Shakespeare 18), *Blood Meridian* contains gothic horrors than what it conveys.

At first glance, the external elements that we have mentioned above are not that much of importance to the Gothic mode. However, they are familiar to us from the first seeds of the genre; in other words, from the first works of the British writers such as Horace Walpole and Anne Radcliff since they are the founders of gothic fiction.

### 1. Analysis

#### 1.1. Clash of civilization

We have said before that the genesis of Gothicism goes back in history to the clash of civilizations between the Romans and the Goths; between the civilized and the uncivilized cultures. As we dig deeper, we can notice that this device can be perfectly projected on *Blood Meridian* since, according to the novel's American characters, America was seen as the civilized nation that prospered since its foundation while the Mexicans and the Indians were seen as the uncivilized barbarians who destroy everything that surrounds them which, in fact, can be the way around.

Within this magnificent paragon, McCarthy's character, Captain White who represents the American conventions and beliefs, insults and disgraces both the Mexicans and Black Americans to justify their incursion and westward expansion through the American continent to enlarge their territory. He belittles the Mexicans by drawing a comparison between them and the Blacks and calling them 'niggers'. Noting that the adjective is extremely an offensive nickname for a black person, this is mainly cleared when the narrative voice of the novel narrates:

The captain leaned back and folded his arms. What we are dealing with, he said, is a race of degenerates. A mongrel race, little better than niggers. And maybe no better. There is no government in Mexico. Hell, there's no God in Mexico. Never will be. We are dealing with a people manifestly incapable of governing themselves. And do you know what happens with people who cannot govern themselves? That's right. Others come in to govern for them [sic]. (*BM* 34)

Indeed, both Mexicans and African Americans have been disgraced and scorned. They have been portrayed as crude and coarse people with no religion, no sense of honor, and no dignity and decency. In short, they have been minimized to a crossbreed and hybrid good-for-nothing whose origins are obscure and not clear although the Americans were the ones who cut them off from their mother land and brought them through the terrific Middle passage<sup>46</sup> to exploit them as their own slaves. Moreover, they criticized them with the intention of blackening, defaming and derogating their history as a people having their own traditions, customs and religion.

Although Mexicans have been described, in the novel to be ruled by a civilized Governor; Angel Trias who, according to Sepich, is a historical figure and "had been sent abroad as a young man for his education and was widely read in the classics and was a student of languages. He was also a man among men and the rough warriors he'd hired for the protection of the state

---

<sup>46</sup>It was the stage upon which enslaved Africans were forcefully transported, after being purchased or kidnapped, across the Atlantic Ocean (from the west coast of Africa) to West Indies or the Americas.



seemed to warm something in him” (*BM* 168), Captain White portrayed them as barbarians who have no idea of justice and cannot govern their own country as we read in the novel:

The captain leaned forward. We fought for it. Lost friends and brothers down there. And then by God if we didnt give it back. Back to a bunch of barbarians that even the most biased in their favor will admit have no least notion in God's earth of honor or justice or the meaning of republican government [sic]. (*BM* 33)

Moreover, when the Governor invited the Glanton gang to have dinner with him, the Mexicans toasted American heroes like Washington and Franklin which were unknown to the gang, a proof of their own ignorance.

The Captain upholds “the White’s Man Burden” view which, according to urban dictionary, was developed during the era of Imperialism. It stipulates that the civilized peoples of Europe and mainly America should bring civilization, modernity, wealth, and advancement to the lesser peoples of the world through their leadership and domination. They had the desire and the burden to educate, convert and take care of all the other inferior races and the uncivilized masses of the world, according to their beliefs, to vindicate and warrant the belief of Manifest Destiny.

The Captain White believes in the superiority of his race as an American, representing those who think that it is their duty to govern the Mexicans and guide them to build a civilized nation. “Son, said the captain. We are to be the instruments of liberation in a dark and troubled land. That's right. We are to spearhead the drive” (*BM* 34). However, it was in fact to exploit their lands and extract gold in addition to jewels that Mexicans found in California, the cradle of gold. Thus, Americans wanted to keep control over that wealth. “Americans will be able to get to California without having to pass through our benighted sister republic and our citizens will be protected at last from the notorious packs of cutthroats presently infesting the routes which they are obliged to travel” (*BM ibid*). And after taking the land he promises each member of his crew:

“Fine grassland. Some of the finest in the world. A land rich in minerals, in gold and silver I would say beyond the wildest speculation”. (*ibid*)

In America, the idea of the White’s Man Burden was first of all applied on the Amerindians who were considered as the inferior category of human bloodline and who lived in a primitive way in tribes and hunted animals to feed themselves in contrast to Europeans who lived in communal leisure and prosperity.

In *Blood Meridian*, the terms ‘red nigger’ and ‘redskins’ are used to humiliatingly refer to the Native Americans noting that the adjective of color “red” here is a racial distinction between the world’s nations to refer to the non-whites mainly the Indians. Being not satisfied with these insults, the whites decorated their pejorative diction toward the Indians with many other words such as ‘heathen’ since they are viewed as ‘the primitives’ and ‘fiends’ as they are ‘barbarous’ and ‘savages’.

As we read further, the Indians are often referred to as ‘yahoos’, ‘injins’ and are described as cannibals since “their faces dyed blue and their hands locked about the shafts of their sixfoot spears, all but naked savages who with their painted skins and their whispered taste for human flesh seemed outrageous presences even in that fabled company”(BM 38). The Indians reek of human flesh and their blood. It is even obvious in their looks and tastes and that is why this myth has been created about them.

They are described as hellish monsters who wear bizarre, disgusting, and hideous garments of other civilizations to show their warlike and thirst to violence and desire to extinguish prosperous spheres like Athens and Spain. Blood constantly boils in their veins. They are also portrayed as ghostlike figures that tongue weird noises and are covered with blood and animal skins. This is mainly depicted in a beautiful tableau that exceeds all descriptions:

A legion of horribles, hundreds in number, half naked or clad in costumes attic or biblical or wardrobed out of a fevered dream with the skins of animals and silk finery and pieces of uniform still tracked with the blood of prior owners...screeching and yammering and clothed in smoke like those vaporous beings in regions beyond right knowing where the eye wanders and the lip jerks and drools. (*BM* 52)

The narrator in *Blood Meridian* described Indians as ghoulish goliaths, specters out of hell to only end up making fun of them while depicting them as a bunch of clowns. Furthermore, McCarthy described them in a very beautiful language that accentuates their barbarity to appeal our attention and keep those images engraved in our minds.

After reading the novel, we notice that McCarthy gives each side its own portion of violence and depravity. Instead, He gives a general overview of human soul. Even the notorious John Glanton's group mostly known as the scalp hunters is more violent toward Indians and Mexicans. They are equally described as barbarous:

viciouslooking humans mounted on unshod indian ponies riding half drunk through the streets, bearded, barbarous, clad in the skins of animals stitched up with thews and armed with weapons of every description... riding also in the company a number of halfnaked savages reeling in the saddle, dangerous, filthy, brutal, the whole like a visitation from some heathen land where they and others like them fed on human flesh. (*BM* 78)

The group also sows terror even by their looks just like the Comanche who attacked the Filibusters. Yet, it is a melting pot of different races since it is made out not only of pure white Americans but non-whites, too, such as: Delawares<sup>47</sup>, a Mexican and one black. We cannot say that the white Americans are equally viewed as savages, too. However, there are some passages in which he reveals the American monstrosity in war toward its enemies through white

---

<sup>47</sup>The term refers to members of North American Indian people. The group comprises the Munsee, Unami, and Unalachtigo, formerly occupying the drainage basin of the Delaware River, the lower Hudson River valley, and the intervening area.

characters such as Glanton, but in wars, even the most peaceful ones act violently to protect their loved ones.

## 1.2. Imprisonment

As we have said before, gothic novels revolve around a large ancient house that serves as a refuge from the protagonist's foe(s). As time evolves the notion of entrapment transcends this idea to different kinds. As Emily Dickinson said in her poem "one need not be a chamber – to be haunted" (no pagination). By this day and age, the Old West that is described in *Blood Meridian* is not the same West that we know; this one had known different metamorphoses. For the Kid, it is considered as his old decaying house that protects him from danger and death and the Judge Holden who tried to put an end to his life several times and finally succeeded at the end of the novel. But more than that, the kid is imprisoned mainly by violence even before his ontogeny, to only ending up condemning him to harbor violence within him.

McCarthy writes that the kid is born during the Leonids meteor shower of 1833. "Night of your birth. Thirty-three. The Leonids they were called" (*BM* 3); an event that marked the American history<sup>48</sup> and was mistaken for Apocalypse<sup>49</sup> since "a thousand meteors a minute emanated from the constellation Leo<sup>50</sup>" (no pagination) explains Gary Kronk and that "the sky came alive with Leonids" (Reynolds 44). In western culture, astrology plays an important role since it is a form of divination about a person's nature and future. It is based on the construction of horoscopes for an exact moment such as birth. Gary Kronk also notes that Leonids generally befall on November (13<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>). Therefore, the astrological sign under which the kid was born is Scorpio (October 23–November 21) as John Sepich explained in his *Notes on Blood Meridian* (2008).

---

<sup>48</sup> People witnessed the first greatest astronomical spectacle over history and the birth of meteor astronomy.

<sup>49</sup> People started to pray and implore God to save them.

<sup>50</sup> The term Leonid is taken from the constellation Leo.

Astrologists believe that Scorpio is ruled by the planets Mars<sup>51</sup> and Pluto<sup>52</sup>. They consider the former as a planet of force and violence and the latter as a planet of rebirth, obsessive desire for power and destructiveness. Scorpios are aggressive and stimulated by conflict. They embody the Yin and Yang emoji<sup>53</sup> at once. Moreover, people under the influence of these planets just like the kid are both constructive and destructive. The kid is described as “some fairybook beast” who awakens at night “to fight with the sailors” (*BM* 4) so as to punctuate the idea that violence runs in his veins, he cannot sleep without his remedy; seeing and shedding blood; in other words, fight. At the beginning, we learn that the Kid fights a lot but only to survive and gain respect mainly when he is confronted to Toadvine. Within the first pages, we notice that his depraved taste for blood is reincarnated when he accompanies and helps Toadvine to kick a man, called Old Sidney in the face; a man whom he does not even know. Then, he burns the hotel in which the old man was and kills its bartender by hitting his head.

As we continue reading, we also understand that the kid is alone trying to become a man. It was difficult for a boy to survive alone in that purgatorian west. Stephen King describes this state of being alone in his master work of horror *Salem's Lot* (1975) as “the most awful word in English tongue. Murder doesn't hold a candle to it and hell is only a poor synonym” [sic] (6). Loneliness is, in fact, a cancer that swallows a person's mind or even more and having a companion is the only remedy that can release him from it. Alas, the west during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a merciless world in which you have to kill or be killed in order to survive. Thus, the kid has no alternative but to help Toadvine. At the end of these events, he runs away; a choice which he could have made beforehand and prevents him all this trouble.

---

<sup>51</sup> Planet Mars is named after the Greek God of war and agriculture Mars who is often referred to as Ares in Roman Mythology since it emanates a reddish color as astrologists see from Earth and refer to it as blood.

<sup>52</sup> The Dwarf Planet Pluto is named after the Greco-Roman God of the underworld and the dead Pluto or Hades. It is far from the sun and is different from other planets.

<sup>53</sup> It is symbol within the Chinese culture, philosophy and religion that represents two extreme opposites

In the next pages, he even sinks low as to sweep the floor in exchange of some drinks in a Mexican tavern. Tricked, the kid savagely kills the barman as to avenge his pride and takes the bottle of wine that he has required beforehand. McCarthy writes:

The kid crouched lightly with the bottles and feinted and then broke the right one over the man's head. Blood and liquor sprayed and the man's knees buckled and his eyes rolled. The kid had already let go the bottleneck and he pitched the second bottle into his right hand in a roadagent's pass before it even reached the floor and he backhanded the second bottle across the barman's skull and crammed the jagged remnant into his eye as he went down [sic].(BM 25)

His beastly side once again rose as some curse or spell that cannot be easily removed. He had the choice to leave him alive, out there, after hitting him once. Instead, he went so far as to end his life and torture him. Yet, no one raised a finger to help him even though “Some of those men [in the tavern] wore pistols in their belts” (26). Duels to death were a common tradition in western culture and none had the right to intervene or he would also be killed.

After this incident, the kid's “head was in torment” (*ibid*). He somehow regretted this scale of violence and ill-treatment after cooling down his head and encircling himself in anguish and liquor. His transient emotional state and split of personality shows his schizophrenia or what is called in Gothic literature the Doppelganger<sup>54</sup>.

The kid is then never mentioned to kill anybody except when he was attacked by the Yumas to defend himself and his mates Tobin and Toadvine who refuse to abandon him when he was injured. Even when he is called “the Man”, he does not kill anybody else, too, except a young boy who pestered him a lot. But, before acting, he warned him to go away several times and he even warned his mates but the obstinate Elrod came back to kill the Man. Hence, he ended up being beaten at his own game and was killed. Even when Glanton orders him to kill the

---

<sup>54</sup> It is a German word that means the double. It was defined by Federick S. Frank as “a second self or alternate identity, sometimes, but not always, a physical twin.” For more information read *The First Gothics: A Critical Guide to the English Gothic Novel* (1987). Freud explains that the Doppelganger is a symbol of repetition that raises the Uncanny: a feeling of fear within the reader that what he reads may actually happen.

wounded Shelby, the kid spars his life, gives him water to drink and hides him in a bush. He rather keeps saving people instead of decapitating them.

The kid also refused to kill the Judge Holden when he had the opportunity, although this later craved for it. Being contrasted even in their descriptions the kid could also slay him but did not; Holden is big and very tall but “his hands were small” (6) and the kid “is not big but he has big wrists, big hands. His shoulders are set close. The child's face is curiously untouched behind the scars, the eyes oddly innocent” (4). When people grow in a violent environment, their traits harden through time but the kid's eyes remain pure. Kindness breeds in him as he does not seek revenge<sup>55</sup> when he was shot to death and does not abandon his mates such as Sproule and risks his own life to help McGill and David Brown when everybody refused to. In a nutshell, the kid is described all along the novel as being rough but not eagerly enjoying violence, especially, when the Filibusters or the Glanton Gang act savagely. He, instead, helps his injured companions that the two groups abandoned.

The kid's father blames him for killing his wife. And, McCarthy writes that this woman did not bear but *incubate* in her own bosom the *creature* who would carry her off” (3). Thus, if he was that innocent and void of violence as a normal baby, McCarthy would have used the term “baby” itself and “bear” instead of “creature<sup>56</sup>” and “incubate<sup>57</sup>” respectively, condemning the kid to be entrapped in violence. Moreover, McCarthy perpetuates him to this jail by sparkling his character with ferocity by saying “in him broods *already* a taste for mindless violence” (BM 3) before even his birth, the kid has this mindless taste for violence since he is a descendent of a middle class of workers who were condemned to be slaves according to the bible “His folk are known for hewers of wood and drawers of water” (*ibid*), as the kid is sentenced to be violent,

---

<sup>55</sup> Revenge is a common motif in western culture to kill people.

<sup>56</sup> The term is synonymous to beast.

<sup>57</sup> The term is close in meaning to “incubus” that means male demon.

according to astrology. His lineage and whole birth was not a happy event in accordance with what his father's description is when he is drunk (emphasis added).

People would have been mesmerized by the fact of having a new born and seeing the Leonids show itself but he “looked for blackness, holes in the heavens. The Dipper stove” (*ibid*) the father perfectly understood that this wretched creature would only bring bad luck to him and the world. Consequently, he hoped for darkness in the skies and in astronomy, Black Holes refer to the death of a star probably hoping for the death of either planet that influenced the kid's birth. Alas, there is no escape from violence since the symbol of freedom which is the Dipper<sup>58</sup>, according to the slave Americans, is broken. All violence's history is reflected in the kid's face and not only him but all the characters as McCarthy writes : “[a]ll history present in that visage, the child the father of the man” (*ibid*) violence became a trademark of humankind and had been present since its birth.

In short, the kid has been introduced to violence at a young age or even before his birth. Therefore, according to Chris Baldick, a gothic text should comprise “a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration” (xix). In short, the kid is both physically and morally enclosed within not only violence but also the western landscape and its surroundings that haunt him as a whole.

### **1.3. Gothic Women**

In Gothic literature, Gothic female characters are very important since Gothicism gives voice to these voiceless figures that have been oppressed by a male-dominated structure that the genre extends to give them a kind of solace and peace. In the novel, we do not find any trace of conventional and traditional women characters since McCarthy does not put focus on them. He

---

<sup>58</sup> It is also called the Plough or the Drinking Gourd by the Black Slaves during the 19th century.



presented only few prototypes which are countable among his several characters. Willard Greenwood comments that “[a]ll epics have well-developed female characters and an important female presence. Despite *Blood Meridian*’s epic strivings, the lack of a significant female presence is one of the book’s Achilles’ heels” (53). Indeed, this is so disappointing since female characters are an important constituent that represents either rebirth or destruction within society.

Since the author deals mainly with what happens in desert, wilderness and taverns (outside houses) we can say that women have been confined within their homes to maintain them and answer back to the Victorian conventions of docility. Indeed, they are subject to the notions of domesticity which is a term closely coined to a female gothic. Harold Bloom notes that “adult men and women do not inhabit the same dwelling places very easily in any of McCarthy’s books. What usually happens is that the domestic spaces, of which the prototypical examples are the campsites in *Outer Dark*, *Blood Meridian*, and *All the Pretty Horses*, are composed of men without women” (27). Women do not fight by men’s side and they are only decorative ornaments of the taverns in which the men go to release their stress and drown themselves in liquor to forget their harsh environment.

In the first chapter of the novel, the narrator mentions two close female relatives of the protagonist: his mother who died after giving birth to him and “a sister in this world that he will not see again” (3). He does not explain where this latter is or give any further details about her. Therefore, we can say that the angels of the kid’s house that protects it vanished. His father bereaved his wife’s loss and constantly “lies in drink” and “never speaks her name” (*ibid*). This situation sickened his daughter who probably ran away to seek another cozy home that reeks out of motherly love and affection. Her quest for motherhood has been neglected and the mother’s suffering to give birth has been ostracized, too.

The narrator has put much focus on the kid’s journey who relinquishes his feeling in front of an old woman toward whom he probably felt some motherly love that he never found all

along the novel. But for her sake, “[h]e made his way among the corpses and stood before her” in a hurry and mainly “spoke to her in a low voice” (315). He who spat all the time and calmly stood in silence became soft toward an unknown old woman and “told her that he was an American and that he was a long way from the country of his birth and that he had no family and that he had traveled much and seen many things and had been at war and endured hardships” (*ibid*). He somehow summarized his life in a glorious way to pity her since pity is the soft spot of women. He offered her protection that every woman looks for and told her that he “could not leave her in this place or she would surely die” (*ibid*) this sweet scene soon turned into a fiasco when he discovered that “[s]he was just a dried shell and she had been dead in that place for years” (*ibid*). All his efforts were in vain.

This sorrowful side of the story could have been his sister’s if the novel was not dominated by a male-oriented society. And to give more credit to this idea, we can say that these female voices have been marginalized and out-casted from the kid’s patriarchal world. Their former prison of housekeeping has been demolished when the sister ran away and the mother died<sup>59</sup>.

Throughout the novel, McCarthy’s narrator generally depicted two kinds of female archetypes: the angels of the house that entertain their houses and the fallen angels or called “the whores”. The first category of women that *Blood Meridian* depicts is the conventional good women stereotype that was brought to America. They are seen as their houses’ Generals who maintain it cleaned. They have to cook and properly serve their husbands. Even if it is not her husband, the unknown criada<sup>60</sup> is the best example within the novel to represent this genre when she is ordered around by Glanton and “set her to work heating water for baths” [sic] (200). Just like another Victorian tradition, women have been belittled and considered to be fragile as

---

<sup>59</sup> In literature, death and madness were common choices that female writers resort to escape from their patriarchal society through their leading characters, especially, during the Victorian Era (1837-1901).

<sup>60</sup> It means maid or a servant in Spanish.

children. When a terrifying event occurs in *Blood Meridian*, women are grouped alongside children and are described as dolorously petrified while “screaming” and “crouched in terror in their hovels listening until the last hoof clop died in the distance” (177).

McCarthy’s narrator mentions another repressed female voice who is the tavern keeper’s wife; “[a] hardlooking woman with a wiry body like a man’s” (4). Unlike the first women, she is permanently confined in her house which is a tavern in which she attends and helps the kid; “she brings his meals, she carries out his slops” (*ibid*). And this is the job that was attributed to her since the War erupted, like many women who were obliged to support themselves while their husbands or men were assigned to join the army to serve their country. As we further reading the novel, we notice that women have been also described when doing menial works such as ‘carrying a yoke of jars’ (131) to bring water, ‘chopping wood’ (104) to keep their houses warm and cook “a woman and a girl brought bowls of guisado” then “gathered [them] up” (221). Another one “was cutting up beefribs with an axe” (234) and “drying fish” (174) while others were “working the floor” (332), and “lay[ing] dead at their wash” (361). These categories of women have been shallowly mentioned without even being named.

The second category that the novel portrays is the promiscuous women who are said to be prostitutes. Notwithstanding, these women are not described to enjoy multiple relationships except few who are not named with this derogative word and are described as “lovely”. They are depicted as “blowing kisses” (80) and “smoking little cigars, going arm in arm and eyeing [at men] brazenly” (78). Those who have been shamed such as “[a] dark little dwarf of a whore” (332) invites the Judge Holden to her room but did not consummate. This contrast let us wonder if the gentle sex is not, indeed, negatively portrayed. True, some “sashayed half naked, some with their breasts exposed” (334) and “[an] enormous whore stood clapping her hands at the bandstand and calling drunkenly for the music. She wore nothing but a pair of men's drawers and some of her sisters were likewise clad in what appeared to be trophies—hats or pantaloons or

blue twill cavalry jackets” (334). However, these women have been only described as debauched women who enjoy only show the beauty of their bodies. Throughout the novel, the term “whore” is associated to either men’s desire for a relationship or to women subdued against their wills. Most of them have been described as “lurid looking” and utter “shrill cries” (267) but what bothers us is that why are these women afraid and terrified when they are approached if they were to like it? The simple and logical answer that would cross our minds is that because they have been simply obliged to.

This misery can only seed horror and invoke uncanny feeling especially when women are seen as men’s properties who can be easily subdued to rape and violence. In times of war, women are mostly the victims that suffer most before dying since they are “abducted” and “violated” as the case of those who crossed the ferry that Glanton occupied and the Young Mexican girl whose “clothes were found torn and bloodied under the north wall, over which she could only have been thrown. In the desert were drag marks. A shoe” (239). These women’s sufferings and woes have not even been voiced in this male-dominated world or should we say underworld that is deprived of human feelings. Instead, the narrator has completely and superficially referred to them while he eagerly and extensively portrayed men’s misbehavior and desire toward women.

While men are shaped to constantly “indulg[e] a latent taste for rape among the sloe-eyed girls of that country” (177) and “doff their hats oafishly and totter and grin and make obscene suggestions to the young girls” (191), the women have been objectified as symbols of beauty and lust. They have been consequently associated to the beauty culture that mythologized women as weak and beautiful creatures. Their physical appearance is what mostly lures the narrative voice of the novel and *Blood Meridian*’s male characters. Their outer looks have been compared to flowers that are pleasant to contemplate and above all smell so good. “The girls with garish painted faces and tortoiseshell combs in their blueblack hair” (22) “whose beauty becomes the

flowers about” (39) are ‘lovely’(79). These nameless sweet and gorgeous figures are only seen as another means of men’s entertainment other than their excessive violence. This botanical imagery is typically a meticulous representation of women since even the most beautiful flowers have thorns through which they protect themselves.

McCarthy writes that “the women were naked save for skirts of willowbark woven into string and many of them were lovely and many more bore the marks of syphilis” (252-253). A large number of women in this passage are described as having a disease of syphilis that is only transmitted through sexual contact. They have only been objectified as men’s property and a symbol for their lustful desires.

The narrator ended up describing all these fallen angels as “makebelieve wantons, at once childlike and lewd” (332) to show that these cunning and clever creatures pretend to be women of easy virtue in order to escape the brand of “docility” and “angel of the house”. This is another way that McCarthy elaborated to free his female character unlike female authors who choose to kill or let them fall under the trap of madness, and break free from confinement. Women are imperfect just like all men are sinful and this is part of their humanity. He, purposefully, did not describe them in order to accentuate their value. A world void of women would only be a desolate and horrific desert full of violence.

Scott Bradfield argues that “McCarthy’s world is an existential one in which men face two choices—either to battle or to die; the female characters, meanwhile, cook and sew or sell themselves on the street”(no pagination). Throughout most of Western history, women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. Since the atmosphere in which McCarthy’s characters try to face life is purely masculine, their world is fully and meticulously developed while the women’s world is completely put aside and has only been hastily evoked; they are not even described as suffering from these daily labors.

Another female voice that we find in the novel is Sarah Borginnis to whom the author dedicates a whole chapter to describe her and sell her merits. She is portrayed as “a huge woman with a great red face and she read him riot” (256). Here Sarah is presented as a real strong modern gothic woman. In his *Notes on Blood Meridian* (2008), John Sepich confirms that “Sarah Borginnis, the Great Western,” as she was called is not difficult to locate in the literature of the old Southwest” (45). She is, in fact, an American heroine in the Mexican War who worked for the U.S. Army as a laundress. Her duties included washing clothes and cooking for officers, as well as caring for the sick and wounded. “Strong, athletic, and graceful, she stood over six feet tall with an hourglass figure” (Lisa Tendrich Frank 91). However, Borginnis fails as a Gothic heroine to save James Robert because the villain judge emerges from nowhere to help him after he drowned in the river and baptized him once again to his originality to destroy what Sarah did. She is no longer the heroine that stepped him away from the hell he was living in.

Howbeit, the chapter in which she is depicted is the shortest among the novel’s chapters that McCarthy wrote. Despite her striking appearance and reputation as the heroine of Fort Brown throughout history, she has been given little merits within few paragraphs for a courageous laundress who was buried with full military honors. Even the form of the novel, too, applies to the traditional marginalization of women. In his *No Place for Home Spatial Constraint and Character Flight in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy* (2006) Jay Ellis writes that:

The chapter barely runs two and a half pages, and the work of “The Borginnis”—so noted with an article as to suggest that she alone carries the entire of civilizing female influence—fails. James Robert wriggles out of his clothes and heads to the river to nearly drown and, rescued by the judge, return to the world of this most masculine of books baptized back into naked depravity, a probable sex slave for Holden. (9)

Ellis adds that “*Blood Meridian* usually refuses to describe women in any but three ways— head-shot victims, vatic soothsayers, or prostitutes—” (*ibid*). And we should add another category that is considered as the fourth example: the working women as we have previously

explained. A fifth sample of women's nature that we can add is the enchantress prototype that ruins men and drives them to an earthly fire and brimstone. This is mostly understood within Shelby's story of joining the Glanton Gang. Although "[h]e was from a prominent Kentucky family and had attended Transylvania College and like many another young man of his class he'd gone west because of a woman" [sic] (*BM* 207) and another "minstrel dancer out of Cincinnati Ohio was shot to death over a woman" (145). Most of men who enrolled in the army and Gangs were because of seductress sirens since:

another Ken-tuckian, a veteran of the war... had returned to claim some darkeyed love he'd left behind two years before when Doniphan's command pulled east for Saltillo and the officers had had to drive back hundreds of young girls dressed as boys that took the road behind the army. (76)

According to Samuel Chamberlain's memoir, *My Confession: the Recollections of a Rogue* (1987), even John Glanton, himself, who sourly manifested all his indophobia<sup>61</sup> by scalping each Amerindian was to avenge his fiancée who was kidnapped and killed by the Lipan Indians. During the Revolutionary War (1776-1783), Mexican War (1846-1848) and the Civil War (1861-1865), women served their nation up till WWI in a variety of ways other than housing. They joined volunteer brigades and signed up to work as nurses to take care of the soldier and keep them cleaned and healthy and as soldiers to protect their lands. However, these women had to hide their sexuality and disguise themselves as boys<sup>62</sup>, generally to trick the enemy.

In McCarthy's narrative, we notice that the hermit who is mostly an archetype for wisdom and sagacity is, in fact, an old slaver who says that "They is four things that can destroy

---

<sup>61</sup> A term coined to refer to the hostility towards the people and culture of India or its people, or of Native Americans.

<sup>62</sup> Glorious English women who disguised themselves as men during the wars were: Deborah Samson Gannett, from Plymouth, Massachusetts, who was one of the first American woman soldiers. In 1782, she enlisted under the name of her deceased brother, Robert Shurtleff Samson. In 1776, Margaret Corbin fought alongside her husband and 600 American soldiers as they defended Fort Mifflin, New York and Elizabeth C. Newcome was dressed in male attire and joined the military at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and battled Native Americans in Dodge City, in 1847.

the earth, he said. Women, whiskey, money and niggers” [sic] (*BM* 18) from which we can say that women in *Blood Meridian* are destructive.

Both the Old woman that Glanton kills but is scalped by McGill and the magician’s wife are respectively portrayed as witches. The former is “a weathered old woman the color of pipeclay. Dry old crone, half naked, her paps like wrinkled aubergines hanging from under the shawl she wore. She stared at the ground nor did she look up even when the horses stood all about her”(97), a sign that she is not afraid but Glanton’s horse “jerked its head and trembled” (*ibid*) as it sniffed her out of fear. He had to pat it so as to calm it down. Moreover, Webster warns him that “she bites” probably that she has more in her bosom than what she seems. She also stood motionless as “she turned to follow his hand with her gaze and he put the pistol to her head and fired” (98).

Ugly and old women witch stereotype is the invention of male-dominant culture through which older women suffer cruel punishments. Even if stereotypes are false, they are influential and powerful within society and can be very harmful. The term “crone”<sup>63</sup> here is used negatively to mean “witch-like old woman” when this poor old lady is only swallowed by age and wrinkles and had witnessed so many deaths and lost her loved ones when she is portrayed as an empty shell in which [n]either courage nor heartsink in those old eyes” dwell that she no longer longs to live and knows what awaits her (98).

The latter is a fortuneteller who “bound her eyes” with a kerchief and sings a mysterious chant that made her look “like a blindfold mannequin raised awake by a string” (94); she is a weird statute that made crazy gestures that are compatible to each card that her husband draws each time then stops and starts once again even louder. The woman sat like “that blind interlocutrix between Boaz and Jachin inscribed upon the one card in the juggler’s deck that they

---

<sup>63</sup> In US older feminists are reclaiming the word as an honored appellation by creating croning ceremonies to celebrate the coming of maturity.



would not see come to light, true pillars and true card, false prophetess for all. She began to chant” (94). In tarot<sup>64</sup> divination, she is referred to “the High Priestess” who stands between two pillars that are engraved with B and J initials that stand for Boaz and Jachin<sup>65</sup>. Since “McCarthy’s style lacks the Christian dimensions”(393), as Ronja Vieth claims in her “When the Blood Trail Comes Full Circle: Cormac McCarthy’s Gothic of Guilt” (2014), the term “priestess<sup>66</sup>” means in non-Christian religions an official who offers sacrifice on behalf of the people and performs other religious ceremonies. This feminine voice which is referred to as “bedlam<sup>67</sup>” has been demonized into “the witch stereotype” that upholds magical tricks and is not punished or killed as the unfortunate old woman who is mistakenly depicted as a witch. According to this, Christopher Walsh agrees with Nell Sullivan on the idea that “women in McCarthy’s work appear as nothing but abject, threatening, and wholly other to the male protagonists, and that he is an unredeemed male author who excludes women from his books; in short, he exhibits misogynistic tendencies” (18-19), and this is what probably explains this revulsion and contradiction.

The atmosphere of a Gothic novel is expected to be dark, tempestuous, ghostly, full of madness, outrage, superstition, and the spirit of revenge. The landscape in *Blood Meridian* is not only horrifyingly gray, but it is also pitch black. There is no light, only a desolate, hot, and dry landscape in which death awaits them. Wherever the characters go, death shadows them: “[t]hey crossed the del Norte by night and waded up out of the shallow sandy ford into a howling wilderness” (42). Not a firm land and it’s so hard to walk through it whenever you are surrounded by danger. Indeed, the South West was a frightening place where a “dull thump of

---

<sup>64</sup> It is a pack of cards, used mainly for fortune-telling. It consists of 78 cards that are divided into the minor arcana and the major arcana.

<sup>65</sup> These two pillars were established in King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem, which was built by King Solomon in c.10th B.C.E. according to God’s instructions. These Pillars form the foundation of an ancient “Sacred Science” once known worldwide and was encoded by the operative Freemasons into the design and architecture of the world’s most famous Gothic cathedrals. For more information read Richard Cassaro’s article at: <http://www.richardcassaro.com/boaz-and-jachin%E2%80%94the-deeper-meaning-behind-the-most-powerful-of-all-freemason-symbols#sthash.jDQuG1YM.dpuf> and <http://www.deepertruth.com/journal/article-1.html>.

<sup>66</sup> It is a term defined by the Collins English Dictionary Online.

<sup>67</sup> It is a term that Americans use for old women to mean a witch or an evil woman like anile and haggard.

hooves and clank of gear and the constant light chink of harness. Save for scattered clumps of buckbrush and pricklypear and the little patches of twisted grass the ground was bare and there were low mountains to the south and they were bare too. Westward the horizon lay flat and true as a spirit level”, and they see “no game, no birds save buzzards” predators that symbolize death and danger, across that barren and desolate desert (*ibid*). McCarthy also adds that: “[i]n a night so beclamored with the jackal-yapping of coyotes and the cries of owls the howl of that old dog wolf was the one sound they knew to issue from its right form, a solitary lobo, perhaps gray at the muzzle, hung like a marionette from the moon with his long mouth gibbering” (117) .The novel’s hell-like setting varies from one page to another. Each one is more frightful than the other.

In *Blood Meridian*, there are some words which are recurrent and evoke features of Gothicism such as: ‘blood’, ‘fear’ and ‘churchyards’. Even though they are separately expressed, they are summed in one scene when the kid and Sproule seek refuge from the merciless Indians in a church full of old and fresh corpses. “Cemetery” which is defined in the Collins dictionary as “the place where the dead are buried”, is another frightening place that is common in Gothic literature to evoke fear and fright. The Glanton Gang “passed along the ruinous walls of the cemetery where the dead were trestled up in niches and the grounds strewn with bones and skulls and broken pots like some more ancient ossuary” ( 175).

The whole novel is, in fact, a cemetery where souls do not rest in peace since their bodies are dispersed all over; “[t]hey rode through Castroville where coyotes had dug up the dead and scattered their bones”, and the bodies are not even at peace in their own tombs and this petrifying scene is recurrent all over the book and seeing all those corpses is just beyond horror (42).

## 1.4. Supernatural Elements

We have said before that the unexplained events in the gothic novel constitute its core since it's the magic wand through which the author weaves suspense and excitement. *Blood Meridian* speaks in the mouth of Gothicism as it uses supernatural elements through the compelling character of Judge Holdon mainly. He is described as:

An enormous man dressed in an oilcloth slicker... He was bald as a stone and he had no trace of beard and he had no brows to his eyes nor lashes to them. He was close on to seven feet in height and he stood smoking a cigar even in this nomadic house of God and he seemed to have removed his hat only to chase the rain from it for now he put it on again. (6)

The Judge is described as a huge hairless baby with small hands and feet. He does not respect religion, and he is a terrific manipulator who incites the people of Nacogdoches to kill an innocent preacher whom he accuses of pedophilia and bestiality. He is an ignominious and odious person who is keen on seeing savagery and destruction around him. The way in which he made up that story makes him artfully mischievous and Machiavellian since he has “never laid eyes on the man before today. Never even heard of him” (8). He is a sadistic psychopath who stood right there in the middle of the mob to relish violence and bloodshed with his serene face as some innocent angel, but in fact he turns out to be “the devil” as Reverend Green called him.

He is often referred to as “the most frightening figure in all American literature” (Bloom 532) and “a villain worthy of Shakespeare, Iago-like and demoniac, a theoretician of war everlasting” (1) who wants to be suzerain of earth and govern the world and “In order for it to be [his], nothing must be permitted to occur upon it save by [his] dispensation” (*BM* 199) he wants to own everything and be the only one to know everything. He masterfully sketches what is unknown to him in his ledger then destroys them to be the only one to know them and claims that “[w]hatever in creation exists without [his] knowledge exists without [his] consent” (198).

He is then a semi-god who is an astute fiddler and great dancer. Moreover, he has an extensive knowledge of history, philosophy, geology, theology, classical literature, science, and chemistry.

He is also depicted as an ageless and immortal figure that “never sleeps. He says that he will never die” (335). In fact, he is a vampire that sucks people’s lives, mainly children of both sexes, a pedophile, and a warlike token that is often followed by bats that flared his hands “in confusion” and did not attack him as they sucked Sproule’s blood. He calmly keeps watching them, all the time, as if he secretly communicates with them, as their tamer, by telepathy. By the end of the novel, the kid is 45 years old while the Judge seems to be the same as he was when the Kid first met him 30 years ago.

This terrifying character is reported to be a historical figure according to Chamberlain’s Memoir, but the fictionalized Judge in *Blood Meridian* is depicted as a supernatural emblem that can hulk a howitzer; a canon that the U.S. Army used to cart around battlefield by using horses, and a rifle in which “*Et In Arcadia<sup>68</sup> Ego<sup>69</sup>*” is inscribed. In other words, wherever he goes, death and tragedies follow him. Furthermore, only some traits that Chamberlain attributes him are mentioned in *Blood Meridian*. A simple human has a soft spot over one thing that he cannot harm, yet the Judge is merciless and has no sympathy over anything. Starting from killing a baby and animals to adults, he is finally labeled as a bisexual rapist that has seemingly an evil herculean force. Thus, he is referred to as the devil.

The Judge is queer, fearless; a magician that “[s]omeone had reported [him] naked atop the walls, immense and pale in the revelations of lightning, striding the perimeter up there and declaiming in the old epic mode” (*BM* 118). He is reciting a loud speech in an archaic language which none of the crew understood as if he recites some spell or curse to stop the storm or call darkness as witches and wizards do in TV shows. Indeed, by the morning, the sky is clear, “the

---

<sup>68</sup>The term Arcadia is a Greek conception of Paradise and a difficult land to get access to it.

<sup>69</sup>It is a latin expression that means “and I even exist in Acadia” in which death is personified.

rain had ceased” and he “was standing in the gently steaming quiet picking his teeth with a thorn as if he had just eaten” (118). Half eaten, “the snakebit horse lay dead with its shapeless head” (*ibid*), and the Mexican boy was dead. The judge is, obviously, the dangerous culprit who crafted all these tragedies. If he was a normal human being, he would have been sick after going out naked in a stormy day and devouring the crazed horse as normal people would.

In his *Cormac McCarthy: A Literary Companion* (2010), Eric Hage explains that Sara Emily Miano has claimed, in *the London Times*, that the judge “recalls Milton’s Satan, Dostoyevsky’s Grand Inquisitor, Melville’s Captain Ahab” and “is the personification of evil”(99). The judge Holden is, in fact, beyond human and tend more to be another creature whose origins are obscure which is contradictory to humanity as we read later in the text:

Whoever would seek out his history through what unraveling of loins and ledgerbooks must stand at last darkened and dumb at the shore of a void without terminus or origin and whatever science he might bring to bear upon the dusty primal matter blowing down out of the millennia will discover no trace of any ultimate atavistic egg by which to reckon his commencing”. (*BM* 309-310)

He is much more like a “mythic creature” as Greenwood Willard P. dubbed him whom we have heard nothing about his origins even if we look in all the books of universe as if he was taken out of an evaporated egg. This satanic representation is the embodiment of the grotesque as he is the most villainous of the novel, yet he is the most refined and knowledgeable character about everything. Eric Hage points out that the Judge:

represents the best that “civilization” has to offer in his intellectual capacity; his musical, dancing, and artistic ability; his multilingualism; his legal and diplomatic acumen; and his capacity to philosophize, converse, and reason. Yet he is a murderer and child molester, and a man who will commit arbitrary and unspeakable acts of brutality simply to preoccupy himself. (48)

The Judge is a polyglot, an eloquent lecturer in diverse fields, an expert dancer who epitomizes knowledge yet he is a liar, a molester, a gunslinger and a sadistic killer who buys two puppies for sake of drowning them later on. In short, he is the incarnation of Satan.

He is a haunting character with no roots or history that inhabited and plagued the kid's dreams and why not ours? He is described as a "great shambling mutant, silent and serene. Whatever his antecedents, he was something wholly other than their sum, nor was there system by which to divide him back into his origins for he would not go" (309). The term "shambling", which means in the English dictionary to walk in an awkward; lazy; or unsteady manner, is often associated with the term monster. Moreover, the term "mutant", which means an animal or organism that has undergone mutation or change, is commonly used as a synonym to the term monster, too. This description made him stand as a non-human but a demonic and monstrous figure.

He is also a "sootysouled rascal" (124) whose heart and soul are governed by darkness and evil just like "a great ponderous djinn [who] stepped through the fire and the flames delivered him up as if he were in some way native to their element"(96). In Islam, djinn, djinni, jinn or jinnee are invisible spirits and supernatural beings that can take human or animal form and influence human affairs. They are often associated with the Devil whose origin is the fire.

The Judge is also depicted as Christopher Marlowe's Mephistopheles in *Dr Faustus* (1604) who exchanges his unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures with the Gang's soul and violence just to replenish his flask of evil. At the end of the book, no one is left alive except the devilish Judge himself who dances around the characters as a devil around a campfire: "[a]nd they are dancing, the board floor slamming under the jackboots and the fiddlers grinning hideously over their canted pieces. Towering over them all is the Judge and he is naked dancing, his small feet lively and quick and now in doubletime" (335). The devil is a sociable fellow who has a weakness for music just like the Judge. It is almost, universally agreed that Satan is an

expert at playing musical instruments like “The violin and flute [which] are his two favorites” (39) as Herbert Halpert says. The association between the violin or fiddle with the Devil also informs the legend of Giuseppe Tartini’s *Devil’s Trill Sonata* (1713), inspired by a dream in which the Devil granted the composer the song in exchange for his soul and this what the Judge probably did with the Glanton Gang.

One may say that the novel is about the horrors of humanity and not those of demons, but does the judge have any side that seems to be human? He has an ulterior motive behind each step or act he does, even after saving the Idiot. This latter became his servant. In *the Tampa Bay Time*, Colette Bancroft portrayed the Judge as “among the most unforgettable, appalling figures in American literature” and “less a man than a metonym for human depravity” (no pagination). When the judge joined the Glanton Gang, he was found in the middle of nowhere in the great desert “Just perched on this rock like a man waitin[g] for a coach. Brown thought him a mirage” [sic] (*BM* 124) it was “Just him and his legs crossed, smiling[g] as we rode up. Like he’d been expectin[g] us” [sic] (125). He is a bewitching illusion; so real since he is a deathless monstrous deity who saved the gang when they were surrounded by Indians by concocting gunpowder out of brimstone, niter, sulfur and urine. Though he did not have any water with him, he seemed to be perfectly fine.

He is the Gang’s spiritual leader to whom Glanton listens carefully and blindly; and the morphine that calms him down mainly when he loses his mind especially in “the afternoon he lay bound to his bed like a madman while the Judge sat with him and cooled his brow with rags of water and spoke to him in a low voice” (191). The relationship between these two is typically professional since “[t]hey’ve a secret commerce. Some terrible covenant (126); the Judge is the devil that made an agreement with Glanton and takes care of his soul till his last day. He even tries to gather some followers to create a whole sect when “[h]e’d filled his pockets with little candy deathheads and he sat by the door and offered these to children passing on the walk under

the eaves but they shied away like little horses” [sic] (191). They were so afraid of him since he was not a mere human being but Lucifer himself. In his *Cormac McCarthy : A literary Companion* (2010), Eric Hage argues that “Cormac McCarthy has often presented terrifying scenarios for his readers, but never has one of his characters so embodied the darkest recesses of humankind as Judge Holden from *Blood Meridian* (1985)” (99). Indeed, there is no cruel character that likes blood as he does.

Withal, super natural elements are also expressed through the use of two other mysterious characters who are the anchorites. They announced to the Kid and his crew the bad events that awaited them, but they were not believed. The first hermit predicts to the kid that there will be a storm and says: “I reckon and I reckon right” (*BM* 17) and nodded at each answer the kid gives him as if he knew beforehand his story and said “knowed ye did” [sic] (18) and the second one warns the kid that “[t]here is no such joy in the tavern as upon the road thereto” (41) as if he knew that the kid and the filibusters will sourly live the harshest experience of their lives along their journey. The Mennonite says the narrator “watches the enshadowed dark before them as it is reflected to him in the mirror over the bar” (40); the Mennonite is, indeed, depicted here as snow white’s stepmother who talks to his magic mirror from which he could predict the group’s future.

## **1.5. Metonymy of Gloom**

This device is mostly used in TV shows to foreshadow a dangerous situation or a bad event. Yet, it is predominant in the novel and plays another important role in classifying it as a Gothic novel to produce a horrifying and a terrific atmosphere. This tool foreshadows perfectly what is next from the kid’s birthday to his death; as if we were watching a movie, but the reality is that we are reading a great novel.



We have said before that the kid was born during the meteor shower of 1833, in which people were mostly afraid of the event since the sky rained out of meteorites and the kid's father was very afraid of his birth since he expected him to be a cursing demon as his astrological signs prophesized. When the kid travels to Memphis, he goes through a "shadowed agony in the garden" whether to definitely leave "the freezing kitchenhouse in the predawn dark" (4) as Jesus was agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane<sup>70</sup>, the night of his crucifixion whether to sacrifice himself or not. Yet, both of them surrendered all their lives for a better future. However, the poor kid did not know the harsh life that awaited him. Notwithstanding, only the atmosphere helped us to anticipate the bad events that followed.

Wherever the Kid went, doom and gloom surrounded the place as "the black waters" he passed through New Orleans River at night. The black color is generally a metonym or equivalent for sad events as to foreshadow his terrible sadness and misery for being lonely, and it is such a pity that we do not get a glimpse of his thoughts to know more about this character.

Before reading that the terrific Judge set the crowd against the Reverend Green, McCarthy writes that "the rain had been falling for two weeks" (5), and "it had been raining for sixteen days when he met Toadvine and it was raining yet" (8), to suggest his bad encounter with this man. We know in advance that something terrible was coming up but what was it? That is a secret and a mystery that McCarthy keeps to amaze us to only blow it later on when the narrator says that they pair to burn, brutalize and kill people.

Ahead of some events that occurred in *Blood Meridian*, McCarthy forebodes it with different images that portend it. For example, when the Indians attacked the Filibusters, the sky was about to burst with thunder and clouds were so gray and so blue and above all full of electricity as to say that they will suffer a lot:

---

<sup>70</sup> Also called the Garden of Olives, we find it in Jerusalem where Jesus prayed to God with his friends who failed him to show him the right path. For more information consult the Life of Jesus Christ at <http://www.jesus-story.net/gethsemane.htm>

That night they rode through a region electric and wild where strange shapes of soft blue fire ran over the metal of the horses' trappings and the wagonwheels rolled in hoops of fire and little shapes of pale blue light came to perch..., blue and barren, great clanging reaches ordered out of the absolute night like some demon kingdom summoned up or changeling land that come the day would leave them neither trace nor smoke nor ruin more than any troubling dream. (47)

Nevertheless, the main event is later on described when the Filibusters rode on during a blazing dawn that is described as the deep red color of blood that was shed during the assault to accentuate the ferocity of their encounter with the Comanches<sup>71</sup> and the massacre that has known. McCarthy writes that the Filibusters:

set forth in a crimson dawn where sky and earth closed in a razorous plane. Out there dark little archipelagos of cloud and the vast world of sand and scrub shearing upward into the shoreless void where those blue islands trembled and the earth grew uncertain, gravely canted and veering out through tinctures of rose and the dark beyond the dawn to the uttermost rebate of space. (50)

He also used the term “Archipelagos” that means a set of islands of different shapes which represent the Comanche with different garments and armors. Yet, the term was related to “clouds” that gather up in the sky and erupt to rain which is represented by the whole attack. Above all, they are dark and prelude nothing good except desolation and sorrow that has befallen upon the group and the fear that it seeded upon the kid and the surviving such as Sproule. When the white Jackson was murdered by the Black one, “all the sky seemed troubled and night came quickly over the evening land and small gray birds flew crying softly after the fled sun” (105). The sky here represented the Black’s state as he was troubled by the white’s comments. McCarthy also writes that the night which is often referred to by darkness as the color of the Black Jackson “came quickly” and reached its limit and sinks into “the problematical destruction of darkness” as if to forecast the death of the white Jackson (*ibid*).

---

<sup>71</sup> They are members of a North American Indian people that formerly ranged from the Platte River to the Mexican border. Now, they live in Oklahoma.

McCarthy is typically a genius since he did not anticipate all the events that occurred in the novel such as the Yuma attack upon the ferry in which the kid and the Glanton gang dwell and the kid's death in order not to bore the reader. He rather surprises us with different events to break the idea of metonymy that he once constructed and this expectation when he describes the weather to ambush mystery and suspense which will be explained more in the following ideas.

## **1.6. Suspense and Mystery**

This device is also a key element defining the Gothic fashion mainly through ambiguity that is interwoven along the novel, since it digs deeper in different fields of life such as philosophy and religion.

As we start reading this text, we notice at first glance that the main character is nameless “see the child” (3) and so is his family. None of them has been named; not his father, neither his mother nor his sister. Thus, we expect the remaining characters that follow to have the same lot. Despite this, Toadvine and some others were spared. He was first of all introduced by name and referred to him as “the man” like some other character then described him to blur the introduction: “[h]is head was strangely narrow and his hair was plastered up with mud in a bizarre and primitive coiffure. On his forehead were burned the letters H T and lower and almost between the eyes the letter F and these markings were splayed and garish as if the iron had been left too long” (11); the kid could have noticed this at first glance when he met him, yet McCarthy left this description at the end of their meeting and fight to puzzle the readers. He also keeps the thread of suspense and mystery while he maintains them anonymous as the kid then named them unlike him such as Sergeant Trammel. He was first of all referred to as “the man” then has been described then named. He later on mentions another character; Captain White. He is described as a Christ-like figure that showed him “the path of righteousness.” However, when he is finally

introduced as the kid meets him, he turns out to be a racist who is portrayed as a western cowboy.

McCarthy created the hermits as his other mysterious characters that implement both curiosity that makes us delve deeper between the lines to think more about their identity and what they stand for, and suspense that makes us sweat all along our quest. Yet, we are left in this state of confusion and perplexity even at its end. This is the secret by which he bewitched us the most and through which we re-read this amazing novel in order to not get rid of it and have a satisfying answer to our inquiries. The hermits are described as ragged people with a weird appearance and a mysterious speech that staunch us the most with its meaning. Besides them, he peppers the novel with other several characters that turn out to be crazy such as John Glanton, the three Mexicans who are constantly laughing as they encounter the kid and Sproule in the desert and the man who peed on himself out of fear when the Fillibusters met him.

Each one of them had tasted his share of life's bitterness and experienced terrible events that caused their craziness. Thus, we can just understand their sorrowful tragedies as we indirectly witness their awful ignominies through the novel. This creates more an awkward feeling, and pushes us to delve more to discover the cause and have a fuller understanding of the novel and the characters even if we are not introduced to their psychological innermost.

The first hermit "wears on his head a hat he's made from leaves and they have dried and cracked in the sun and he looks like a raggedy man wandered from some garden where he'd used to frighten birds"(15), as some scarecrow that "nested away in the sod like a ground sloth. Solitary, half mad, his eyes redrimmed as if locked in their cages with hot wires" (16). Above all, he makes weird gestures unlike any rational and sane person like beating "his palm with one fist and dart his eyes about" and "scratch[ing] his filthy hair" (*ibid*). He also "was clapping the heels of his clenched fists together at his chest" (*ibid*) as some monkey. He somehow knows the kid's life as if he was expecting him to come and insists on him to stay over the night in which "he

bent over him” when “total darkness” settled in the hut. When the kid woke up to this creepy image, “the hermit crawled away” as some weird reptile (19). By morning, “the hut was empty” as some mirage or a dream as one may say. Yet, this ex-slaver was real and got lost somewhere like some madman as he is described or some other creature. Any normal slaver would get rich and live his life out of that money. Still, this man secluded himself in the wilderness, since he “got sick of niggers” and his mistreating or their selling. For his case, we can say that slavery made him mad just like Glanton became mad when he scalped so many victims (18).

The narrator also introduces another recluse who mutters all the time and reads the fillibusters’ rueful future in a mirror as we have explained before. He also introduced the family of jugglers to fog more our understanding. He was not satisfied with all this and sprinkled mystery over the kid as he became the man. At the beginning, we learn that the kid “can neither read nor write” (3), yet why does he carry a bible that he found “at the mining camps” since he cannot read it or understand it? Moreover, he is dressed in “dark and frugal clothes” as some mysterious gothic hero (312).

McCarthy described the most hideous images and the pictures that he meticulously painted in his novel such as decapitated bodies, scattered bones, and dead babies hanged in a bush. These events also obscure the puzzle that McCarthy creates in our mind since it is so hard to forget or easily understand. Moreover, Readers are generally given different possibilities according to their expectations in life such as the ending. We could doom the kid to death as we could choose another alternative such as rape and humiliation since the Judge appeared to be naked and this is what makes us jump to this conclusion. But, what could be more horrific and disgusting than this in order not to be described. His fate remains anonymous and this scene itself lurks mystery and suspense above all the previous scenes. All these elements contributed to seed ambiguity and enigma in the reader. Nonetheless, the most thrilling character is the Judge as we previously said.

## 1.7. The Frontier

Frederick Turner explains in his thesis (1893) that the frontier myth is a meeting point between savagery and civilization. Thus, the uncivilized frontier was seen as dark and full of danger. We have previously explained that the American frontier depicts the reality of violence and bloodshed, moving away from the cowboy life myth to interrogate national innocence about the white's racist heritage, the exploitation of Native Americans and the African Americans in plantations before the civil war. In this gothic stance, McCarthy dealt with the issue of race and slavery in his own way as he depicted the American landscape during the 1847 when slavery was not yet abolished. He wrote that the blacks were striven hard day and night in the plantation by which the kid goes near when "he wanders as far as Memphis" (*BM* 4) and "Blacks in the fields lank and stooped, their fingers spiderlike among the bolls of cotton" (*ibid*). Here McCarthy's narrator depicts a scene in which he used a racial term "Blacks" to refer to the African Americans who pick up cotton in Memphis plantation. This latter became a major slave market during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when cotton became the South's dominant cash crop. Consequently, a large number of African-American slaves were imported to plantations as a force labor that contributed to the rise of the South's economy. McCarthy sympathized with these people as he affirmed and admitted their hard work since they are described as lifeless, skinny, and gaunt slaves who do not even stand straight to rest because they were not allowed to and were continuously bending to work. These poor people have been stripped away from their stamina as their fingers were metamorphosed and had changed from their habitual form from working and starvation. This spider-image fits them perfectly since spiders are considered as dangerous and harmful. But what may irritate us in this imagery is that in which way are the slaves harmful toward their owners as the hermit refers to in the novel? Is it through trying to escape this state of misery and seeking their freedom to be considered as human beings or in wanting to benefit from what they endeavored so far and sweated from when they were rooted out from their homelands?

Memphis plantation was established during 1819 by John Overton, James Winchester, and Andrew Jackson who were considered as the founding fathers of the city, as all the merits go to them. Nonetheless, we may ask ourselves: were they the only ones who did all the menial works and the hard tasks in trying to establish the city and achieve the American dream as the American conventions denote? What about the slaves who died from suffering as they worked in the fields? With any labor that the non-rich Americans established to fulfill the American dream, corruption stood by their side. The plantation was established on the back of the slaves whom all Americans should thank. Instead, they segregated them from their community since they were different from them and were considered to be outsiders. With McCarthy's style, he perfectly portrayed the slaves suffering through a Hemingwayan<sup>72</sup> strategy (Iceberg theory<sup>73</sup>) that consists in digging up information within historical documents and other sources to know more about the truth concerning slavery.

By 1848 abolitionists helped some slaves to escape slavery like William and Ellen Craft and others who purchased their freedom could walk freely in America. Yet, they were still segregated in some countries mainly the south. We notice in *Blood Meridian* that the group of cattle herders who came from Abilene and helped the kid contains some "free niggers" among their group.

When the kid also went to a cantina, he saw "a nigger that had been sweeping the floor" (11). This was typically the chores that were also given to the slaves to help out their owners. After cleansing, the nigger "stood the broom against the wall and went out" since he was not allowed as most slaves to remain in the white spheres except for working. The animosity

---

<sup>72</sup> It is relating to Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961), an American writer and journalist.

<sup>73</sup> Also called as the theory of omission, it is the writing style of Earnest Hemingway who was influenced by his journalistic career. The theory stipulates that only one eighth of information that the writer conveys in his story floats above the water. The reader has to dig up these hints to know more about the whole story. And, this great deal of knowledge that he discovers constitute the seventh that is left hidden beneath the water. This forge the nucleus of a story since it comes from what is not in it, to only let the surface shine. It is a form of minimalism.

between African Americans and white Americans is also clearly depicted through the conflicting and contrasting characters of both the white and the black Jacksons:

In this company there rode two men named Jackson, one black, one white, both forenamed John. Bad blood lay between them and as they rode up under the barren mountains the white man would fall back alongside the other and take his shadow for the shade that ...Glanton looked to the rear along the column from time to time he seemed to simply reckon them among his number and ride on. (81)

They were constantly fighting, yet the narrator said that it was the white Jackson who constantly pestered the black and not the way around because of his skin color and the western belief about Africans. The racist myth that the westerners created about the Africans was that these latter were descendents of Cain's bloodline whose soul was darkened by evil as he murdered his own brother Abel out of jealousy. We notice that the white Jackson always mocks the black as he leaps in front of him to embody this latter as his own shadow. Since the shadow is also black, racism lays in making no difference between his own shadow and the black Jackson who is being reduced to a shade of nothingness. Furthermore, he ironically launches words of love to emasculate him since he despises him the most as they bare the same name.

The white Jackson does not stop here; he also reviles the black each time he gathers up with the group and this shows the whites' abomination in mistreating the African Americans. "There were two fires in this camp and no rules real or tacit as to who should use them" (106); the fires around which the group settled has no rule just like the Americans promised to establish a nation based on equality and freedom when the founding fathers signed the declaration of independence (1776). Yet, none of this happened. With the following years, segregation was even stricter, even after the emancipation proclamation (1863) till the civil war. We notice this racial segregation when the Delawares and McGills sit around one fire and the whites in another.

When the Black Jackson approached the whites' fire, "the white man [...] with a gesture and a slurred oath [...] warned the black away", and the Black replied that "[a]ny man in this



company can sit where it suits him” (106). The former “swung his head, one eye half closed, his lip loose” and sat cross legged, smoking a cigar as to show his racial superiority around the campfires. He then threatens him with a gun and the black Jackson “moved away in the dark” as to absorb courage to only “step out of the darkness bearing the bowieknife” and kills his arch-nemesis who represents the racial superiority and the fall off slavery (108).

According to the Slave Fugitive Law (1793), when the slaves run away, a ransom was put upon their heads, dead or alive to retrieve their “property” as they were called. And this is the secret story behind the ex-slaver’s blackened heart who “do[es not]care to tell it. Made good money. [He] never did get caught” (18), even if it was against the law, at that time, when the U.S. started to establish anti-slavery movements. Nonetheless, slavery was not completely abolished until 1865. The heart that the hermit objectified to “that thing” cost him “two hundred dollars” and the kid who was estranged to all this was amazed that someone could give such a price to only a nigger’s heart. The hermit, then, clarified that the price was not for the heart but for “the black son of a bitch it hung inside of” (*ibid*).

Racism is also shown when the bartender Owens refused to serve the scalphunters who were blackened by the dried blood on their faces: “[g]entlemen, he said, we dont mind servin people of color. Glad to do it. But we ast for em to set over here at this other table here. Right over here” [sic] (234); he, like many other racist, ostracized the gang mistaking them for African Americans as Toadvine confirms this idea “[h]e thinks we’re niggers” (235). When the misunderstanding is cleared, Owens still refuses to serve them since Jackson is with them. David Brown hands the bartender a gun and defies him to kill Jackson, yet the former hesitates and this later kills him. Davy then comments on Jackson that he is the “most terrible nigger I ever seen” (236). Through this spectacle, McCarthy contrasts the racist language of Owens and Jackson’s reaction. In fact, he does not harm anyone, but he does not spare those who harry him.

In the novel, the whites did not only discriminate the African Americans but also the Indians and the Mexicans too as we have previously explained in the first element of Gothicism. McCarthy revised the American history as he revised the notion of slavery and its abolition by considering African Americans as human beings not different from the white through the character of the harness-makers' son who was not yet corrupted by the society's myth about the non-whites: "even a crazy black nigger was not less than a man among men" (143) and have the right to be seen as the whites' equals, "pointing out at the road and calling for a place to be made for the nigger" (*ibid*). This was the peaceful and righteous decision that would have been made from the start to avoid all that bloodshed that occurred during the civil war.

The historical past of America has been narrated by the American vanquishers; they saw themselves as innocent puritans who fled mother country to seek their lost Jerusalem. Instead, they stepped into a frightening place haunted by 'savages' who threatened their existence after a long voyage and fatigue. They described themselves as innocent travelers who sought adventure. Yet, the American history has been shaped out of the unspoken truth that led to the throne of myriad innocent people such as: Native Americans, African Americans and their miscegenation. In her essay "A Frontier Myth Turns Gothic: "*Blood Meridian: Or, the Evening Redness in the West*"", Ronja Vieth argues that: "[D]ue to its preoccupation with the unspoken realities of America's mythologized past, a past still celebrated in countless Western novels, pulp biographies, ballads, and films, *Blood Meridian* can thus be properly called Frontier Gothic" (47) since the novel deals with the unspoken realities and the fall of the attractive western cowboy. To this extent, much of the imagery surrounding the destruction of Native Americans, African-Americans and non-whites has acquired an American gothic flavor. Thus, this novel can be included within the American gothic category

Indeed, the New World acted as a symbol of hope for many people around the world, especially those who ventured west to look for their green light<sup>74</sup> and achieve the American Dream. There were so many individuals who found success, enough to maintain the notion of the West as a utopia alive through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but, in fact, America turned out to be the grave of so many others who lost their lives in trying to achieve this dream became their nightmare.

Ronja Vieth also adds that the Gothic novel, and principally the Frontier Gothic, is “a means of confronting our demons and rewriting our origin myth” (50), and that is what McCarthy shaped in his *Blood Meridian*. He rewrote the western myth of innocence to correct its past western culture about the frontier, Indians’ slaughter, and racism that lead to slavery. McCarthy incorporated all the elements that shaped the American history. She also notes that

*Blood Meridian* is not merely a Western novel rewriting the frontier myth. It is much more than that; it has metamorphosed into a piece of Frontier Gothic. That distinction is essential, because the novel relies on the tropes of the American Gothic not only to present an alternative historical past but also to induce an acceptance of that alternative history in the reader. (56)

In fact, this is McCarthy’s objective when he wrote the novel; nonetheless, he skillfully dealt with the issue of racism since he objectively described each side as violent. Blood thirst breeds only in the inner self of humankind. He did not side with either party. In short, McCarthy did not consecrate his *Blood Meridian* only to slavery, race, or anxiety of the frontier but also on human fears of violence, the supernatural, the uncanny and madness.

The gothic has always intrigued the readers and become their favorite genre as it deals with what the mind tries to fight with. In fact, this type deals with the darker sides of the human psyche like violence and terror. Herewith, the Gothic, like romance, has always been associated with writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne whose hero(ine) steps out of his/her infernal world to

---

<sup>74</sup>The green light is an encouraging symbol of success and money to achieve the American Dream in Scott Fitzgerald “The Great Gatsby”(1925)

rescue his/her lover. But, with McCarthy there is no romance in *Blood Meridian*; the novel sets only uncanny feelings inside the readers who simply end up categorizing it as a gothic novel that deals with what each one of them fears the most; to be left alone in a merciless world that is governed by violence.

## **Conclusion**

Categorizing *Blood Meridian* within the Gothic genre is sometimes problematical since most of the critics deny its features. On one hand, *Blood Meridian* does not deal with necrophilia or incest and social taboos as in McCarthy's other southern gothic novels such as *Outer Dark* and *Child of God*; on the other hand, it delineates other elements mentioned earlier in the third chapter like imprisonment and metonymy of gloom...

## **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

In American culture, the Western genre plays an important role, since it is considered as a cultural myth as well as a significant part of national identity. Pop images that we got from western movies are partly responsible for creating this myth of masculinity and heroism around western characters that came to be mostly associated with wilderness as part of the frontier that they tried to discover.

In 19<sup>th</sup> century, stories about the frontier became popular and writers extended the myth by encompassing their characters with mystery and courage. Cormac McCarthy is *perhaps* the only writer who depicted the western culture with its violence as it really used to be in the west within his masterwork *Blood Meridian*. In fact, this (reclusive, reserved, and disconnected according to journalists and critics) author is almost like Don DeLillo's Bill Gray<sup>75</sup> who became legendary thanks to his commitment to writing by refusing fame. McCarthy used the grant funding that he received from different foundations to conduct historical research about the west to write this great novel. These foundations are: the Lyndhurst Foundation<sup>76</sup>, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation<sup>77</sup>, and the Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation<sup>78</sup>.

McCarthy was so mysterious that many virtuous qualities have been attributed to him. When he accepted to be interrogated by Oprah Winfrey during her show, the public was very excited to learn more about this anchorite who discovered that McCarthy was not apocalyptic as

---

<sup>75</sup> He is the protagonist of Don DeLillo's novel *Mao II* published in 1991. He is famously a reclusive novelist who endlessly works on a novel which he chooses to not finish, just like *Blood Meridian*. He has chosen a secluded lifestyle, from the outside world in order to keep his writing pure.

<sup>76</sup>The Foundation was founded in 1938 with Carter Lupton as its president. It was the first private foundation in Tennessee that focuses on the enrichment and enhancement of the social and natural environment in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the surrounding southeastern region.

<sup>77</sup> The Foundation was founded in 1925 by Olga and Simon Guggenheim in memory of their deceased son. The organization awards Guggenheim Fellowships to professionals, Nobel Laureates, Pulitzer and other prize winners who have demonstrated exceptional ability in their works.

<sup>78</sup> The Foundation was founded in 1970 by Catherine T. and John D. MacArthur. It is the 10th-largest private foundation in the United States. It awards grants and supports non-profit organizations in approximately 50 countries.

most of his fans have speculated. In fact, he is a modest and simple old man yet distanced. Many Cormackian fans and critics have created the Cormac McCarthy Society and a site bearing McCarthy's name in which all of his critical books and essays about his writings are included.

He blended historical facts within fiction since it is the best genre that is dubbed as the lie through which McCarthy has told the truth about the west. The result was that he created a western novel through parodying the genre. It is mostly called an anti-western since it does not depict 'an age of innocence' in which heroic characters struggle against danger, but it rather portrays a West that is built out of violence and bloodshed. This is contradictory to the western myth and there is nothing more appropriate to define a genre than its parody.

This epic novel is typically a postmodern *magnum opus* as it is a patchwork of different genres, with an open and vague ending; we do not know what really happens to the kid. While *Blood Meridian* mirrors and alludes to many authors and books thematically, structurally, and linguistically, it also owes much of its materiality to Samuel Chamberlain's *My Confession: The Recollections of a Rogue*.

Most critics have hailed this great novel as a historical fiction and McCarthy himself said that "the ugly fact is [that] books are made out of books. The novel depends for its life on the novels that have been written." (Woodward no pagination) as many critics have noted, *Blood Meridian* is indeed made out of the finest literature. True, we cannot deny that it contains historical events and real characters, but the real genre of this novel is problematic, paradoxical and challenging. It can also be hailed as an existentialist novel as it neglects the emotional side of the characters and puts much focus on death that spreads through each page we read. It can, also, be incorporated within an ecopastoral genre as Georg Gilman explained well in his *The Pastoral Vision of Cormac McCarthy* (2004) since "the absolute lawlessness of the setting matches with the absolute wilderness of the setting" (73) within the novel. In fact, McCarthy imagined an apocalyptic world in which animals do not live in harmony with nature, and by

showing these problems, such as dead animals, the novel seeks to establish order to enjoy a secure life.

What most critics did not extend in their analyses is the elements of the gothic that are eminent in the novel. Ronja Vieth(2012) and Martin Procházka(2012) were fairly the only ones who studied the novel as a gothic fiction. The former extended the gothic of guilt and the notion of duality while the latter takes the most enduring of Gothic tropes, the ruined and ghost town of Anasazi in the novel. This feature was often attributed, in Europe, to a castle or mansion and shows its persistence and mutations in America over time.

Although McCarthy's Gothicism is rarely acknowledged by critics, other elements of the gothic strikingly include the clash of civilizations that is represented through the civilized American characters and the uncivilized Mexicans and Indians, the violent and bloody western landscape in which the kid is imprisoned, gothic women that deal with the unvoiced female characters that have been imprisoned within the domestic sphere and mystery and suspense that is almost woven through enigmatic and nameless characters such as the kid and his tragic fate at the end of the novel.

McCarthy adorns his novel with supernatural elements through his characters, mainly with his devilish Judge Holden and the hermits. Another feature of Gothicism that McCarthy used in his text is metonymy of gloom; a device upon which he played with the setting in order to prelude and foreshadow the dangerous events that followed. One's death was also greeted with silence rather than angst or mourning.

The gothic frontier is another feature of Gothicism upon which McCarthy extends the gothic genre as we have explained in the last chapter. It includes the dangers of the desert and the wilderness in which Indians pop out any times to attack the adventurers. The issue of racism and slavery is another theme of the gothic frontier that McCarthy delineates in his novel through the



conflicting characters; the white and the black Jacksons mainly. Other features that the novel exhibits are: perversion, the characters' mental instability in which their morality is questioned and the different dialects they use in addition to the mortifying pact with the devilish Judge Holdon.

All these elements are mainly characteristics of the Southern Gothic which is a tradition of fiction that focuses on violence and bloodletting in the South as we have previously explained. McCarthy's commitment to the Southern tradition of the gothic and the grotesque as seen in the works of William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor has been repeatedly noted by critics such as Kenneth Lincoln, Jay Ellis, Willard P. Greenwood, Eric Hage, Edwin T. Arnold and Dianne C. Luce. Even though *Blood Meridian* is set in the southern West of U.S., the novel exhibits features of the southern gothic tradition mainly like the sublime, the grotesque, humor, slavery, bloodshed, and violence. It also exposes not only features of traditional Gothicism as selling oneself to the devil, imprisonment and metonymy of gloom but also characteristics of American Gothicism as the novel's setting is wilderness and sees Indians as savages and harmful people. This novel, indeed, can be categorized within the gothic stance and more precisely it is postmodern gothic novel as it mixes between traditional Gothicism, American Gothicism and Southern Gothicism.

For further research on the Southern Gothic tradition within the works of Cormac McCarthy, we would suggest *Outer Dark* (1968), *Child of God* (1973), *Suttree* (1979) and *No Country for Old Men* (2005). His latest, most appraised novel *the Road* (2006) is an excellent example of how McCarthy depicts the future of our world. Yet, *Blood Meridian* is the best example of how the American past was shaped. There is no mystery, evil is endemic in man, so it is better to acknowledge this idea as the book explains.

# Bibliography

## Primary Sources

McCarthy, Cormac. *Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West*. United States of America: First Vintage International Edition, 1992. Print

## Secondary Sources

### Printed Books

Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1993. Print.

Baldick, Chris. *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*. U.S.A: Oxford University Press, 1992. Print.

Beville, Maria. *Gothic-postmodernism: Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. Print.

Bloom, Harold. *Novelists and Novels*. United States of America: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005. Print.

---. *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Cormac McCarthy, New Edition*. United States of America: Infobase Publishing, 2009. Print.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Glennis Byron, and Dale Townshend. *The Gothic World*. New York: Routledge the Taylor & Francis Group, 2014. Print.

Carter, Angela. *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. New York: Penguin Books, 1987. Print.

- Cavallaro, Dani. *The Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear*. London: Continuum. 2002. Print.
- Cooper, Andrew L. *Gothic Realities: The Impact of Horror Fiction on Modern Culture*. United States of America: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010. Print.
- Crow Charles L., ed. *A companion to American Gothic*. United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014. Print.
- Dryden, Linda. *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Print.
- Duggett, Tom. *Gothic Romanticism: Architecture, Politics, and Literary Form*. United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.
- Ellis, Jay. *No Place for Home: Spatial Constraint and Character Flight in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. Print.
- Galens, David. *Literary movements for students: presenting analysis, context, and criticism on literary movements*. United States of America: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009. Print.
- Hage, Eric. *Cormac McCarthy, A Literary Companion*. United States of America: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010. Print.
- Heiland, Donna. *Gothic and gender: an introduction*. United States of America: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004. Print.
- Hoeverler, Diane Long, and Donna Decker Schuster, ed. *Women's Literary Creativity and the Female Body*. The United States of America: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.
- Hogle E. Jerrold. *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.

- , Jessica Bomarito. *Gothic Literature: A Gale Critical Companion*. Detroit: Gale/Cengage Learning, 2006. Print.
- Horner, Avril, and Sue Zlosnik. *Gothic and the Comic Turn*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004 .Print.
- Josyph, Peter. *Adventures in Reading Cormac McCarthy*. United States of America: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2010.Print.
- King, Stephen. *Salem's Lot*. Great Britain: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975. Print.
- Levinson, Irving W. *Wars within War: Mexican Guerrillas, Domestic Elites, and the United States of America, 1846-1848*. Canada: TCU Press, 2005. Print.
- Martin, Robert K., and Eric Savoy. *American Gothic New Interventions in a National Narrative*. United States of America: University of Iowa Press, 1998. Print.
- Maxwell, Richard, and Katie Trumpener. *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Print.
- McCarthy, Cormac. *All the Pretty Horses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1992.Print.
- . *The Crossing*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994. Print.
- *Cities of the Plain*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1998. Print.
- . *No Country for Old Men*. New York: Vintage International, 2006. Print.
- . *Outer Dark*. New York: Vintage International, 1993. Print.
- . *The Road*. New York: Vintage International, 2006. Print.
- . *Suttree*. New York: Vintage International, 1992. Print

- Meed, Douglas V. *Essential Histories: the Mexican War 1846–1848*. Oxford: Rutledge, 2005. Print.
- Monnet, Agnieszka S. *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic: Gender and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd, 2010. Print.
- Morgan, Jack. *The biology of Horror: Gothic Literature and Film*. The United States of America: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002. Print.
- Mountjoy, Shane. *Manifest Destiny: Westward Expansion*. New York: Chelsea House, 2009. Print.
- Murphy, Bernice M. *The Suburban Gothic in American Popular Culture*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- Olson, Danel. *21st-century Gothic: Great Gothic Novels Since 2000*. United Kingdom: Scarecrow Press, 2011. Print.
- Poster, Mark. *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001. Print.
- Punter, David. *A New Companion to the Gothic*. The United States of America: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2012. Print.
- , and Glennis, Byron. *The Gothic*. The United States of America: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004. Print.
- Reynolds, Michael D. *Falling Stars: a Guide to Meteors and Meteorites*. United States of America: Stackpole Books, 2001. Print

- Ruland, Richard, and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. U.S.A: Penguin Books Ltd, 1992. Print.
- Sepich, John. *Notes on Blood Meridian: Revised and Expanded Edition*. United States of America: University of Texas Press, 2008. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Dramatis Personae, 1810. Print
- Smith, Andrew. *Gothic Literature: Edinburgh Critical Guides*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007. Print.
- , and Jeff Wallace. *Gothic Modernisms*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. Print.
- Spooner, Catherine. *Contemporary Gothic*. United Kingdom: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006. Print.
- , and Emma McEvoy. *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*. United States of America: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- The American Standard Translation of the Holy Bible*. The American Revision Committee. Ed. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901. Print.
- Wallace, Diana, and Andrew Smith., ed. *The Female Gothic New Directions*. England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Novel*. The Floating Press, 2009. Print.
- Walsh, Christopher J. *In the Wake of the Sun: Navigating the Southern Works of Cormac McCarthy*. Knoxville: Newfound Press University of Tennessee Libraries. 2009. Print.
- Walters, Margaret. *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

## Online Books

Bayer, Gerd. *Heavy Metal Music in Britain: Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series*. Britain: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd, 2009. *Google Book Search*. Web. 14 Feb 2016. <[https://books.google.fr/b?id=NljX-oMfBiMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/b?id=NljX-oMfBiMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Beck, John. *Dirty Wars: Landscape, Power, and Waste in Western American Literature*. United States of America: U of Nebraska Press, 2009. *Google Book Search*. Web 15 Apr 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=KSPEparuV-QC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=KSPEparuV-QC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Becker, Susanne. *Gothic Forms of Feminine Fictions*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. *Google Book Search*. Web. 19 Mar 2016. <[https://books.google.fr/books?id=jeXb4Agtg5IC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=jeXb4Agtg5IC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Blazek, William, and Michael K. Glenday, ed. *American Mythologies: Essays on Contemporary Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005. *Google Book Search*. Web. 10 Apr 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=sRMn-LoEb7gC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=sRMn-LoEb7gC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Bloom, Harold. *How to Read and Why*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001. *Google Book Search*. Web. 01 Apr 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=bewrMsdX1J0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=bewrMsdX1J0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Boles, Janet K., and Diane Long Hoeveler. *Historical Dictionary of Feminism*. United States of America: Scarecrow Press, 2004. *Google Book Search*. Web. 03 Apr 2016.

<[https://books.google.fr/books?id=tOVlvvrMJhUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=tOVlvvrMJhUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Boguta-Marchel, Hanna. *The Evil, the Fated, the Biblical: The Latent Metaphysics of Cormac McCarthy*. United Kingdom. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. *Google Book Search*. Web. 19 Apr 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=o0ksBwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=o0ksBwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Bridgwater, Patrick. *The German Gothic Novel in Anglo-German Perspective*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013. *Google Book Search*. Web. 14 Feb. 2016. <[https://books.google.fr/books?id=bmYgAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=bmYgAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Brockden, Charles B. *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*. The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2015. Web. 17 Feb 2016. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/8223/8223-h/8223-h.htm>>.

Cant, John. *Cormac McCarthy and the Myth of American Exceptionalism*. New York: Routledge, 2013. *Google Book Search*. Web. 02 Mar 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=PKqXvoiAi-4C&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=PKqXvoiAi-4C&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Cooper, Katherine, and Emma Short., ed. *The Female Figure in Contemporary Historical Fiction*. Great Britain. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. . *Google Book Search*. Web. 05 Apr 2016. <[https://books.google.fr/books?id=YrVtUTUmlC8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=YrVtUTUmlC8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Edwin T. Arnold, Dianne C. Luce. *Perspectives on Cormac McCarthy*. Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1999. *Google Book Search* .Web. 14 Feb 2016 .<<https://books.go>



ogle.dz/books?id=OgKvY78gjLYC&dq=Perspectives+on+Cormac+McCarthy&hl=fr  
&source=gbs\_navlinks\_s>.

Eva Marta Baillie. *Facing the Fiend: Satan as a Literary Character*. U.S.A: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014. *Google Book Search* .Web. 22 Apr 2016.<[https://books.google.dz/books?id=UHSyCwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=UHSyCwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) >.

Guillemin, Georg. *The Pastoral Vision of Cormac McCarthy*. United States of America: Texas A&M University Press, 2004 . *Google Book Search* .Web. 02 May 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=UEwHYJUHQfAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=UEwHYJUHQfAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) > .

Hogle, Jerrold E., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern Gothic*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2014. *Google Book Search* .Web. 08 Mar 2016.<[https://books.google.fr/books?id=QY9EBQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=QY9EBQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Josyph, Peter. *Cormac McCarthy's House: Reading McCarthy Without Walls*. United States of America: University of Texas Press, 2013. *Google Book Search*. 14 Feb 2016 . <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=PTsPK4cYuxAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=PTsPK4cYuxAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Luce, Dianne C. *Reading the World: Cormac McCarthy's Tennessee Period*. United States of America: University of South Carolina Press, 2009. *Google Book Search*. 14 Feb 2016 .<[https://books.google.dz/books?id=8IxM8F912EsC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=8IxM8F912EsC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Maxwell, Lauren. *Romantic Revisions in Novels from the Americas*. United States of America: Purdue University Press, 2013. *Google Book Search* .Web. 14 Feb.2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=hVjlBHM6FjIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=hVjlBHM6FjIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) >.

McGilchrist, Megan Riley. *The Western Landscape in Cormac McCarthy and Wallace Stegner: Myths of the Frontier*. New York: Routledge, 2012. *Google Book Search* .Web. 14 Feb. 2016.<[https://books.google.dz/books?id=UxaFowXcIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=UxaFowXcIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) >.

Mundik, Petra. *A Bloody and Barbarous God: The Metaphysics of Cormac McCarthy*. United States of America: University of New Mexico Press, 2016. *Google Book Search*.Web.02 May2016.<[https://books.google.fr/books?id=QQzbCwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=QQzbCwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Owens, Barclay. *Cormac McCarthy's Western Novels*. The United States of America: University of Arizona Press, 2000. *Google Book Search* .Web. 19 Mar 2016 <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=iv8PmHAYTfEC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=iv8PmHAYTfEC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Parrish, Timothy. *From the Civil War to the Apocalypse: Postmodern History and American Fiction*. United States of America: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008. *Google Book Search* .Web.02 May 2016.< [https://books.google.dz/books?id=F5cJNJzaodMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=F5cJNJzaodMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gsbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Patrick M. Jones. *Revelations from Revelation*. TEACH Services, Inc., mars 2008. *Google Book Search*. Web. 15 Jan 2016. <<https://books.google.fr/books?id=iX4cmDeh5oEC>

&pg=PA164&lpg=PA164&dq=November+1213,+1833&source=bl&ots=9JI4D1S1nv  
&sig=yRSPZdJq-oYpe-SX-4WNJYCH8xA&hl=fr&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiT8cbU-  
avLAhXF2xoKHcetBLMQ6AEIdjAO#v=onepage&q=November%2012-13%2C%  
201833&f=false>.

Smith, Allan Lloyd, and Victor Sage, ed. *Gothick Origins and Innovations*. The Netherlands: Rodopi, 1994. *Google Book Search*. Web. 09 May 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=fZXUVNIJ4lsC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=fZXUVNIJ4lsC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

---. *Modern Gothic: A Reader*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996. *Google Book Search*. Web. 09 May 2016. <[https://books.google.fr/books?id=G9NRAQAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=G9NRAQAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

---. *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*. New York: the Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2004. *Google Book Search*. Web. 09 May 2016. <[http://books.google.fr/books?id=ispjxUdqpwC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.fr/books?id=ispjxUdqpwC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Spurgeon, Sara L. *Exploding the Western: Myths of Empire on the Postmodern Frontier*. United States of America: Texas A&M University Press, 2005. *Google Book Search*. Web. 27 Apr 2016. <[https://books.google.fr/books?id=0sMJEbXv6pUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=0sMJEbXv6pUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Stricker, Florence. *Cormac McCarthy - Les romans du Sud-Ouest*. Paris: Editions Ophrys, 2008. *Google Book Search*. Web. 02 May 2016. <[https://books.google.dz/books?id=3qvzeYwIJuMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=3qvzeYwIJuMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Wallace, Diana. *Female Gothic Histories: Gender, History and the Gothic*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. 2013. *Google Book Search*. Web. 01 May 2016.<[https://books.google.dz/books?id=sVauBwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=sVauBwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

Wallach, Rick, ed. *Myth, Legend, Dust: Critical Responses to Cormac McCarthy*. Great Britain: Manchester University Press, 2000. *Google Book Search*. Web. 04 May 2016.<[https://books.google.dz/books?id=fzEqoZ53MPcC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.dz/books?id=fzEqoZ53MPcC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

## Online Articles, Interviews and Poems

*Blood Meridian*. Amazon. 1996-2016. Web. 24 Jan 2016.<<http://www.amazon.com/Blood-Meridian-Evening-Redness-West/dp/0679728759>>.

Bancroft, Colette. "A detour at the end of 'The Road'". *The Tampa Bay Time*. 23 Apr, 2007. Web. 19 Dec 2015.< [http://www.sptimes.com/2007/04/23/Floridian/A\\_detour\\_at\\_the\\_end\\_o.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2007/04/23/Floridian/A_detour_at_the_end_o.shtml)>.

*Blood Meridian*. Powell's city of books, 1971. Web. 24 Jan 2016. <<http://www.powells.com/book/blood-meridian-9780679728757#sthash.YRLerFVt.dpuf>>.

Bradfield, Scott. "Books: The twilight cowboy". *Independent*. 12 Jun 1998. Web. 31 Jan 2016.<<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/books-the-twilight-cowboy-1164609.html>>.

"Compiled interviews". Cormac McCarthy the Official Web Site of the Cormac McCarthy Society. Kentucky, October 1993. Web. 17 Dec 2015.< <http://www.cormacmccarthy.com/topic/compiled-interviews/>>.

Cormac McCarthy, interview by Oprah Winfrey. *Themes in The Road: Where Fiction and Science Meet*. Santa Fe Institute , Jun .2007. Web. 19 Feb 2016.< [http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/Oprahs-Exclusive-Interview-with-Cormac-McCarthy- Video](http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/Oprahs-Exclusive-Interview-with-Cormac-McCarthy-Video)>.

Cormac McCarthy, interview by Richard B. Woodward. *Cormac McCarthy's Venomous Fiction*. The New York Times, Apr 19, 1992. Web. 19 Feb 2016.< <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/17/specials/mccarthy-venom.html>>.

Cormac McCarthy, interview by Matthias Von Matussek. *Die Abendröte des Westens*. Der Spiegel, August 31,1992. Web 19 Feb 2016.< <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-9284806.html>>.

Cormac McCarthy, interview by Mario-Paul Martinez. 'No hay ninguna razón para pensar que las cosas van a mejorar'. Informacion.es, 2012.Web. 19 Feb 2016. <<http://www.diarioinformacion.com/cultura/2012/10/06/hay-razon-pensar-cosas-mejorar/1302161.html>>.

Cormac McCarthy, interview by John Jurgensen. *Hollywood's Favorite Cowboy*.The Wall Street Journal, Nov 20, 2009.Web.20 Feb 2016. < <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704576204574529703577274572?mobile=y>>.

Dickinson, Emily. "One need not be a chamber to be haunted". Dickinson Poems. Web. 16 Mar 2016. < <http://www.people.virginia.edu/~sfr/enam312/2004/edickinson.html>>.

Esposito, Scott. "Cormac McCarthy's Paradox of Choice: One Writer, Ten Novels, and a Career-Long Obsession". *The Carterly Conversation* , 2008. Web.23 Mar 2016.< <http://quarterlyconversation.com/cormac-mccarthy-paradox-of-choice>>.

Grossman, Lev, and Richard Lacayo. "All-Time 100 Novels A-B". *Time Magazine*, 07 Jan 2010. Web. 20 Jan 2016.<<http://entertainment.time.com/2005/10/16/all-time-100-novels/slide/blood-meridian-1986-by-cormac-mccarthy/>>.

Halpert, Herbert. "The Devil and the Fiddle." *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin* 2.2 (1943): 39-43. Web. 02 Apr 2016.< [http://www.jstor.org/www.sndll.arn.dz/tc/verify?origin=/stable/pdf/27655458.pdf?\\_=1463939447506](http://www.jstor.org/www.sndll.arn.dz/tc/verify?origin=/stable/pdf/27655458.pdf?_=1463939447506)>.

Itoh, Shoko. "Poe, Faulkner, and Gothic America". *The Faulkner Journal of Japan* Vol. 3 (2001), 17-32. Web. 09 Mar 2016. < <http://www.faulknerjapan.com/journal/No3/Itoh.htm>>.

J. Molinaro. "John Glanton's Gang". *The Scalp Hunters*. 12 Jan 1997. Web. 07 Apr 2016.<<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/scalpin/apaches.html>>.

James, Caryn. "Blood Meridian, by Cormac McCarthy". *New York Times*. 28 Apr 1985. Web. 11 Dec 2015. <<http://www.nytimes.com/1985/04/28/books/mccarthy-meridian.html>>.

Kamei, Nobuharu. "German Gothic Novel". *Chuo University*. Web. 14 Feb.2016 <<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/adv/chuo/dy/research/20120705.html>>.

Kollin, Susan. "Genre and the geographies of violence: Cormac McCarthy and the contemporary western". *Contemporary Literature* V. 42 no3 (Fall 2001) p. 557-88. Web. 19 Feb 2016.< <http://faculty.gvsu.edu/royerd/courses/495/western.htm>>.

Kronk, Gary W. "Observing the Leonids: Leonids". *Meteor Showers Online*. Web. 22 Apr 2016.<<http://meteorshowersonline.com/leonids.html>>.

- McCarthy, Cormac. "Cormac McCarthy's Venomous Fiction". Interview. By Richard B. Woodward. *The New York Times*. 19 Apr 1992. Web. 12 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/19/magazine/cormac-mccarthy-s-venomous-fiction.html>>.
- MacKethan, Lucinda. "Genres of Southern Literature". North Carolina State University February 16, 2004. Web. 01 Apr 2016. < <http://southernspaces.org/2004/genres-southern-literature>>.
- Marx, Karl. "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte". 1852. Web. 23 Feb 2016. <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm>>.
- Pilkington, Tom. "Fate and Free Will on the American Frontier: Cormac McCarthy's Western Fiction". *Western American Literature* 27.4 (1993): 311–322. Web. 31 May 2016. < [http://www.jstor.org/stable/43021039?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/43021039?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)>.
- Robenalt, Jeffery. "A Glimpse of Texas Past: The Great Comanche Raid and the Battle of Plum Creek". *Texas Escapes*. 9 January 2011. Web. 09 Mar 2016. < <http://www.texasescapes.com/JefferyRobenalt/Great-Comanche-Raid-and-Battle-of-Plum-Creek.htm>>.
- Rogez, Yvonne-Marie. "Cormac McCarthy: Blood Meridian Western de l'Apocalypse, Apocalypse du western". Université Paris III, 2006. Web 23 Feb 2016. <<http://www.cercles.com/n16/2/rogez.pdf>>.
- Softing, Inger-Anne. "Desert Pandemonium: Cormac McCarthy 's Apocalyptic" Western" in Blood Meridian". *American Studies in Scandinavia*, Vol. 31 (1999): 13-30. Web. 01 Mar 2016. < <http://cjas.dk/index.php/assc/article/download/1105/1108>>.

- Shawn, Mark Jasinski. "Judge Holden and the Violence of Erasure: Blood Meridian's Historical Skepticism". *Modern Horizons Journal*. 2011. Web. 17 Jan 2016. <[http://www.modernhorizonsjournal.ca/Nov\\_2011%20-%20Jasinski.pdf](http://www.modernhorizonsjournal.ca/Nov_2011%20-%20Jasinski.pdf)>.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Sister's Choice: Tradition and Change in American Women's Writing". *The Clarendon Lectures*, 1989. Oxford Scholarship Online. October 2011. Web . 01 May 2016. <<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198123835.01.0001/acprof-9780198123835-chapter-7>>.
- Smith, Andrew, and Diana Wallace. "The Female Gothic University of Glamorgan Then and Now". *University of Glamorgan*. (1-7) 25 Aug 2004. Web. 14 Feb. 2016. <<http://www4.ncsu.edu/~leila/documents/TheFemaleGothic-ThenNow.pdf>>.
- Sullivan, Nell. *The Cormac McCarthy Journal* 8.1 (2010): 101-05. Web. 18 Mar 2016. <<http://www.jstor.org.www.snd11.arn.dz/stable/pdf/42909416.pdf>>.
- O'malley, Sheila. "The Writing of Blood Meridian". *The Sheila Variations*. April 2, 2008. Web. 11 Dec 2015 <<http://www.sheilaomalley.com/?p=7926>>.
- Tóth, Réka. "The Plight of the Gothic Heroine: Female Development and Relationships in Eighteenth Century Female Gothic Fiction". *Eger Journal of English Studies X* (2010) 21–37. Web. 12 Apr 2016. <[http://anglisztika.ektf.hu/new/content/tudomany/ejes/ejes\\_dokumentumok/2010/Toth\\_R\\_2010.pdf](http://anglisztika.ektf.hu/new/content/tudomany/ejes/ejes_dokumentumok/2010/Toth_R_2010.pdf)>.
- Vieth, Ronja. "A Frontier Myth Turns Gothic: "blood Meridian: Or, the Evening Redness in the West"". *The Cormac McCarthy Journal* 8.1 (2010): 55–72. Web. 01 Mar 2016. <<http://www.jstor.org.www.snd11.arn.dz/stable/42909410>>.
- Witkowska, Aldona. "The Gothic as an Aspect of American Romanticism". *Tworzywo Dwutygodnik Internetowy*. niedziela, 20 lutego 2011. Web. 30 May 2016. <<http://ww>>



w.uwm.edu.pl/pro\_media/testy/index.php/wykladowcy/439-qthe-gothic-as-an-aspect-of-american-romanticismq>.

Wood, James. "The sanguinary sublime of Cormac McCarthy". *The New Yorker: Red Planet*. 25 Jul 2005. Web. 13 Feb. 2016 <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/07/25/red-planet>>.

Wood, Jennie. "A History of Women in the U.S. Military". *Infoplease Sandbox Networks, Inc.* 2000–2016. Web. 22 Mar 2016. <<http://www.infoplease.com/us/military/women-history.html>>.

## Dictionaries:

Abrams M.H., and Geoffrey Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2011. Print.

Childs, Peter, and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Hughes, William. *Historical Dictionary of Gothic Literature*. U.S.A: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013. Print.

Urban Dictionary. *White Man's Burden*. Web. 14 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=white+man%27s+burden>>.

"Manichaeism". *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010.

## Encyclopedias

"Goth." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010.

"Jordanes". Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2016. Web. 16 mai. 2016 <<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Jordanes>>.

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature*. New York: Facts On File, Inc. 2005. Print.

Tendrich, Frank Lisa, ed. *An Encyclopedia of American Women at War: From the Home Front to the Battlefields*. United States of America: ABC-CLIO, 2013. web. 25 Apr 2016. <[https://books.google.fr/books?id=nn7Dj6qUn6kC&printsec=frontcover&hl=f&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=nn7Dj6qUn6kC&printsec=frontcover&hl=f&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

## Theses

James, Peter Mitchell. "Blood Meridian, The Brutalist Aesthetic, and History". Diss. Wesleyan University, 2008. Middletown, Connecticut, 2008. Web. 19 Feb 2016. <[https://www.google.dz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwizr6GZkd\\_MAhVI0xoKHXfkB3QQFggeMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwesscholar.wesleyan.edu%2Fcgi%2Fviewcontent.cgi%3Farticle%3D1040%26context%3Detd\\_hon\\_theses&usg=AFQjCNE7yirpdZF4hk5IcevdQTdXEwjVQ&sig2=MnxEcajuOXFH8u4x3gXk9w](https://www.google.dz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwizr6GZkd_MAhVI0xoKHXfkB3QQFggeMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwesscholar.wesleyan.edu%2Fcgi%2Fviewcontent.cgi%3Farticle%3D1040%26context%3Detd_hon_theses&usg=AFQjCNE7yirpdZF4hk5IcevdQTdXEwjVQ&sig2=MnxEcajuOXFH8u4x3gXk9w)>.

Karlsson, Kiah Siobhán. *19th-Century Frontier Ideology in Blood Meridian: Cormac McCarthy's Treatment of History and Judge Holden's Monologue*. Diss. University of

Colorado: Boulder, 2011. Web. 21 Feb 2016 <<http://centerwest.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FIRSTUnderacademicnonKarlsson.pdf>>.

Piliter, Lauri. *Southern Gothic: the Development of the Depiction of Violence and Spiritual Degeneration in the Works of William Faulkner and Cormac McCarthy*. University of Tartu, 2004. Web. 27 Apr 2016. <[https://www.google.dz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiM6O-qI9\\_MAhXLwBQKH YjNCUsQFggjMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fspace.ut.ee%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F10062%2F694%2FPiliter.pdf&usg=AFQjCNE7Kp0XbenI-OSrXWhieGyc66hr3A&sig2=2FRV-PO-AEn2ynPxiCMbiQ](https://www.google.dz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiM6O-qI9_MAhXLwBQKH YjNCUsQFggjMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fspace.ut.ee%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F10062%2F694%2FPiliter.pdf&usg=AFQjCNE7Kp0XbenI-OSrXWhieGyc66hr3A&sig2=2FRV-PO-AEn2ynPxiCMbiQ)>.

Turner, Frederick J. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921. The Project Gutenberg eBook: October 14, 2007. Web. 15 Mar 2016. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm>>.

Whyte, James. *A reading of Blood Meridian (Essay) and The Book of War (Novel)*. Stellenbosch University, 2012. Web. 22 Mar 2016. <[https://www.google.dz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjaguvDmd\\_MAhWDOBQKH aUoAD8QFggjMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fscholar.sun.ac.za%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F10019.1%2F20324%2Fwhyte\\_reading\\_2012.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&usg=AFQjCNEvVLiGnJbs7WWNV7wsy4XJdQ2uig&sig2=rvtm9lrm5m-fbzGI3W6Yw](https://www.google.dz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjaguvDmd_MAhWDOBQKH aUoAD8QFggjMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fscholar.sun.ac.za%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F10019.1%2F20324%2Fwhyte_reading_2012.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&usg=AFQjCNEvVLiGnJbs7WWNV7wsy4XJdQ2uig&sig2=rvtm9lrm5m-fbzGI3W6Yw)>.

## Abstract

This work studies Cormac McCarthy's novel *Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness of the West* through the lenses of Gothicism. Following elements of the Gothic (mainly American and Southern Gothic), the present work strives to give a better understanding of the genre and how its elements are used in order to express fearful threads of this vogue in the novel. The objective of this work is also to explain the origins of Gothicism and explore its elements that are mostly cast in *Blood Meridian* which is not a conventional gothic work. It also aims at shedding a new light to this masterpiece as a historical fiction as most critics label it and provide its fans with more information.

**Key Words:** Gothic Literature, Southern Gothic, Frontier, *Blood Meridian*, Mystery, Cormac McCarthy.

## Résumé

Cette dissertation examine *Méridien de Sang, ou le rougeolement du soir* dans l'Ouest, un roman de Cormac McCarthy sous une étude gothique. En se basant sur les éléments du gothique (gothique Américain et gothique du Sud, plus exactement), ce travail consiste à expliquer le genre ainsi que ses éléments. L'objectif de cette thèse consiste non seulement à expliquer les origines du gothique et explorer ses éléments dans le roman qui n'est pas conventionnel, mais aussi à donner plus d'informations aux lecteurs et lui accorde une nouvelle vision autre qu'une fiction historique, un genre littéraire que lui attribue la plupart des critiques.

**Mot Clés:** Littérature Gothique, Gothique du Sud, Frontière, *Méridien de Sang*, Mystère, Cormac McCarthy.

## ملخص

تتناول هذه المذكرة موضوع القوطية في رواية كورماك مكارثي دم الميريديان، أو احمرار المساء في الغرب . بالإعتماد على خصائص القوطية أو ما يعرف بالجرمانية ( القوطية الأمريكية و القوطية الجنوبية ) ، تهدف هذه الدراسة الى شرح هذا النوع الأدبي وعناصره. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو ليس فقط لشرح أصول القوطية واستكشاف عناصرها في الرواية التي لا تعتبر تقليدية بل هو ايضا لتزويد القراء خاصة معجبيها بأدق التفاصيل و المزيد من المعلومات حول نمط نصّها الذي يعرف باسم الخيال التاريخي واعطائها مفهوم آخر

الكلمات الدالة : الأدب القوطي، القوطية الجنوبية والحدود، دم الميريديان ، غموض ، كورماك مكارث