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April 20, 2011

“A New and Broader View”: Blood Meridian as the Herald of a New Morality

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## Abstract

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Does Blood Meridian have more profound moral implications beyond historical revisionism? If so, how are readers supposed to reconcile such a moral function in the novel with its excessive and ever-present violence? These questions fueled my study of the novel and ultimately led me to explore both the historical background of the novel as well as some of its possible ideological forerunners. In addition to analyzing the function of the violence and historical accuracy of the novel, this paper explores the numerous connections and correlations between McCarthy's novel and many of Friedrich Nietzsche's key philosophies, namely the will to power, the master-slave morality, and the Ubermensch. By placing the novel in its Nietzschean context, specifically addressing The Judge as the embodiment of Nietzsche's Ubermensch, I hope to demonstrate how McCarthy's novel is in essence a re-imagining and re-affirming of Nietzsche's ideas in a historical rather than hypothetical context.

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## 1: Introduction.

As I have gotten closer to the end of my honors project, I have found myself reflecting on its beginnings. Technically speaking, I took on this project as an extension of a seminar paper for a class I was taking on southern literature in the fall of 2009. However, when I trace the whole course of development of ideas related to this project to their genesis, I sometimes think this project truly began in the summer of 2003, the summer before my ninth-grade year. That summer, I read All The Pretty Horses for the first time.

All The Pretty Horses was my first encounter with Cormac McCarthy, and also the first time my classmates and I were challenged to think critically about literature. While my peers resented close readings of the novel as pointless and uninteresting busy-work, I enjoyed the exercises and became more and more captivated by the novel. Even at a time when my maturity level was such that the most pressing concern in my life was whether or not my crush would ask me to the homecoming dance, I was continually impressed by McCarthy's command of language.

As time went on I re-read my copy of All The Pretty Horses frequently and was exposed to other McCarthy novels as well. I had read and stood in awe of McCarthy's Child of God with my creative writing class during the spring of 2009. That summer while reading The Road in an airport, I stopped only when the tears in my eyes prevented me from being able to read the words on the page. So by the time our class began to read Blood Meridian that fall, I was already utterly convinced that McCarthy was undeniably one of the most talented contemporary novelists.

The first and most basic aspect of my understanding of Blood Meridian is my understanding that Cormac McCarthy is an outstanding writer. It was this belief that enabled me

to endure the novel-length onslaught of violence that was the experience of my first reading of the novel. It was this belief that caused me to object to those of my classmates who disregarded the novel as being obtuse, pointless, or hollow even though I hadn't yet formulated any exact reason for why they were wrong in thinking so. Most importantly, it was this belief that convinced me that if only I could expand my background knowledge I would be able to grasp a more profound meaning in the novel. Over the course of a project that started from my simple appreciation of McCarthy's skill as a writer, my appreciation of his work has deepened in profound ways. My respect for McCarthy's ability led me to increase my basic understanding of both the historical and philosophical bases of the novel.

When I started my quest to find a possible meaning for the off-putting violence in the novel, I began to read a variety of perspectives on Blood Meridian. After reading a few historical takes on the novel, I quickly realized that most of the violence I was so astounded by was more factually based than I had allowed myself to believe. Although enlightening, that information still did not fully satisfy my desire to really grasp the full implications of the novel. I slowly began to realize that understanding The Judge would be vital to my understanding of the novel as a whole.

The first description of The Judge that truly struck me was by Denis Donoghue, who called The Judge, "a Nietzschean before he ever could have read Nietzsche" (Donoghue 411). As I got deeper into my studies, I frequently came across descriptions of The Judge as "Nietzschean." When I continued to see references to Nietzsche in literary studies of Blood Meridian I realized that if I was going to fully comprehend the novel, I would need to understand much more about Nietzsche than the fact that he was an influential and controversial 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher. I have come a long way from my initial understanding of Blood Meridian,



which admittedly was very poor, and my increased awareness of the works of Nietzsche has been a key factor in this development. Indeed, the more I began to read about Nietzsche the more I become convinced that The Judge not only espouses Nietzsche's philosophies, he embodies them.

.....

## 2. Summary of Nietzsche's Relevant Philosophies

In order to evaluate McCarthy's relationship with Nietzsche, it seems worthwhile to present an overview of Nietzsche's major philosophical contributions. The 1880s were some of Nietzsche's most prolific years. Many of the influential works he published in that time period (namely On the Genealogy of Morals, Beyond Good and Evil, and of course Thus Spoke Zarathustra) reflect a spirit of questioning, distrust, and re-evaluation. Nietzsche's distrust was channeled, especially in the three aforementioned texts, towards "a critique of morals more severe than any before" in western thought (Stegmaier 20). His ideas not only questioned conventional moral values, but challenged the very existence of any sort of objective morality.

Nietzsche's doubt about the existence of unbiased morality derives in large part from his beliefs regarding the role of God in contemporary life. Although Nietzsche made many thought-provoking statements, one of his most notorious was his assertion that "God is dead." Though he was neither the first nor last to make such a statement, Nietzsche is the thinker most often associated with the concept of the death of god. The death of god is a jumping off point for most of Nietzsche's philosophy, so understanding its significance is vital.

For Nietzsche, the death of God refers not to a literal event. He is not saying that God existed, created the universe, and then at some point in the nineteenth century ceased to exist. Rather, the death of God is simply the fact that the idea of God has ceased to be a central thought

or guiding force in modern life. Nietzsche doesn't delve too deeply into the myriad causes (advances in science, astronomy, the protestant revolution, etc); but it is sufficient to say that as life became increasingly secular, God (the concept of God) became less and less influential.

This is particularly true in regards to morality. Whereas we once felt our morals were derived truly and absolutely from God, the death of God creates a void or at least a doubt as to the origin of our morality. In Nietzsche's words, "Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and these sinners died with him" ("Thus Spoke Zarathustra" 13). With God out of the picture, it is necessary not only to re-evaluate our morals, but possibly also to recreate them.

Of course, the foundations of our morality are exactly what Nietzsche explores in On the Genealogy of Morals and many of his other texts as well. His goal, not only in On the Genealogy of Morals but at points in Thus Spoke Zarathustra and subsequent texts, was to share his conclusions regarding the following questions:

under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? *and what do they themselves possess?* Have they hitherto hindered or furthered human prosperity? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, or the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plentitude, force, and will of life, its courage certainty and future? (Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals" 453)

Already evident in this introductory section are many of the key themes and language of Nietzsche's views on morality. The third question, "Have they hitherto hindered or furthered human prosperity?" and the following questions hint at his belief that our existing moral code, inherited from the Judeo-Christian tradition, and less directly from Zoroastrianism, are not self affirming. His statement is biased against those values (namely piety, pity, humility) which he

believes do not inherently “further human prosperity” or concretely contribute to an individual’s vitality. According to Nietzsche, those values have no intrinsic justification, they are not inherently worthwhile. Because they are not reinforced with concrete benefits (timidity, for instance, doesn’t aid in the procurement of food) our current moral values are instead reinforced by invented standards of good and evil. For Nietzsche, this fact unravels conventional Judeo-Christian morality.

Nietzsche classifies two kinds of moral systems, which he terms master and slave morality. According to Nietzsche, the slave morality is formed when “the violated, oppressed, suffering, unfree, who are uncertain of themselves and weary, moralize” (“Beyond Good and Evil” 397). Under these circumstances, “pity, the complaisant and obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility and friendliness are honored- for here these are the most useful qualities and the only means for enduring the pressure of existence” (Nietzsche, “Beyond Good and Evil” 397). Because it espouses such values, Nietzsche views Judeo-Christian morality as a Slave morality.

By contrast, a master morality is one that is formulated and held by powerful individuals. Whereas a slave morality equates good and bad with “good” and “evil,” a master morality thinks in terms of “noble” and “contemptible.” The trouble with equating “bad” and “evil” is that we define what is “evil;” so a thing might be deemed evil, even if it is not necessarily “bad” in the sense of being harmful to the individual. By contrast a master morality judges “what is harmful to me is harmful in itself” (Nietzsche, “Beyond Good and Evil” 395). In that sense, a master morality is self-affirming.

In his efforts to trace the development of our moral sensibilities, that is, how we came to adopt a so-called slave morality, Nietzsche demarcates human history in terms of distinct phases:

During the largest part of human history- so-called prehistorical times- the value or disvalue of an action was derived from its consequences. The action itself was considered as little as its origin... Let us call this the *pre-moral* period of mankind; the imperative “know thyself!” was as yet unknown. (“Beyond Good and Evil” 234)

Nietzsche views this as morality in its natural state: the value of an action determined by its consequences. This is the kind of Master Morality that Nietzsche believes existed in the time of Vikings and warlords.

Much to Nietzsche’s dismay, in more recent history there has been a serious reversal so that “it is no longer the consequences but the origin of an action that one allows to decide its value” (“Beyond Good and Evil” 234). Rather than tracing the positive or negative effects of an action, we judge based on intentions. He dubs this as the “moral” phase and its start dates coincide with the advent of monotheistic religions. Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all have sacred texts which essentially codify “good” and “evil”. This is what caused us to begin looking at intent rather than consequence. Consequences are neither good nor evil, intentions, however, can be.

In both Beyond Good and Evil and Thus Spoke Zarathustra Nietzsche advocates for the start of a new phase of our moral development. He asks:

Haven’t we reached the necessity of once more resolving on a reversal and fundamental shift in values, owing to another self-examination of man, another growth in profundity? Don’t we stand at the threshold of a period which should be designated negatively, to begin with, as *extra-moral*? (Nietzsche, “Beyond Good and Evil” 234)

Although Thus Spoke Zarathustra is constructed as a much more literary text (more on this later) and is for that reason less concrete in its espousal of new values, it is no less explicit. Zarathustra in his speeches repeatedly calls for “change of values” and “creators” (Nietzsche, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 59, 23).

In addition to proclaiming the death of god, advocating for a new morality, and explaining the concept of master-slave moralities, Thus Spoke Zarathustra also illustrates another of Nietzsche’s key concepts: the will to power. There have been a lot of misconceptions as to what Nietzsche meant by the will to power. Through Zarathustra, Nietzsche explains it simply: “the will to power- the unexhausted procreated will of life” (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 114). The will to power is Nietzsche’s response to the suggestion of a will to live or the will to existence:

Indeed, the truth was not hit by him who shot at it with the word of the ‘will to existence’: that will does not exist. For, what does not exist cannot will; but what is in existence, how could that still want existence? Only where there is life is there also will: not will to life but- thus I teach you- will to power. (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 115)

Werner Stegmaier summarizes the will to power as “the law of the more powerful alone prevails; every living thing endeavors to overpower others, and ought to do so” (20).

However the will to power is not necessarily a justification strictly for the use of physical force, “Law and morality, according to that doctrine, are means of Wills to Power” (Stegmaier 20).

Nietzsche believes that “whatever lives, obeys” (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 114). The slave obeys the master, but whom does the master obey? In the words of Nietzsche’s

Zarathustra, “Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage- whose name is self. In your body he dwells; he is your body” (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 34). The will to power is first and foremost the ability to obey one’s self, to be one’s own master, or in Nietzschean language, to self-overcome.

Related to the will to power is the idea of the eternal return, which Nietzsche refers to as the eternal recurrence. Although the eternal recurrence is not an invention of Nietzsche’s, it still figures prominently in his philosophy. Many cultures and religions, notably Hinduism, view time as cyclical, so in that sense the conception of the eternal recurrence is by not strictly speaking a modern one. However, in Nietzsche’s time and culture time was viewed as strictly chronological and forward moving. The idea of eternal recurrence was suggested and put forth not as a result of a sweeping change in cultural outlook, but from the scientific understanding of the day.

According to Newtonian physics, time is infinite, but matter is not. The premise of the eternal return is as follows: A finite amount of matter means a finite number of possible combinations of that matter; imagine a set of alphabet blocks- there are only so many formations you can make before you begin to recycle through already-used formations. So although there is admittedly a very large amount of matter and even larger number of possible combinations of that matter, both are still finite quantities. If time is infinite, eventually those combinations will be replicated.

Although the science behind the eternal return has since been refuted, the idea is no less important to understanding Nietzsche. Nietzsche refers to “the idea of the eternal recurrence” as “the fundamental conception” of Thus Spoke Zarathustra (“Ecce Homo” 751). In Nietzsche’s

thought, the eternal recurrence is not presented necessarily as a fact, but as a hypothetical question:

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: “This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more” ... Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: “You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.”

(“The Gay Science” 273)

Clearly “(t)his life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more” alludes to eternal recurrence. However, as Heidegger pointed out in his lectures on Nietzsche, Nietzsche’s focus is not on the return itself, but on the individual’s reaction to the possibility of such a thing.

The Doctrine of the eternal return is not for Nietzsche a scientific fact, but rather “asks us how we would react if the thought of the eternal recurrence was posed to us. For the man who creates his own values, what this should mean is the acceptance of our fate in light of the fact that what is done in the past is done and what will be done in the future will flow inevitably from our characters” (Paphitis 193). This idea contributes significantly to our understanding of the will to power. Nietzsche says in his explanation of the will to power that “he who cannot obey himself is commanded” (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 114). If the idea of repeating your own actions infinitely into the future is a frightening prospect, it is only so because you cannot abide by those actions, meaning you cannot obey yourself. In contrast, if the eternal recurrence of the same is a thrilling prospect, you have mastered yourself and the will to power.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra can be seen as Nietzsche's seminal text. Aside from its popularity, it is noteworthy because it embodies most of the key ideas espoused in all of his other texts. In it, Nietzsche chooses Zarathustra (known in English as Zoroaster), founder of Zoroastrianism, the first prominent monotheistic religion, which was a tremendous influence on subsequent monotheistic religions (namely Judaism, Christianity, Islam), as his mouthpiece in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. His reasoning was that, "Zarathustra created this most calamitous error, morality; consequently, he must also be the first to recognize it" ("Ecce Homo" 784).

Thus Spoke Zarathustra is stylistically speaking a significant departure from Nietzsche's other texts. At times it resembles a novel that follows Zarathustra's development, at times it resembles poetry, but the style it most consistently mimics is that of the Bible. Composed mainly of parables and speeches, Thus Spoke Zarathustra utilizes many of the same narrative styles and techniques found in the Bible in order to satirize the values espoused by the Bible.

Nietzsche's most important contribution in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, at least in relation to Blood Meridian, is the idea of the *Übermensch*. But what is the *Übermensch*? It has been translated as into English as both over-man and super-man. However the *Übermensch* has connotations and implications that extend far beyond its literal translation. The *Übermensch* is both the realization of and logical development from Nietzsche's other ideas. Certainly, it is difficult to understand the *Übermensch* without first understanding the ideas which he is meant to embody. Nietzsche views the *Übermensch* as a natural progression, so he introduces it in evolutionary terms:

*I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome... All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man?*



What is the ape to man? A laughingstock or painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman... Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman- a rope over an abyss. ("Thus Spoke Zarathustra" 13-14)

He conceives of the Übermensch as the next phase of development. He traces evolution from worm to ape to man, and eventually, Übermensch.

However the path from man to Übermensch is not an easy one. Nietzsche worries that without a goal, the race of men will decay:

The time has come for man to set himself a goal. The time has come for man to plant the seed of his highest hope. His soil is rich enough. But one day this soil will be poor and domesticated and no tall tree will grow in it. Alas the time is coming when man will no longer shoot the arrow of his longing beyond man, and the string of his bow will have forgotten how to whirl. ("Thus Spoke Zarathustra" 17)

Nietzsche views the overman as a logical advancement, but not one that will occur effortlessly. Without a vision towards the overman, man will become "poor and domesticated" and cease making progress.

Throughout Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche calls for a change of both values and perspective. The so called slave morality, our traditional beliefs about good and evil, the virtues we praise, are all impediments to the overman. Specifically the Judeo-Christian virtues of humility and enlightenment ideals of equality; are values that are seen as dangerous to Nietzsche. Because such values suppress excellence in favor of promoting the status quo; they discourage pushing the limits of what man is capable of, therefore they also inhibit progress towards the overman. Zarathustra encourages his audience to be bold and break with tradition, "Behold the

good and the just! Whom do they hate most? The man who breaks their tables of values, the breaker, the lawbreaker; yet he is the creator” (Nietzsche, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 23). This sentiment reoccurs often in the text. Specific changes Zarathustra calls for in order to facilitate the eventual overcoming of man are to value the body over the spirit and to value the future over the past.

The death of god is an important consideration for the *Urbmensch* simply because it is the absence of god that gives the overman the chance to be sovereign; “now this god has died. You higher men, this god was your greatest danger ... Only now the great noon comes; only now the higher man comes- lord” (Nietzsche, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 286). Even the most powerful man is slave to god. However, with god dead, the *Urbmensch* is beholden to no one; he is truly the master of himself.

This fact is precisely why, more than anything else, the *Urbmensch* embodies the will to power. Zarathustra tells the higher men (those who would go on to become the overman):

Recalcitrance- that is the nobility of slaves. Your nobility should be obedience. Your very commanding should be an obeying. To a good warrior, “thou shalt” sounds more agreeable than “I will.” And everything you like you should first let yourself be commanded to do... Your highest thought, however, you should receive as a command from me- and it is: man is something that shall be overcome. (Nietzsche “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 48)

His advice is essentially that the way to the overman is by following and obeying the will to power. The *Urbmensch* embodies the bulk of Nietzsche’s thought because the *Urbmensch* is precisely that being who is unafraid of the eternal return because he has completely and utterly overcome himself. His will alone determines the value of his actions. He is not subject to

judgments of good and evil, he obeys only his own will to power. Looking at McCarthy's novel, there is one character that fits this description: The Judge. This resemblance will be pursued in detail in a later section.

Nietzsche produced an astounding variety of work, much of which is seemingly contradictory. When someone produces a body of thought as diverse, challenging, and original as Nietzsche did, there is bound to be some misinterpretation.

The most common misinterpretation of Nietzsche is that the concept of the Will to Power advocates explicitly for the use of force or violence. Any violence in Nietzsche's work is implicit and relies mainly on interpretation. He neither describes violence specifically nor does he advocate it directly. However Nietzsche for a long time had the unfortunate stigma of being associated with the violent atrocities committed by Hitler's Third Reich; due largely to some heavy handed editing on the part of his sister, a Nazi-supporter, after his death. Although certain ideas, specifically the will to power, can be perceived or misunderstood in such a way that they seem to advocate the actions of the Nazi party, the bulk of Nietzsche's work demonstrates that such an interpretation would be inaccurate. In truth, Nietzsche was wary of the heightening Nationalist sentiments in across Europe; and he once referred to Jews as "the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe" (377). The violence, if there is any, in Thus Spoke Zarathustra is at most an implied undertone.

In contrast, the violence of Blood Meridian is pervasive and undeniable. Although Nietzsche himself never portrayed nor directly advocated for the kind of violence seen in McCarthy's novel, the excessive and graphically portrayed violence of the novel can be interpreted as a derivative of Nietzsche's philosophies, albeit an extremist one. The next two sections address different aspects of the violence in Blood Meridian: its historical accuracy, and

its effect on readers, both of which have implications for the overall meaning of the novel and provide context for a comparison with Nietzsche's thought.

### 3: Historical Background of *Blood Meridian*

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In Blood Meridian the violence is explicit and ever present. For many readers, the pervasive violence is initially the most striking aspect of the novel. This project actually began as an initial search to find meaning for what seemed to be utterly senseless violence. In that sense, this project is a testament to the effectiveness of McCarthy's shock value tactics. In order to grapple with the violence of the novel, it is necessary to understand how true the novel's violence is to history.

Much of the historical background of the novel has been exhaustively researched in other texts, and the veracity of the historical aspects of Blood Meridian is very well documented; but important enough to warrant a brief review. The locations, dates, skirmishes, and many of the characters are verifiable and can be found in and cross referenced with a variety of first-hand accounts, diaries, and newspaper reports. McCarthy's description of the violence and hardships of frontier life as well as the actions of his characters, specific events, and sometimes even his language, though they may seem at times be unsettling to readers unfamiliar southwestern history, are strikingly true to accounts of frontier life.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Anglo residents of the Texas frontier with Mexico and other areas west were in conflict with many of the indigenous tribes. In Chihuahua City (then a state of northern Mexico) for instance, residents were having trouble with the Comanche Indians. In order to combat the issue, Governor Angel Trias began offering contracts

to groups of men essentially to hunt and kill Comanches and other troublesome Native American groups.

As receipts, the men took scalps of their victims. The act of scalping was as cruel as it was gruesome; according to historian Richard Dodge it was believed among many tribes that scalping was one of the ways an “Indian soul could be prevented from reaching (its) paradise” (Qtd in Sepich 7). Therefore, a scalp provided excellent “proof of the Indian’s death, given the lengths to which an Indian would go to protect his body from this disfigurement” (Sepich 7). During the time the novel is set, scalp hunting was not only a legitimate profession; it was a lucrative one, “A group of fifty scalp hunters paid two hundred dollars a scalp would only have to bring four scalps a month into Chihuahua City in order to exceed the army’s rate of pay” (Sepich 7-8). This fact, when coupled with the fact that the scalp of a peaceful man was indistinguishable from the scalp of a warlike one, and the scalp of a Native American was not all that different from a Mexican one, led to excesses of cruelty and the deaths of many innocent people.

Glanton’s gang of scalp hunters is portrayed in the novel as a ragtag company, albeit a company of effective and efficient fighters. Historian T.R. Fehrenbach describes the scalp hunting Texas Ranger bands, on which the fictional gang is based, in similar terms:

A great variety of men served in these ephemeral, semibarbarian fighting bands. Most were unlettered farm boys from both Texas and other states; some were gentleman with classical educations... But the ranger bands inevitably stamped with a deep aggressiveness and brutality toward their enemies. They had to be. The white defender fought in grim campaigns where there were few protocols and no expectations of honorable surrender on either side... (The Texans) adopted the

fighting style of their foes. They battled by raid and ambush... they took few prisoners. (Fehrenbach 302)

Glanton's gang is composed of Texans, men from other states (like Tennessean 'the Kid'), most of whom are illiterate. The gang's frequent hostile encounters are almost exactly as Fehrenbach described; raids and ambushes in which no prisoners are taken. Also recognizable in McCarthy's novel from Fehrenbach's historical account is the "inevitably stamped" "deep aggressiveness and brutality."

Most all of the major and minor characters in the novel are real historical figures mentioned by multiple sources. Characters appearing as fleetingly in the novel as Sarah Borginnis and Albert Speyer are historical figures found in multiple accounts. Even Reverend Green, a character who appears in only one scene at the beginning of the novel, is a found referenced in multiple sources (Sepich 14).

Governor Angel Trias, who in the novel is the Governor of Chihuahua City that contracts Glanton's gang of scalp hunters and later throws a ball in honor of their success, is based on Governor Angel Trias, the real life Governor of Chihuahua City who contracted Glanton's gang of scalp hunters and later threw a ball in honor of their success. The description of Trias in John Russell Bartlett's personal accounts verifies McCarthy's characterization. Both portray Trias as well-educated and multi-lingual, a result of having spent time abroad in Europe (Sepich 45).

John Joel Glanton is one of the most prominent figures both in the novel and in historical accounts. His name and exploits appear frequently, and McCarthy's rendering of him is by and large faithful to those accounts. John Sepich's research reveals a variety of possible sources for McCarthy. The accounts vary slightly, and though there is little agreement on Glanton's appearance or origin, the sources are unanimous that he was the leader of a gang contracted to

collect scalps, and that he was unscrupulous in his pursuit of those scalps and the financial rewards they netted (Sepich 27-42).

While many of the characters are historical figures found in multiple sources, the existence of a Judge Holden in any primary source text is limited almost exclusively to Samuel Chamberlain's *My Confession*. Although McCarthy's Holden at times comes across as an entirely fictional creation because of the larger than life aspects of his character, it appears that McCarthy was drawing largely from historical facts as presented by Chamberlain:

The second in command, now left in charge of the camp, was a man of gigantic size called "Judge" Holden of Texas. Who or what he was no one knew but a colder blooded villain never went unhung; he stood six feet six in his moccasins, had a large fleshy frame, a dull tallow colored face destitute of any hair or expression. (Chamberlain 271)

McCarthy's Holden is likewise, "(a)n enormous man... he was bald as a stone and had no trace of beard and he had no brows to his eyes nor lashes to them. He was close to seven feet in height" (McCarthy 6). McCarthy's Holden's height and hairlessness may be exaggerated, but they are grounded in the historical account of Judge Holden.

The similarities between the fictional Holden and Chamberlain's go beyond physical likeness. All of the peculiar skills McCarthy's Holden possesses are evident in Chamberlain's description as well. According to Chamberlain:

Holden was by far the best educated man in northern Mexico; he conversed with all in their own language, spoke in several Indian lingos, at a fandango would take the harp or guitar from the hands of musicians and charm all with his wonderful performance, and out-waltz any poblana of the ball. He was "plum centre" with

rifle or revolver, a daring horseman, acquainted with the nature of all the strange plants and their botanical names, great in Geology and Mineralogy...

(Chamberlain 271-272)

Not to be outdone, McCarthy's Holden speaks Dutch (which he apparently learned "off a Dutchman"), Spanish, is capable of "holding an (extemporaneous) lecture in geology" regarding "feldspar," "copper," and other "native nuggets" found at the camp site (McCarthy 122).

According to the priest:

God the man is a dancer, you'll not take that away from him. And fiddle. He's the greatest fiddler I ever heard and that's an end of it. The greatest. He can cut a trail, shoot a rifle, ride a horse, track a deer. He's been all over the world. Him and the governor they sat up till breakfast and it was Paris this and London that in five languages ... (McCarthy 116)

Seemingly anything Chamberlain's Holden can do, McCarthy's can do as well, or, by the Priest's reckoning, better.

Even the fictional Holden's peculiarities of speech and particular mannerisms seem at least partly inspired by Chamberlain's accounts of the historical Holden. In one instance, Chamberlain describes a conversation with Holden in which Holden declares, "Nature, these rocks, this little broken piece of clay (holding up a little fragment of painted pottery such are found all over the desert), the ruins scattered all over the land tell me the story of the past" (Chamberlain 283). Following the fictional Holden's aforementioned geology lecture on "the earth's origins," he has a very similar exchange with one of the men:

The Judge smiled.

Books lie, he said.



God don't lie.

No, said the judge. He does not. And these are his words.

He held up a chunk of rock.

He speaks in stones and trees, the bones of things. (McCarthy 116)

Although not the verbatim equivalent of Chamberlain's exchange, the similarities between the two are undeniable. The two speeches are alike in both content and point of view expressed, and the both speakers utilize similar body language in using a prop to make their point. In short, nearly all of the obscure knowledge, particular skills, and even the manner of speaking that characterizes McCarthy's Holden can be found outlined at least vaguely somewhere within Chamberlain's testimony.

One of the most off-putting aspects of McCarthy's Judge Holden for readers is his penchant for ruthless, explicit, and seemingly gratuitous violence. Over the course of the novel, he drowns two puppies, violates women and girls, presumably murders the kid, and performs countless other atrocities. The men are scalp-hunters; they trade in violence. What separates Holden is that often times his violence occurs neither of necessity nor provocation.

Holden's actions are repulsive even to the other men. One scene in particular illustrates his exceptional cruelty. The gang finds a young apache boy among the survivors of one of their raids. Once the gang decides to keep the boy, Holden scalps him. The boy is described as perfectly sweet, "(he) watched everything with dark berry eyes and some of the men played with it and made it laugh and they gave it jerky" (McCarthy 164). In this passage it is worth noting the shift in which the boy starts being referred to with the impersonal pronoun "it." This essentially objectifies the boy by referring to him not as a person with sentient thoughts, but only an "it," an object to be possessed, shared, or as the case may be, overpowered.

The sympathy or at least the playfulness the men exhibit towards the boy is the first and arguably the only instance of the book in which the gang is shown in any light other than that of being heartless mercenaries. Even the judge is seen “dandling it on one knee” (McCarthy 164). However this portrayal of the softer side of the men brought out by the child is harshly juxtaposed with the ensuing encounter between Toadvine and Holden:

Toadvine saw him with the child as he passed with his saddle but when he came back ten minutes later leading his horse the child was dead and the judge had scalped it. Toadvine put the muzzle of his pistol against the great dome of the judge’s head.

Goddamn you, Holden.

You either shoot or take that away. Do it now.

Toadvine put the pistol in his belt. The judge smiled and wiped the scalp on the leg of his trousers and rose and turned away. (McCarthy 164)

This is one of very few instances in the novel in which a member of the gang (Toadvine) exhibits any kind of sentimental, remorseful, or empathetic feeling; and it is a direct result of his disdain for the Judge’s action. For a man who makes his living hunting scalps to be outraged by something, it must be really heinous. In contrast to Toadvine’s heated outburst, the Judge handles the entire situation nonchalantly, daring his challenger to shoot him, afterwards calmly wiping the scalp on his pants. The Judge sees no need to and makes no attempt to provide Toadvine with a moral justification for his action.

The atrocities committed by the fictional Holden, like his peculiar skills and knowledge, can be traced to accounts of the historical Judge Holden. According to Chamberlain:

before we left Fronterras a little girl of ten years was found in the chaparral, foully violated and murdered. The mark of a huge hand on her little throat pointed (Judge Holden) out as the ravisher as no other man had such a hand, but though all suspected, no one charged him with the crime. (Chamberlain 271-272)

Chamberlain is careful to note that the girl was “foully violated and murdered,” a particularly offensive connotation implying something more grotesque than the word rape could possibly have captured. Later in Chamberlain’s account, Judge Holden again causes “uproar” by “seizing hold of one of the girls and proceeding to take gross liberties with her person” (Chamberlain 287). Like McCarthy’s Holden, the historical Holden handles the situation with a coldhearted nonchalance; escaping punishment by making “some explanation to the crowd in Spanish that appeased them” (Chamberlain 287). Neither the fictional Holden nor the historical Holden act in response to personal threat; and neither one exhibits feelings of remorse (or really any sort of feelings at all) before, during, or after.

Though much of characterization of McCarthy’s Judge Holden is historically accurate, much is not, or cannot be. The Judge is an example of a character that truly stands out from the text of which he is a part. The Judge’s actions and beliefs are puzzling. It seems to me, that The Judge is not just a character in a text, but rather a question posed by McCarthy; The Judge transcends the novel itself and becomes part of the discussion on nature of man, the true meaning of morality, and the future of both, begun by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in his seminal text Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

Robert Gooding-Williams in “Nietzsche and Modernism” suggests that “Nietzsche’s philosophical aim in *Zarathustra* is to elaborate the conditions under which the creation of new values would be possible. He never maintains dogmatically that these conditions will be, or are

likely to be satisfied” (Gooding-Williams 105). Borrowing Nietzsche’s ideas in a historically based fiction, McCarthy sought to put Nietzsche’s thought experiment to the test, using the early 19<sup>th</sup> century American southwest as his laboratory.

McCarthy achieves two things by his unrelenting, yet historically accurate, portrayal of the violence of the new American west. By graphically illustrating a landscape of widespread moral depravity and violence, McCarthy creates a literal and figurative desert that serves as the perfect backdrop to showcase his own representation of Nietzsche’s philosophy; in the novel “man reflects the violent character of a brutal environment” (Owens 7). Furthermore, by sparing no detail in relating the realities of frontier life, McCarthy creates a shock value that forces readers to rethink and reassess both the novel and their own values.

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#### 4: Assessing the Violence in *Blood Meridian*

All of the personal accounts and firsthand testimonies make it clear that the violence of the novel was neither exaggerated nor invented by McCarthy. How is novel’s violence still so shocking in comparison to the history in which it is rooted? What does McCarthy’s rendition do that the historical version absents? The answers to both these questions lie in various aspects of the narrative style adopted by McCarthy.

Throughout this project, the thorough research compiled by John Sepich in his book Notes on Blood Meridian has proven to be a goldmine of information and an invaluable resource in regards to understanding the historical background of the novel. In addition to his methodical research, Sepich provided valuable insight, namely his assertion that “before television were the diarists, the personal narrators” (Sepich 61). Sepich hit the nail on the head regarding why the historical accounts were somehow less shocking than McCarthy’s fictional account. Sepich points out one essential difference between the fictional events in the novel and the accounts they

were based on: the majority of historical accounts are first person narratives whereas McCarthy's narrative voice is extremely detached and uninvolved.

This is especially evident in the case of Judge Holden. Though the scope and horror of the actions of one Holden (fictional vs. historical) fail to exceed those of the other, at first reading the actions of the fictional Holden seemed to me comparatively more atrocious, more shocking. The difference lies not in the actions of either Holden, but in the way they are described.

Chamberlain's diary is a personal account. His narrative is littered with judgments of the actions and persons described therein. His makes his opinion of Judge Holden clear: "I hated him at first sight," "Holden, in spite of my repugnance of the man," and "The old scoundrel" (Chamberlain 272, 284, 296). In telling of Holden's deeds, Chamberlain labels them "horrid" (Chamberlain 271).

In contrast, McCarthy's narrative voice is deliberately aloof. The language of the narration never judges the Judge. Take for instance the sentence "the child was dead and the judge had scalped him" (McCarthy 164). There is no inherent emotional description of the event although what it describes is wrenching. It is a simple statement of fact, void of color or emotion. The narrator casts no direct judgment on the deed or its do-er, and implicit judgment in the form of adjectives or modifiers is wholly absent.

The lack of judgment on the part of the narrator applies not only to The Judge but to the gang and novel as a whole. Through his distant unblinking third person narration style, McCarthy resists making value judgments on the actions of his characters. Every violent detail is described matter-of-factly, for instance:

Two weeks out they massacred a pueblo on the Nacozari River and two days later as they rode toward Ures with the scalps they encountered a part of armed Sonoran cavalry on the plains west of Baviacora under General Elias. A running fight ensued in which three of Glanton's men were killed and another seven wounded, four of whom could not ride. (McCarthy 205)

In this passage, it would seem as if no value judgments are cast on Glanton's men. Adjectives and adverbs such as "merciless" or "violently" that are often associated with massacres are conspicuously absent from the passage. Injured and even killed members of the gang (the supposed protagonists) are commemorated only by a list without emotion or elaboration. Their fallen opponents receive even less recognition!

McCarthy's narrator is strangely aloof, projecting none of his own opinions or moral judgment on the characters or events of the novel. He treats the most mundane and the most gruesomely violent events with the same unblinking approach. Consider this passage:

In the morning they rode out to the south. Little was said, nor were they quarrelsome among themselves. In three days they would fall upon a band of peaceful Tiguas camped on the river and slaughter them every soul. On the eve of that day they crouched about the fire where it hissed in a softly falling rain and they ran balls and cut patches as if the fate of the aborigines had been cast into shape by some other agency altogether. As if such destinies were prefigured in the very rock for those with eyes to read. (McCarthy 173)

Here, the narrator tells about the slaughter of entire tribe of "peaceful" Tigua Indians in the same paragraph and the same tone as he discusses whether or not the men quarreled with each other as they were riding. There is no attempt on the part of the narrator to apply meaning, or to pass

moral judgment on the seemingly unjustified and unnecessary “slaughter” of innocent souls. If anything, the narrator in this instance is actually pardoning the men, writing off the destruction as part of some “prefigured” and therefore unavoidable “destiny.”

I selected the two preceding passages because I think they exemplify the distant quality of McCarthy’s narration, not because either passage is particularly distinct from the text. For all his skill at writing, McCarthy’s novel comes off at times as formulaic, and both passages above follow a pattern that is repeated consistently throughout the novel. The vague formula is the phrase “they rode on,” the description of a gruesome or violent event, followed again by that nonchalant phrase “they rode on.”

The second major concern I had about the violence of the novel was how it was never called into question by the narrator. How could, and why would, McCarthy write about such horrific things in such an objective manner. However, the more I study the novel, the more I become assured that my initial feelings were somewhat incorrect. The sense of objectivity created by the distant narration is misleading. By choosing to abstain from typical judgments against violence, McCarthy is in effect criticizing the ideology behind those typical judgments against violence. In other words, “Blood Meridian raises an ethical issue mainly by not speaking of it” (Donoghue 406).

Presumably, each reader brings to the table some sort of ethical or moral code. McCarthy uses understated descriptions of what most readers would consider horrific deeds to create a strong visceral reaction to those deeds. By omitting ethical considerations from the narrative perspective, McCarthy triggers the reader into considering the moral implications on their own. Barclay Owens captured the sensation created by the novel’s nonchalant portrayal of violence perfectly, “At some deep level our moral equilibrium has been disturbed, and the author does not

pause for comforting reflection to help us regain balance” (Owens 7). A reader first reacts to the violence, then, hopefully, reflects on their reaction and the belief system that created such a strong initial response. McCarthy’s lack of judgment in the text is not an oversight; his refusal to make a judgment *is* a judgment.

The almost constant violence in the novel and McCarthy’s unwavering objectivity towards it strives towards much the same goal as Nietzsche’s aphorisms and epigrams: to force their audience to reevaluate conventional morality. While the extreme violence of McCarthy’s novel could be seen as an overly zealous interpretation of Nietzsche, it is equally likely that McCarthy’s interpretation of Nietzsche is spot on. It is merely that his method for instigating such grand re-evaluations comes across as brasher and more extreme due to the fact that he was writing in a completely different medium than Nietzsche was. In order for McCarthy to express ideas similar to Nietzsche’s in the novel format, he utilized the shock value generated by his unrelenting and non-judgmental portrayal of violence.

Perhaps one of the most off-putting aspects of the ever present violence in McCarthy’s novel is how well written it is. McCarthy describes each and every grisly event with deliberate attention to its esthetic value. Take for instance this passage following one of the gang’s frequent skirmishes; ostensibly such a recovery and recuperation time would be one of the more mild scenes of the novel, but it is not so in McCarthy’s rendering. The passage is as chilling as any battle scene, and just as well written:

When they halted Glanton ordered fires built and the wounded seen to. One of the mares had foaled in the desert and this frail form soon hung skewered on a paloverde pole over the raked coals while the Delawares passed among themselves a gourd containing the curdled milk taken from its stomach. From a



slight rise to the west of camp the fires of the enemy were visible ten miles to the north. The company squatted in their bloodstiffened hides and counted the scalps and strung them on the poles, the blueblack hair dull and clotted with blood.

David Brown went among these haggard butchers as they crouched before the flames but he could find him no surgeon. He carried an arrow in his thigh, fletching and all, and none would touch it. (McCarthy 161)

The subjects McCarthy covers in this passage: a disemboweled calf, the counting of scalps, a man walking around with an arrow visibly and painfully protruding from his leg, and the complete unwillingness of his comrades to help him; are uniformly macabre. Here, as in many of his other novels, McCarthy employs his mastery of language to write about gruesome topics. From the alliteration of the second sentence, to the well-paced sentences structure throughout passage, the esthetic value of the passage is clear.

In *“Rewriting the Southwest: Blood Meridian as a Revisionary Western”* Robert Jarrett asserts that “The pervasive violence and the hyperesthetic quality of that violence... does not exist merely for its own sake” (Jarrett 90). Instead, the function of the juxtaposition of McCarthy’s “poetic style and the “viciousness” of the violence his language represents” is that “this very esthetic pleasure may compel the reader to a guilty consciousness of his or her own esthetic consumption of narrated violence” (Jarrett 90). While Jarrett believes the sole purpose of engendering a “guilty consciousness” in the reader is to force a revision of the sugarcoating of some of the more rotten aspects of America’s history, I believe that McCarthy is also attempting to force a re-evaluation of the moral code that necessitated such a sugarcoating.

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## 5: Exploring the Judge's Nietzschean Perspective

McCarthy's novel is not simply a revisionary western; it is a work that brings to bear important ideas about traditional moral thought. The suggestion that the novel intended only to re-evaluate the romanticized history of Manifest Destiny and westward (and southward) expansion is made problematic by the frequency and content of the Judge's speeches. The point of view expressed via The Judge has much larger implications than the revision of a specific historic event. Through the mouthpiece of The Judge, McCarthy issues some staunch criticism of conventional morality and proves himself a worthy disciple of Nietzsche.

The Judge's speeches are important to consider for a variety of reasons. First, because Judge Holden is in a variety of ways given a privileged status over the other characters in Blood Meridian, his statements gain added significance. Second, because they are eloquent and explicitly stated, they are easier to understand than much of the text. And finally they are worth considering for the degree to which they overlap with many of Nietzsche's significant ideas.

Judge Holden is clearly meant to stand out from the other characters in the text. Although there is hardly a physical description or personal history given of any of the other characters, even the protagonist of the text is referred to only as The Kid, Judge Holden's physical and personal attributes are described thoroughly. Whereas the other key figures in the novel are at best semi-literate, Judge Holden employs a vocabulary that would make an English professor jealous. The only other character who speaks for more than a few sentences at a time is the ex-priest, and even then only in description of Judge Holden. In contrast Holden himself gives frequent speeches and monologues, on a wide range of topics, some of which are many pages long.

Perhaps the most often cited example of the Judge's Nietzschean philosophy is his statement that "Moral law is an invention of mankind" made in response to one of the men's suggestion that, "The man that wins in some combat is not vindicated morally" (McCarthy 250). However the Judge's entire response, not just the first sentence, reflects on Nietzsche:

Moral law is an invention of mankind for the disenfranchisement of the powerful in favor of the weak. Historical law subverts it at every turn. A moral view can never be proven right or wrong by any ultimate test. A man falling dead in a duel is not thought thereby to be proven in error as to his views. His very involvement in such a trial gives evidence of a new and broader view. The willingness of principals to forgo further argument as the triviality which it is and to petition directly the chambers of the historical absolute clearly indicates of how little moment are the opinions and of what great moment are the divergences thereof. For the argument is indeed trivial, but not so the separate wills thereby made manifest. Man's vanity may well approach infinite in capacity but his knowledge remains imperfect and however much he comes to value his judgments ultimately he must submit them before a higher court. Here are considerations of equity and rectitude and moral right rendered void and without warrant and here are the views of the litigants despised. Decisions of life and death, of what shall be and what shall not, beggar all question of right. In elections of these magnitudes are all lesser ones subsumed, moral, spiritual, natural. (McCarthy 250)

The Judge's statement that "moral law is an invention of mankind" is almost identical to Nietzsche's assertion that "men gave themselves all their good and evil" ("Thus Spoke

Zarathustra” 59). In fact the first three sentences of his speech offer a concise and articulate summary of Nietzsche’s master-slave morality.

In the middle section of this speech, the Judge describes a situation in which two men use a duel to settle an argument. His explanation of the significance of such an occurrence may just as well be an explanation of the will to power. In a duel, the stakes are greater than who is right and who is wrong, “For the argument is indeed trivial, but not so the separate wills thereby made manifest.” The victor is not the winner of the argument, “A man falling dead in a duel is not thought thereby to be proven in error as to his views.” In this situation, “Decisions of life and death, of what shall be and what shall not,” right and wrong become irrelevant. The duel is a specific, albeit violent, representation of Nietzsche’s idea of the will to power boiled down to its most fundamental elements: right and wrong play no part in who survives the duel, the result is determined by the strongest will, the best shooter.

On the preceding page, The Judge defends War. His explanation has bearing both on a discussion of the will to power and of Thus Spoke Zarathustra:

Suppose two men at cards with nothing to wager save their lives. Who has not heard such a tale? A turn of the card. The whole universe for such a player has labored clanking to this moment which will tell if he is to die at that man’s hand or that man at his. What more certain validation of a man’s worth could there be? This enhancement of the game to its ultimate state admits no argument concerning the notion of fate. The selection of one man over another is a preference absolute and irrevocable and it is a dull man indeed who could reckon so profound a decision without agency or significance either one. In such games as have for their stake the annihilation of the defeated the decisions are quite clear. This man

holding this particular arrangement of cards in his hand is thereby removed from existence. This is the nature of war, whose stake is at once the game and the authority and the justification. Seen so, war is the truest form of divination. It is the testing of one's will and the will of another within that larger will which because it binds them is therefore forced to select. War is the ultimate game because war is at last the forcing of the unity of existence. War is god. (McCarthy 249)

The Judge describes a card-game scenario in which a draw of the cards determines that one opponent lives and the other dies. Like the example of the duel, right and wrong have no bearing on the outcome. However this time he extrapolates his beliefs so that they apply to War, which he views as “the ultimate game.”

Whether it is to secure national security against a foreign enemy, or to liberate oppressed people, or simply to obtain land, leaders of nations, tribes, and kingdoms have always sought some sort of moral rationale to justify War or specific wars. In the Judge's view, any justification for war is moot; the reasons for entering a war do not affect the outcome of that war. War is not won necessarily by the morally justified, but by the will of the most powerful. This echoes a sentiment expressed in Thus Spoke Zarathustra; in the section titled “On War and Warriors” Zarathustra says, “You say it is the good cause that hallows any war? I say unto you: it is the good war that hallows any cause” (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 47).

The importance of war in the Nietzschean worldview is discussed again later in Blood Meridian. The Judge has a conversation with the Kid in his jail cell in which he once again echoes Nietzsche's perspectives on war:

You came forward ... to take part in a work. But you were a witness against yourself. You sat in judgment of your own deeds. You put your own allowances before the judgments of history and you broke with the body of which you were pledged a part and poisoned it in all its enterprise ... If war is not holy man is nothing but antic clay. Even the cretin acted in good faith according to his parts. For it was required no man to give more than he possessed nor was any man's share compared to another's. Only each was called upon to empty out his hear into the common and one did not. Can you tell me who that one was? ... What joins men together ... is not the sharing of bread but the sharing of enemies.

(McCarthy 307)

Judge criticizes the Kid for bearing "witness against (himself)." From a Nietzschean point of view, feelings of self-judgment and guilt are bad or undesirable because they do not help the person who has them become more powerful. When the kid "sat in judgment of (his) own deeds" he was acting contrary to his own will to power.

In "On War and Warriors" Zarathustra proclaims, "You may have only enemies whom you can hate, not enemies you despise. You must be proud of your enemy: then the successes of your enemy are your successes too." (Thus Spoke Zarathustra 48) The Judge's speech demonstrates that he has internalized such a belief. Referring to their Native American adversaries The Judge says, "Even the cretin acted in good faith according to his parts" (McCarthy 307).

Perhaps the most important point of this particular speech made by the Judge is his assertion that, "If war is not holy man is nothing but antic clay" (McCarthy 307). At first glance the Judge's statement seems little more than a rephrasing of Nietzsche's views on war. However

upon closer reading I believe The Judge's statement relates to Nietzsche in other ways. A common metaphor in Christianity is that of man as clay, shaped by God the creator. If war is holy, it is holy because it is the testing of one's will against another's; it is holy because in the heat of battle, men determine their own fate and the fate of their opponents, and in that way they are god-like. If war is pre-determined by God, then war is not holy, and "man is nothing but antic clay." This view hints at, and demonstrates the Judge's internalization of, many of Nietzsche's ideas: the will to power, the death of god, and the overman.

Time and time again, McCarthy expresses distinctly Nietzschean perspectives through The Judge. The influence of the German philosopher is clear in both the language and thematic content of the following passage:

If God meant to interfere in the degeneracy of mankind would he not have done so by now? Wolves cull themselves, man. What other creature could? And is the race of men not more predacious yet? The way of the world is to bloom and to flower and die but in the affairs of men there is no waning and the noon of his expression signals the onset of night. His spirit is exhausted at the peak of its achievement. His meridian is at once his darkening and the evening of his day ... do you not think this will be again? Aye. And Again. (McCarthy 146)

This speech shares not only similar ideas, but similar language with Thus Spoke Zarathustra. In the first line, the Judge exhibits the same questioning of the existence or agency of God in the affairs of man as Nietzsche expressed. He answers his own rhetorical question ("do you not think this will be again") at the end of the passage, which is both an echo and affirmation of Nietzsche's conception of the eternal return.

However this passage is also a prime example of how McCarthy consistently utilizes similar language as Nietzsche did in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. The flower blooming/plant metaphor is one Nietzsche employs frequently, as in this line from a previously quoted section, “The time has come for man to plant the seed of his highest hope. His soil is rich enough. But one day this soil will be poor and domesticated and no tall tree will grow in it” (Nietzsche, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 17). In fact, there are many other instance in which the two authors use like language in order to express similar ideas, which are detailed in the following section.

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 6: Comparing the Language of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Blood Meridian*

Both the language and ideological undertones of Blood Meridian share significant overlap with Thus Spoke Zarathustra. The similarities testify to McCarthy’s awareness of and interest in the works of Nietzsche; they are too frequent to be coincidental. McCarthy deliberately drew on the kind of language employed by Nietzsche in order to both connect his novel to and comment on Nietzsche’s work. Although I recognize comparing the similarities in language of two texts that were originally written in different languages may seem to tread upon un-solid ground, I thought the overlaps worthwhile to explore for a few reasons. First, because I can only assume McCarthy read Nietzsche in translation, it seems fair to compare his language with the language of the translation of Nietzsche’s work. The second reason I feel comfortable comparing the language of the two texts is, because it is not the specific language, that is particular words (which are liable to vary greatly in translation) that I’m comparing. Rather I am looking at more general similarities in the type of language and the way the two authors employ similar symbolic language and utilize like imagery to make common points.

Both authors make use of dancing symbolically in their work. For Nietzsche, the Dance is symbolic of the levity and freedom that come from letting go of old values and creating one’s



own. According to Nietzsche, “man is a grave burden for himself! That is because ... he loads too many *alien* grave words and values on himself” effectually weighing himself down (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 193). By assuming the burden of traditional values, man takes on a “spirit of gravity” which prevents him from dancing (Nietzsche “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 108).

Nietzsche contrasts “the devil” that is “the spirit of gravity” with the “godlike dance” (“Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 108). For Nietzsche man gains the ability to dance when he has let go of burdensome conventional values in favor of his own; then and only then can he dance and be “godlike.”

For McCarthy too, or at least for *The Judge*, the dance is something that must be earned. In the final bar scene, the Judge explains to the kid what the dance signifies for him:

And where is the fiddler and where the dance?

I guess you can tell me.

I tell you this. As war becomes dishonored and its nobility called into question those honorable men who recognize the sanctity of blood will become excluded from the dance, which is the warrior’s right, and thereby will the dance become a false dance and the dancers false dancers. And yet there will be one there always who is a true dancer and can you guess who that might be?

You aint nothing.

You speak truer than you know. But I will tell you. Only that man who has offered himself up entire to the blood of war, who has been to the floor of the pit and seen the horror in the round and learned at last that it speaks to his inmost heart, only that man can dance. (McCarthy 331)

This speech is yet another instance of *The Judge* expressing a distinctly Nietzschean point of view. The Judge again echoes Nietzsche's sentiments about the "nobility" of war and its "honorable" warriors, this time in almost identical terms. What the dance symbolizes for The Judge is very similar to what it symbolizes for Nietzsche. For Nietzsche the ability to dance is concomitant with the freedom of determining one's own principles. Likewise, for The Judge, the Dance is earned when a man admits that there are forces within him, namely violence, of which conventional morality would not approve. The man "who has been to the floor of the pit and seen the horror in the round and learned at last that it speaks to his inmost heart" can dance because he has divested himself of traditional morality and accepted a new ethics of war and power in its place. For The Judge as for Nietzsche, the right to dance is earned by those who have freed themselves from traditional values.

The two books share a variety of other stylistic commonalities, one of which is that both books detail aimless journeys; or at least, the journeys they describe have no concrete destination. Zarathustra's journey has a goal; his goal is to usher in the era of the *Übermensch*. However Zarathustra's goal is a very abstract one, and as such so he has no set plan or destination, making his journey appear meandering and arbitrary. Likewise, the journey of the Kid is chaotic and lacks any kind of foresight or planning ahead on his own part. He happens to encounter Captain White and joins that failed expedition. Then he follows Toadvine and becomes a part of Glanton's gang. Even as an adult many years later, "he travelled about from place to place ... He worked at different trades" (McCarthy 312). His path in life has been a journey that has taken him all over the country, but it has not been determined by an overriding goal or sense of purpose.

Partly because both books follow journeys without concrete destinations or schedules, both authors rely on the sun to indicate the passage of time. However in addition to this concrete use of the sun, the two authors also utilize the sun in more symbolic ways as well. Both authors rely on the sun to generate metaphor, simile, and imagery to support important themes and explain key ideas of their respective texts.

In one (previously mentioned) Blood Meridian passage, McCarthy (via the Judge) uses sun imagery as a metaphor to explain his views on man, “in the affairs of men there is no waning and the noon of his expression signals the onset of night. His spirit is exhausted at the peak of its achievement. His meridian is at once his darkening and the evening of his day” (McCarthy 146). Noon is the apex of the sun in the sky, and for McCarthy symbolizes man’s apex, “the peak of (his) achievement.” This is strongly reminiscent of the language Nietzsche relies on in his presentation of the *Übermensch*.

Nietzsche’s use of figurative language based around on the sun begins on the first page of the prologue:

But at last a change came over his heart, and one morning he rose with the dawn stepped before the sun and spoke to it thus:

“You great star, what would your happiness be had you not those for whom you shine? ... Behold, I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to receive it ... For that I must descend to the depths, as you do in the evening when you go behind the sea and still bring light to the underworld, you overrich star. Like you I must go under- go down, as is said by man, to whom I want to descend. (Nietzsche, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 9-10)

In just this small section of the prologue, Nietzsche initiates the use of sun-related figurative language in a variety of ways that he will continue to utilize throughout Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

Nietzsche uses the sun in this passage to develop the punning he carries on throughout the book. He uses the setting of the sun as a simile to explain how Zarathustra must “go under” and descend to the level of the people to shed the aforementioned “light” of knowledge. The daily rising and falling of the sun relates to Nietzsche’s use of puns surrounding the words over and under (*overman*, going *under*, etc). By using over/under puns and focusing on the rising and falling action of the sun, Nietzsche creates a visual frame of reference for explaining the superiority of the *Urbmensch*. The *Urbmensch* is higher than man, above man, the apex of man, and the imagery generated by Nietzsche’s punning and metaphors illustrates this.

Nietzsche also uses the sun in this passage and throughout Thus Spoke Zarathustra in the commonly used metaphor for the light of knowledge. He makes a comparison between Zarathustra and the sun in terms of casting light, equating the light the sun casts on the earth each day with the illuminative powers of the wisdom Zarathustra wants to share with mankind. The idea of the *Urbmensch* figures not only to cast a revealing light on the day to day struggles of man, but also to serve as a light at the end of tunnel, a north star to guide mankind towards its ultimate goal. Nietzsche relies on this metaphor throughout the book. The scene Nietzsche describes after Zarathustra’s first failed speech to the people in the marketplace, “Meanwhile, the evening came, and the marketplace hid in darkness” (Nietzsche, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 20) plays again on the light metaphor. The darkness of the marketplace is symbolic of the ignorance of the townspeople and their inability to understand Zarathustra’s teaching.

Both authors utilize sun imagery for both concrete and figurative purposes; in the two novels the sun can indicate passage of time, or be symbolic of different phases of development.

Perhaps the most important symbolic use of sun imagery that is shared between the two books is the way each author uses the image of the sun at high noon to introduce key figures. The language of the ex-Priest's description of the first time he saw the Judge is strikingly similar to Zarathustra's introduction of the *Ubermensch*. Zarathustra says to the higher men, "Only now the great noon comes; only now the higher man becomes- lord" (Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" 286). In fact, Nietzsche repeatedly refers to the era of the *Ubermensch* as "the great noon." Just as noon is the apex of the sun, Nietzsche's "great noon" is symbolic of the overman as the apex of man's development.

The priest's description of the gang's first encounter with The Judge is striking for a number of reasons:

Then about the meridian of that day we came upon the judge on his rock there in that wilderness by his single self. Aye and there was not rock, just the one ...

And there he set. No horse. Just him and his legs crossed, smiling as we rode up. Like he'd been expectin us. He'd an old canvas kitbag and an old woolen Benjamin over the one shoulder. In the bag was a brace of pistols and a good assortment of specie, gold and silver. He didn't even have a canteen. It was like ... you couldnt tell were where he'd come from. (McCarthy 125)

The Judge, like the *Ubermensch*, is presented at noon, which I believe is no small coincidence. The introduction of The Judge at noon has symbolic importance, which I will elaborate on in the following section.

## 7. Reading The Judge as *Ubermensch*

Many aspects of the Judge's first appearance in front of the gang are extraordinary. The unlikelihood and abnormality of finding a solitary man, in good

health, contentedly sitting on a rock (in a place lacking any other rocks, no less), with no horse or canteen, in the middle of unpopulated territory is clear. Subsequently, The Judge performs an even more miraculous feat, producing desperately needed gunpowder out of the earth itself. Even before the end of the first day of knowing The Judge, the men begin to attribute eerie extrasensory abilities to the Judge; as demonstrated by the Priest's belief that, "(it was) like he'd been expectin us" (McCarthy 125).

However as the novel goes on, such instances of capabilities verging on the supernatural become the norm. By the end of the novel The Judge frequently and inexplicably appears in places where he is not expected: the Kid's jail cell, the Kid's etherized nightmare, the desert, and ultimately in the bar with the Kid. Perhaps more inexplicable is the fact that each time he appears largely unchanged. Furthermore, he frequently expresses knowledge of events which he couldn't reasonably know about. In the final bar scene, which is set decades after the main action of the novel, he is described as seeming "little changed or none at all" and finally claims to be immortal, "He never sleeps. He says that he will never die" (McCarthy 325, 335).

Throughout the novel, the supernatural aspects of the Judge's persona (like those mentioned above) become increasingly obvious. In these ways, the Judge exceeds his historical counterpart, and indeed any man known to history. Sepich picks up on this and his analysis leads directly to a key point of my argument:

'When bearing another name' seems a particularly apt point of departure for McCarthy's enhancement of the historical figure who was Judge Holden. In McCarthy's novel, Holden's ability to appear, disappear, reappear, an ability which is first suggested in Chamberlain's mention of the Judge's routine change-

of-name, bears on questions of Holden's origins and self-proclaimed immortality.

(Sepich 16)

Sepich alludes to Chamberlain's suggestion that Judge Holden has gone by a bevy of different names in his lifetime, a sentiment that the ex-Priest Tobin echoes in the novel, "Every man in the company claims to have encountered the sootysouled rascal in some other place" (McCarthy 124). The idea of various aliases and changes of name is certainly an interesting one, and one that I personally believe McCarthy deliberately toyed with in the novel.

At the outset of the novel, McCarthy's character is referred to as "Judge Holden" but by the novel's end he is solely referred to as "The Judge." This subtle name change from "Judge Holden" to "The Judge" signifies the change from "Judge Holden" as a concrete historical figure, to "The Judge", a much more symbolic figure. Whereas the actions of "Judge Holden" are rooted in historical accounts, the more superhuman aspects of "The Judge," namely his unchanging appearance, his almost clairvoyant knowledge of events, and his immense size, clearly are not nor can be.

In this way, "The Judge" transcends history. Denis Donoghue calls him "Cormac McCarthy's most audacious creation, the historical personage transformed from a name and a few memorable details into a comprehensive force" (Donoghue 411). By augmenting the vaguely referenced historical figure of Judge Holden not only with tremendous gifts of oration in presenting a distinctly Nietzschean point of view, but also with exceptional abilities that verge on super-human, McCarthy has brought the figure of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* to life in the 19th century American southwest.

There has been no dispute about The Judge's symbolic importance in the text; however scholars have had tremendous difficulty agreeing on any kind of taxonomy suitable for The

Judge. Some critics have even had trouble limiting The Judge to one role. In his essay “‘Witness to the uttermost edge of the world’: Judge Holden’s Textual Enterprise in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*” Joshua Masters argues that The Judge concurrently serves three different roles in the text: trickster, ethnographer, and Adam (Masters 25). None of these or any other of the suggestions I came across seemed to fully encapsulate the judge or explain the full scope of his actions. Some descriptions were applicable to specific scenes but not others. For instance, the trickster role makes a great deal of sense for the scene in which The Judge bears false witness against Reverend Green and throws the gathering into utter chaos, but it is not very relevant to the scene in which the Judge lectures on the history of the Anasazi, and even less so to the scene in which he scalps the apache boy.

According to Masters, “(The Judge) moves between these two roles (Trickster, Ethnographer): at once transgressing boundaries and violating social codes and at the same time, creating new ones” (Masters 27). Masters is correct in his assertion that The Judge simultaneously crosses boundaries and redefines social codes throughout the novel. However, the suggestion that in doing so The Judge is alternating between different symbolic roles seems to me to be forced. Neither the prankster role nor the ethnographer role fully describes The Judge or his actions, so Masters settles into the conclusion that in some instances The Judge serves one role, and in other cases, a completely different role.

Admittedly a single character can serve multiple functions within a text. Furthermore, I agree with Masters that The Judge is one such character. However, I believe that The Judge does much more in McCarthy’s novel than alternately serving the role of trickster, ethnographer, and Adam. Rather, I have found that all the various roles assumed by The Judge throughout the text are encompassed within his primary role as the embodiment and voice of the *Urbemensch*.



When reading The Judge as symbolic of The Ubermensch, no accommodation is necessary. There is no need to say to reconcile The Judge's actions in one scene with a role he plays in another scene because understanding The Judge as Ubermensch explains the spectrum of his behavior, not just one particular aspect. Even his most disparate actions fall under one Nietzschean umbrella. His slaughter of two puppies was a demonstration of his will to power. His views on morality are almost verbatim Nietzsche. The seemingly super human abilities make him seem like a literal super-man.

Though the novel highlights The Judge, who in many ways steals the show and has garnered the bulk of my attention in this project, it more closely follows The Kid. The conflict between The Judge and The Kid drives the last third of the novel and understanding the nature of their conflict is vital to understanding the novel itself. If The Judge is symbolic of Nietzsche's Ubermensch, the epitome of the unrestrained will to power, and the maker of his own rules, The Kid is representative of the everyman and is therefore the inheritor of Judeo-Christian morality.

In contrast to The Judge, The Kid, though competent, is never portrayed as outstanding or anything other than average. His physical presence is hardly described. He rarely speaks and when he does his vocabulary and mannerisms do not stand out. The only way in which The Kid stands out from any of the other members of the gang is that he is prone to exhibiting glimpses of compassion. In multiple instances throughout the novel, The Kid is shown to have values that conventional morality praises but that Nietzsche and The Judge lambast. The Kid spares lives when he can. He is the only member of the gang to take pity on David Brown and assist him in dislodging the arrow from his thigh.

By virtue of his virtues, his overall average-ness, and the juxtaposition of his character with all that is symbolized by The Judge as Ubermensch, The Kid represents all of the values

that oppose The Judge. Therefore, the ideological conflict between The Kid and The Judge is the conflict between traditional Judeo-Christian ethics and Nietzsche's so called master morality of the will to power. The prevailing interpretation of the final encounter between The Kid and The Judge in the jakes is that The Judge kills The Kid. Is this symbolic of the triumph of a new morality (or amorality) over the old?

As stated in my introduction, the goal at the outset of this project was to determine a morally viable meaning for the novel, and so this question has proven especially troublesome. In one sense at least, viewing The Judge as *Übermensch* satisfies the search for an ethically suitable meaning in the novel by negating the need for one. If we adhere to The Judge's logic, his own immortality is a validation of his moral code, and his killing of The Kid is an ultimate and decisive triumph over his opponent. Therefore it is also the triumph of an ethics of power over Judeo-Christian values. If our traditional morality is therefore rendered impotent, then my own search for a moral of the story is not only unnecessary but also futile. Such an interpretation would indicate that the primary moral of the story is that our morality needs be re-evaluated or even replaced.

Much of the novel supports such an interpretation. As discussed in Section 4, the shock value of the violence in the novel causes exactly this kind of moral re-evaluation. Moreover, The Kid, even in his role as the anti-Judge, has a capacity for violence that is suggested from the very beginning of the novel when McCarthy describes The Kid, by stating that "in him broods already a taste for mindless violence" (McCarthy 3). Furthermore, The Kid himself commits numerous acts of violence including the murder of Elroy, the participation in the gang's livelihood, and countless barroom brawls. Truthfully, The Kid performs many of the same atrocities as The Judge, the difference being that while The Judge revels in his own power, The Kid is burdened

by guilt as a result of his actions. The fact that the primary character in the novel shown to possess or exhibit any traditional moral values whatsoever frequently participates in violent acts suggests that even holding traditional values is futile in the face of man's natural tendencies.

In Donoghue's words, "The novel demands that we imagine forces in the world and in ourselves that the Enlightenment and Christianity, rarely in agreement on other issues, encourage us to think we have outgrown" (Donoghue 418). The Judge is by far the most learned and erudite character in the novel. By the virtue of his vast cultural and scientific knowledge he is the figure that would most easily be associated with the Enlightenment. Ironically though, it is The Judge himself who demands the reader question those Enlightenment ideals. Without The Judge, readers of the novel could more easily avert their eyes and ignore the carnage laid plain in front of them by McCarthy. However through his speeches, actions, and his haunting persona, The Judge makes such avoidance impossible. The Judge forces the reader to judge what we might rather ignore.

## 8. Conclusion

As I pored over my notes in search of a fitting conclusion, I happened upon a passage I had dog eared but never found a place for:

"None among the company harbored any notion as to what his attitude implied, yet so like an icon was he in his sitting that they grew cautious and spoke with circumspection among themselves as if they would not waken something that had better been left sleeping." (McCarthy 147)

Like the gang, readers of the novel are dumbfounded by the iconic figure of The Judge. So too are readers afraid to “waken something that had better been left sleeping.” To attempt to come to terms with The Judge and the violence he represents is to confront our own relationship to that violence, both on a national and individual level.

Barclay Owens notes that, “(a)s one of the most violent novels in contemporary American literature, *Blood Meridian* parallels its times” (20). He goes on to note how the novel was published in the wake of America’s first televised war, the Vietnam War. Evening news reports brought evidence of the atrocities committed by our own military right to the family television set. Ironic perhaps, that our incredible technological advances are precisely what forced us to recognize the more primal aspects of the War in Vietnam. In fact so strong was this spirit of amendment that it brought to bear other less than noble facets of our national history as well, most particularly the era of Manifest Destiny. In addition to embodying the general sentiment of historical revisionism brought about by the Vietnam War, Owens suggests that even some of the particular scenes of violence in the novel are evocative of well known real life images of the war (Owens 20-26).

Certainly, I agree with Owens on many accounts. His points are all valid and indeed were especially informative and eye-opening to me, being a generation removed from Vietnam (the war and the nation). However, the fact that Owens’s book was published in 2000, and that I and countless others concurrently are still studying and evaluating McCarthy’s novel in 2010 (and into 2011) testifies to its incredible staying power. Yes, Blood Meridian is in many ways a product of the post-Vietnam era; but, like the violence it portrays, the novel has transcended that era.

If, as some critics have suggested, Blood Meridian is nothing more than a revisionary western, I doubt it would be so poignant or interesting to me personally. If the sole purpose or achievement of the novel and its abundant violence was to debunk the myth of Manifest Destiny, it should hardly be as relevant to a student of my generation and upbringing. By the time I read the novel, my knowledge of the history of the American southwest has already undergone the kind of “historical revisions” the novel supposedly espouses. Growing up in Maryland, I learned about the Native American cultures that had predated colonials in my area before I knew all the presidents. We learned about the trail of tears in the fourth grade, years before we ever discussed the Manifest Destiny. In high school we learned about The Vietnam War; and though we learned about the moral rationalization for the war, we also read Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*, learned about the massacre at My Lai, and our military’s use of Agent Orange against civilians. We harbored few myths about the nobility of America’s endeavors in Southeast Asia.

Though Blood Meridian may have evoked images of the Vietnam War for Owens or anyone else in his generation of readers, it remains poignant to readers of my generation for altogether different reasons. Indeed during my own relatively short lifetime, I have already been witness to many specific examples of the presence of violence in contemporary life. Whether as seemingly innocent as the popularity of crime dramas, or as outright repulsive as the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, or even as personal as the shooting death of a friend, it is impossible to suggest that we as individuals or as a nation have truly outgrown violence.

That is the exact reason McCarthy’s novel remains relevant. It is not about the specific violence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century American Southwest, nor is it merely a projection of the violence of the Vietnam era. The novel is not about the violence of any particular era, it is about the fact that in every era of man there has been violence. The historical accuracy, the stunning aesthetics, and

the pervasiveness of the violence in the novel collectively force the reader to admit that we are the inheritors of a legacy of, and perhaps even a tendency towards violence.

Were the violence of the novel made to stand for itself, it would certainly carry its own weight and bring to bear many questions on the nature of man. But when the violence of the novel is coupled with rationalizations presented by The Judge, Blood Meridian takes on even more significance and becomes an even more impressive feat of writing. The uncanny similarities between The Judge and Nietzsche's hypothetical *Übermensch*, as well as The Judge's eloquent espousal of many of Nietzsche's theories, help to carry on the work that Nietzsche began in his landmark philosophical texts. Furthermore, by placing those ideas in an impeccably researched historical setting, McCarthy demonstrates how Nietzsche's ideas can have a real world application and relevance.

Looming ever present in the back of my mind throughout my entire study of Blood Meridian has been the awareness of the fact that my project would never be complete or convincing until I grappled with the task of analyzing the curious epilogue and reconciling it with my interpretation of the novel. The epilogue is a brief parable:

In the dawn there is a man progressing over the plain by means of holes which he is making in the ground. He uses an implement with two handles and he chucks it into the hole and he enkindles the stone in the hole with his steel hole by hole striking the fire out of the rock which God has put there. On the plain behind him are the wanderers in search of bones and those who do not search and they move haltingly in the light like mechanisms whose movements are monitored with escapement and pallet so that they appear restrained by a prudence or reflectiveness which has no inner reality and they cross in their progress one by

one that track of holes that runs to the rim of the visible ground and which seems less the pursuit of some continuance than the verification of a principle, a validation of sequence and causality as if each round and perfect hole owed its existence to the one before it there on that prairie upon which are the bones and the gatherers of bones and those who do not gather. He strikes fire in the hole and draws out his steel. Then they all move again. (McCarthy 337)

I began by trying to understand the passage on a literal level. The first man is part of a building project. His job is to make a “track of holes” in the earth that will later be filled and build upon his initial groundwork: perhaps fence posts or the foundations of a building. The symbolic meaning of the passage, then, suggests that this initial figure could be representative of the pioneer of ideas, namely, the writer whose thinking establishes a foundation for those who come after, a category into which both McCarthy and Nietzsche would fall. Of the two groups that follow, “the wanderers in search of bones” are those who think critically about what they have encountered and seek a meaning in it. In contrast, “those who do not” are the symbolic of the readers who do not search for meaning. Their “reflectiveness” “has no inner reality.” In either case, the both groups move as if by the command of the first man.

For me personally, I take the epilogue to be McCarthy’s challenge to the reader. Blood Meridian as a whole is difficult and inaccessible for a variety of ways. It is gruesomely violent, lacks traditional plot development, and for most readers requires use of a dictionary. However if one seeks out a meaning in the text they will find at least the bare bones of a moral. What I found was the fictional representation, in a historical setting, of Nietzsche’s thought. What I found was the groundwork for a new way of thinking about violence, history, and morality. In

that way, the novel is an illustration of life that is, to borrow Nietzsche's phrasing, beyond good and evil.

The Judge's actions are justified based not on their moral appropriateness but on the degree to which they help him overpower others and his environment. His violence is not evil, because for him "evil" is an irrelevant conception. His violence is merely one way in which he manifests his will to power. However, the will to power and violence are not the same thing, for instance, The Judge's will to power is also evidenced in his intellect, his meticulous study of the plants, artifacts, and people he encounters. In short, The Judge always endeavors to subdue others, whether in physical combat or intellectual discourse.

McCarthy's novel is neither a revisionary history nor a fictional mimicry of Nietzsche's philosophies. Instead, it is a fictional novel grounded in a historical context that doesn't ape Nietzsche but rather builds on his thought. Blood Meridian presents a world in which the will to power can be a more relevant standard by which to measure one's actions than conventional Judeo-Christian morality. In the historical setting of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century American Southwest, The Judge, like Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, judges the value and merit of his own actions and the actions of those around him on the basis of the will to power alone.



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