The Cormac McCarthy Journal

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Editor's Introduction

Greetings! This 2010 issue of *The Cormac McCarthy Journal* comes with a few changes—I have taken over the editorial helm, and John Wegner will be editing our online content. As someone who found her academic calling in McCarthy's work, I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with the likeminded scholars that we feature in these pages.

Cormackians are always a fun bunch, and in October of this year many of us gathered in the Albert B. Alkek Library at Texas State University in San Marcos to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the publication of *Blood Meridian*—in close proximity with the recently opened McCarthy archives. A forthcoming issue of *Southwestern American Literature* will include some of the work presented on the novel, and several of the papers on McCarthy's other writings will appear in the next issue of this journal. The keynote address in San Marcos was given by artist, writer, and flâneur Peter Josyph, whose striking photograph of the Southern Railroad Bridge in Knoxville graces the cover of this issue.

We begin with something of a continuation—two essays on *The Road*, which was the subject of our 2008 issue of the *Journal* and has attracted strong critical interest in the interim. Erik Wielenberg addresses the moral code evident in *The Road*, arguing that it is not dependent on the existence of God, and in doing so mentions the allusion to Prometheus in the book's motif of "carrying the fire." Daniel Luttrull takes that motif as the basis for his inquiry, and provides a detailed look at the Prometheus myth in history—in sources like Hesiod, Aeschylus, Shelley, and Nietzsche—and how those stories inform an understanding of *The Road*.

And in turn, William Quirk picks up with a consideration of Nietzsche, using the philosopher's writings about tragedy (as well as a broader discussion of the German literary and cultural tradition) to unpack *The Sunset Limited*'s influences and allusions. Quirk's reading is particularly welcome at a time when *Sunset* has made its way onto stages around the country and abroad. It has also had prominent screen time in the recent HBO production starring Tommy Lee Jones and Samuel L. Jackson. (Look for a review or two in our next issue.)

The final two essays address issues of land, space, and meaning in McCarthy's Western works. Ronja Vieth explores the genre of the Frontier Gothic through an examination of *Blood Meridian*, a darkly Gothic double of the United States' mythologized past, and Daniel Weiss considers several of McCarthy's works in his analysis of the author's use of maps and the knowledge that they contain—information that can be explicit or implicit.

This issue also includes two short notes. Samuel Sotillo comments on Robert Bolaño's Chilean review of *Blood Meridian* and the possible influence of McCarthy's novel on Bolaño's masterwork, the novel *2666*. And Jim Welsh muses on Don Graham's Cormackian writings as well as the Coen brothers' adaptations of *No Country for Old Men* and *True Grit*. So we have Sotillo on Bolaño on McCarthy, and Welsh on Graham on Cormac (on Oprah). Rounding things out are reviews of several recent works of McCarthy criticism by Dianne C. Luce, John Beck, and Megan McGilchrist, as well as a special issue of the journal *Appalachian Heritage*.

Enjoy, and keep in touch.

Stacey Peebles, Editor
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