

Chapter 1

Politics of Violence in McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men* and *Blood Meridian*

This project centers on Cormac McCarthy's two novels namely *Blood Meridian* (1985) and *No Country for Old Men* (2005), both of which deal with the cross-border trouble between the US and Mexico, and the riots and unsettlement emerged out of that trouble. It attempts to penetrate into the traumatic conditions felt by victims, survivors and witnesses developed because of those riots by bringing back the historical plight of the land, and the modern trauma emerged as remnant of drug war smuggling, criminality and all-round violence. This research also focuses on how the all-pervading rule of evilness performs in both of the novels causing befall of innocence and relatively more virtuous sides, and finally creating a situation of lawlessness, or more a situation of Godlessness. In other words, the research rivets excessively violent circumstances embedded in both of the novels to pinpoint the bleak consequences against the ethics and sensibility of morality and humanity.

Blood Meridian simply discloses horrendous and inhuman performance practised by some human beings against other human beings by shattering their lives. The Kid, the protagonist of fourteen years old and an orphan, represents one of the human actors destined to live a topsy-turvy life, and later on being massacred as a man by the villainous all-pervading power named Judge Holden. McCarthy presents the Judge as an embodiment of immortal evil force deeply rooted in the mortal world desirous of taking everyone's lives. The violent drama presented by the novelist hints the very moment of violence-based historical drama of the United States of America leading to the trauma of the cross-border land between the US and Mexico during the US westward expansion. Especially, the government supported irregular military adventurers known as American filibusterers and the Glanton gang perform violence and atrocity in the name

of getting victory over the Mexican land. Rapes, killings, scalping, shootings of human beings as well as animal world by the above mentioned groups capture crucial moments in the novel. The occurrence of damage and extinction of many indigenous tribes clarifies the most traumatized saga of American borderland.

No Country for Old Men opens with the crisis emerged in the US-Mexico border in the wake of the Vietnam War. This border ballad presents the chaos and lawlessness created in the condition of fluidity in that borderland as a consequence of drug war smuggling. Llewellyn Moss, even though an innocent character in the desire of hunting, happens to fall in the abyss created by the lawless volatile circumstance by wrongly holding the satchel of money of that smuggling. The sole line of plot engages us how Moss's plight gets conditioned with the money in hand. His family life gets shattered along with the deaths of many other innocent people untimely and unknowingly. Beyond so, with Ed Tom Bell's main narration, McCarthy stresses on the trauma of Bell, the law enforcement officer himself, and others interrogating on the laws of ethics and the laws of religious faiths. The prevalence and omnipotence of Anton Chigurh, the rigorous and voracious evil force, causes violence and atrocity attacking on the human world establishing a situation of evil as good and God.

The excessive violence in the aforementioned novels suggests an alarming and horrendous issue to the writers of history indicating how such profound experiences can be represented in the historical record. It further raises the issues of significance of that excessive violence exploited by McCarthy in both of the novels. It questions what aftereffects remain with the utilization of violence, and how these consequences are responded by the victims, witnesses and readers of McCarthy.

The research probes into sheer violence and atrocity with the fictional presentation of McCarthy which otherwise can't be presented in the core facts like in historical books. Hence by unfolding the traumatic experiences of Ed Tom Bell, the Kid, Llewellyn Moss and other tribal people caused by the all-pervading evil forces like Anton Chigurh and Judge Holden in both of the novels, it dismantles the saga and glorification of the American frontiersman, and then heavily questions the borderland security of the US government along with enforcement of law and order in the democratically sound country like the US.

The primary purpose of the project is to study Cormac McCarthy's two novels *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men* in the light of trauma theory. Through the critical gaze, the study focuses on the extremity of violence and evilness prevailing in the community of human beings not only to interrogate the myths of Wild West but also to rewrite the history by the perspective of the victimhood of the violence at the US-Mexican border. So this study probes into how Cormac McCarthy's both novels, *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men*, present atrocities, violence, crimes and chaos, deaths and supremacy of evil in the United States of America, both in history and at the turn of the present century. Whereas *Blood Meridian* connects these issues by taking the historical references of westward expansion of Americans' killing, raping, massacring and scalp hunting numerous indigenous tribes innocently, *No Country for Old Men* raises the conditions of barbaric shootings, killing and degrading human life at the lowest price. With the post-Vietnam war era, the society gets degraded because of the backdrops and evil remnants of the war even after nearly four decades in the society. Whatsoever, in both conditions, McCarthy butts on the shattered and traumatized lives of people in the United States of America.

In fact, these novels are full of wounds in physical, emotional and psychological levels. These wounds in various levels create horror and terror in the people in and out the novels through the ghostly presence of evil forces particularly represented by Judge Holden and Anton Chigurh in *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men* respectively. Physically and psychologically abundant amount of pain and torture create psychological disorders of the major characters in them represented by Ed Tom Bell and Llewellyn Moss in *No Country for Old Men*, and the Kid, Reverend Green, many indigenous tribal people in *Blood Meridian*. As evils pervade everywhere in the novels, betrayals of variety get prominence in them. The traumatized conditions display the inability of speaking, presenting and representing the truth while needed. With all such troublesome and dreary experiences of human beings, the victims, survivors and witnesses of the events get unsettled empathetically in the text. The effect of which finally unsettles the readers empathetically, the creation of “secondary trauma” in the words of Dominick LaCapra as well.

There have been widespread discussion in the intelligentsia regarding McCarthy and his oeuvre. Whereas some of the critics have notified his works as full of mysterious elements and multiple dimensions of meanings, others have dug out philosophical and historical embeddedness in them. While the texts are found to be influenced by existentialism, traditional Christian beliefs, nihilism and antinomianism altogether by some scholars, then again others have analyzed them with the individual’s feelings of freedom, alienation, self-sufficiency and individualism. Likewise, the issues of racism, discrimination, misuse value of things, consumerism, mythological subject matters also become the concerns of so many critics in both of McCarthy’s novels. Some others have again studied from the perspectives of crisis of masculinity in both of the novels of McCarthy as well. Hence the subject matters seem to be crossing the boundaries.

With due respect to the ideas of scholars presenting such facets of McCarthy's works, this study slightly deviates by utilizing the significance of ideas of trauma theory to study McCarthy's narratives. To prove the given analysis of the novels, all the ideas and concepts related to trauma studies would be redundant. For that, it becomes quite pertinent to mention meaning, origin, development, and key issues in understanding trauma theory in relation to McCarthy's literature. Since the study focuses on the utilization of traumatic violence, it seeks how political and recuperative motive for humanity functions in McCarthy's texts. Particularly it develops the logic in the theoretical lines of Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra and related scholars and critics in general.

Since the advent and development of trauma studies coincides with the time of McCarthy's writing, development and different facets of trauma literature could be easily compared with and explored in McCarthy's novels. The issues raised in the interpretation of literary texts in the light of trauma theory are of varied nature. On the one hand, it deals with the events occurred in the history creating terror and horror. Political atrocities, chaos, violence, terrorism, attacks, lawlessness and so on create so. The terrific and horrific experiences traumatize the concerned people. There is unraveling of degradation and dehumanization of the subjects. On the other hand, when realized later in delayed form, through storytelling, testimony or so on, there is a kind of healing of the wound of the victims and survivors as well.

The traumatic representation of the events has ghostly nature because of the haunting fears. The lack of agency during the occurrence of trauma, acting out and working through are other issues to be studied and dug out in the trauma narrative. Trauma theory deals with issues of ambiguity of perception because of unknowability of actual events. Sometimes, the traumatic conditioning also remains as unpredictable, un-representable and unspeakable as well. Such

inability of finding out of the real events has the cause, the cause of belatedness of the experience since the experience of trauma remains in the latent form and gets revealed after the triggering of the similar catastrophic events as the earlier one. Hence things disappear, get repressed, and appear again.

Trauma also arises when the places, people, time and things confided with don't reveal their very nature. In other words, betrayal, denial, repression, and evasions traumatize the subjects. Moreover, trauma is not an issue of individual, rather it takes communal, social or collective form. To study the matters remaining in trauma literature, recollection and memory of history remain at the center. These agendas and interpretation of literary texts through these tools validate the richness and profundity of literary study in the light of trauma theory. The analysis of *No Country for Old Men* and *Blood Meridian* in this thesis is greatly affected and influenced by such conditions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Cormac McCarthy and his novels have been multifariously studied by the critics. They have dug out his works to be adept with the subject matters like history and politics, tradition and modernism, mystery and romance, violence and anarchy, ethics and humanity, and so on. Ashley Kunsu, Katie Owens Murphy and Sara L. Spurgeon present overview of McCarthy's oeuvre in general, including *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men*, to play with some of the above mentioned themes his works. This study digs out how Sara L. Spurgeon, David R. Jarraway, Raymond Malewitz and Stephen Tatum interpreted *No Country for Old Men*. Likewise, John Emil Sepich, Denis Donoghue, Philip Snyder and Patrick W. Shaw explore variety of opinions reading between the lines in *Blood Meridian*.

Ashley Kunsu analyzes *Understanding Cormac McCarthy* by Steven Frye and *Reading the World: Cormac McCarthy's Tennessee Period* by Dianne C. Luce to dig out the issue of "mystery" and "possibility" in the writer's oeuvre. On the one hand, Kunsu presents the thesis that McCarthy's novels are rife with "existentialism, ancient Gnosticism, traditional Christianity, Platonism and nihilism, among other systems or patterns of thought" (146). On the other hand, she holds that "he must be studied for the richness of possibility" (147).

For Kunsu, Frye studies McCarthy's ten novels in chronological order with short introduction to the readers about the "challenges" in reading McCarthy because of the "aesthetics and "darkness of the context" (147). He finds McCarthy involved in American romance combined with mystery and difficulty in answer. To cut the whole analysis of Kunsu in short about how Frye studies McCarthy, we get McCarthy exploiting the themes of nature, history, social change, omni-present reality of mystery, romance, violent American story of expansion

towards West, frontier saga, nightmarish human darkness and depravity, nihilism, Judeo-Christian cosmology, myths, dreams, human community and friendship differently in varied extents in his ten novels through *Understanding Cormac McCarthy*. Kunsu further argues and eulogizes Frye for providing great support to the scholars involved in the study of McCarthy especially contributing on the exploitation of subject matter in the whole McCarthy canon.

Kunsu identifies Dianne C. Luce probing only into McCarthy's early career, but extensively. Studying each of the early four works of McCarthy in different chapters in her book on McCarthy, Luce discloses multiplicity fused with unknowability in them; namely, philosophical and local historical influence and the theme of antinomianism in *The Orchard Keeper*, Gnosticism in *Outer Dark*, historical influence in *Child of God*, and gnostic imagery, existentialist and the theme of Christianity in his first screen play *The Gardener's Song*. She concludes that the works of McCarthy undoubtedly contain mystery in which the readers need to ponder about in their search for answer of life which again finally leads them to the path of multiple possibility.

Katie Owens Murphy interprets McCarthy's Southern works as commending the values of frontier ethics which are again in quite contrast to the Western novels of McCarthy's border fiction. As the protagonists in the southern novels seek for freedom, individualism and self-sufficiency, they are in pressures of modern civilization, and henceforth these characters do have nostalgia for "frontier ethic" (156). The issues of isolation, self-sufficiency, removal from civilization, proximity to nature, alienation and total freedom dominate McCarthy's Southern novels like *The Orchard Keeper*, *Outer Dark*, *Child of God* and *Suttree*. Murphy states,

"The geography of these novels mirrors the marginalization of their characters, who exist on the fringe of civilization rather than at its center. Moreover, the

triumph of punitive institutions such as prisons and asylums over these individuals marks the triumph of ‘the agents of modernity’ over the frontier values.” (qtd. in Walsh 173)

McCarthy’s southern works expose an evocation of independence of the protagonists. These characters get troubled with the growing influence of modernity, its culture of urbanization, industrialization, government control over the individuals and so on. Murphy hints us by investigating such frontier values in the border fiction of McCarthy like in *All the Pretty Horses*.

In the introduction section of *Cormac McCarthy: All the pretty Horses, No Country for Old Men, The Road*, Sara L. Spurgeon cites Harold Bloom for comparing McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian* with the works like those of William Shakespeare, Herman Melville and Homer. Spurgeon puts McCarthy shares strong and elevated language and archaic diction with Shakespeare. As McCarthy’s idiosyncratic characters, epic vision and power evocation of natural world match with Melville, he has affinity with Faulkner for common roots in Southern Gothic.

For him, McCarthy’s published works encompass “distinctly American characteristics,” “nihilistic worldview,” with the excessive use of “violence” and “the legacy of American history cut through with racism, slavery, invasion, conquest, exploitation” and so on (2, 3). Such exploitation of different agendas to be an outcome of his own experiences in life. Spurgeon presents an account of his biography with so many upheavals in his life including his disinterestedness in writing in his early life, his traveling, two unsuccessful marriages, study, publications and others. One of the extra-ordinary personality of McCarthy was his “literary recluse”, which means he never went on to publicity and popularity by denying interviews and public appearances, and by sending agents to receive the prestigious awards as well (7).

As a southern writer, McCarthy followed “the tradition of Faulkner and Flannery O’Conner” and he built a reputation as ‘a writer’s writer’ with the works *The Road*, *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Child of God*, and *Suttree* (8). But as a Southwestern writer, he presents reinvention “of prose, his focus, and his scope” (9). To compare such two distinct aspects of McCarthy’s novels, Spurgeon adds:

While McCarthy’s Southern novels are seen by many scholars as fulfilling the promise of Faulkner by bringing the Southern Gothic fully into the late twentieth century, the Southwestern novels do not perform the same function of the genre of the Western, which has not historically offered any sustained critique of westward expansion or white settler culture. It may be said that McCarthy’s Southwestern novels do the opposite, overturning and undermining the Western, subverting it from within. (9)

Two different facets of McCarthy’s presentation of the issues in his novels are seen in the interpretation of Spurgeon. On the one hand, the Southern novels are embedded with sensuous and erotic joy in language with the use of dialogues and dialects, allegorical feeling, and widespread violence. On the other side, the Southwestern novels compel readers to face ‘the racism, greed and brutal violence’ indicating “westward expansion” (10). He further analyzes *Blood Meridian* on similar terms as an “apocalyptic novel” lying in this second act of McCarthy as the Southern novels represent his first act in literary life.

Spurgeon posits that the publication of *No Country for Old Men* in 2005 places McCarthy from the second act to the third. For Spurgeon, McCarthy’s *The Road* and *No Country for Old Men* have such third turning “because of several important rhetorical and stylistic characteristics” (16). Focusing on McCarthy and the contemporary scholarship, Spurgeon widens the

interpretations on McCarthy from those parochial ones, which regard him as Southern or Southwestern or genre writer. Rather the scholars have been indulged in modernist and postmodernist issues in McCarthy which can encompass larger literary, cultural and historical matrices. For Spurgeon, the book that he is editing provides with “the chapters that engage McCarthy’s work from the positions of post-Marxist, post-Capitalist, and Globalization studies” as interpreted by many contemporary literary scholars (21).

David R. Jarraway sees the novel *No Country for Old Men* as dealing with the agenda of crisis of masculinity caused by confusion and disorder in which the male characters like Llewellyn Moss and others are destined to live. For Jarraway, such crisis indicates “becoming woman in a kind of emasculated state of emergency..” in the period of post-feminist discourse (52). Jarraway classifies varied facets of masculinities in the novel as represented by Anton Chigurh, Ed Tom Bell and Llewellyn Moss. Whereas Chigurh represents iron-clad, immutable, rigid, stubborn and essentialist masculinity, Tom Bell, though a law enforcement officer, exercises paraplegic activity in the fight against the violent criminal record breaking masculinity of Anton Chigurh and other drug war criminals. Rather he chooses the path of domestication at the end as he talks with his wife suggesting the paraplegic masculinity through homeward movement. Such “domestication of male identity within the sheltered and nurturing precincts of the family home thus affords another sense of ‘becoming-woman’” (55).

Jarraway proceeds ahead that the character of Llewellyn Moss gets place somewhere “between aggressive activity of Chigurh and the passivity of Bell,” and hence gets encapsulated to “being-woman” by the virtues of “imperceptibility, indiscernibility and impersonality” (59). The changes in him, his wife’s claim of knowing him perfectly, his picking up of the female hitchhiker and providing her with some stolen amount of money, and his move against Chigurh’s

telephone threat bring the crisis in his identity. Jarraway strengthens his argument by analyzing the status of Moss as de-territorialized and again in the condition like that of “a failed re-territorialization” (60). The uprooted-ness and homelessness of the protagonist Llewellyn Moss could be defined as the crisis of masculine identity in the traditional American sense of masculinity.

Raymond Malewitz exposes *No Country for Old Men* to have abundance of examples in which the inherent values of the produced goods has heavily been abused by both the protagonist and the antagonist. It indicates “the departure of artisanal forms of production and the subsequent arrival of industrial capitalism’s anarchic world of commodities” (722). Llewellyn Moss’s sawing of shotgun, using boots as his gun stand, shirt as sock are the instances to hint such misuse values. The serial killer, Anton Chirurh, abuses gas canister as gun, towel as bandage, handcuffs as weapons, and so on. Such excessive use of misuse value, as Malewitz opines, “undermines the social structures by which one could distinguish between the proper use and the improper misuse of commodities” (727). It depicts the late modernity’s chaos and abuse of commodities.

Malewitz interprets the text as a novel of “rugged consumerism” populating the Wild West of the US. Malewitz ponders on the shift of “natural phenomena” to the “technological commodities” in the world of *No Country for Old Men*. The critic asserts, “In McCarthy’s late capitalist denouement to the dream of the mythic West, animal prey becomes human prey, animal tracks become automobile tracks become signals, cattle-smuggling becomes drug-smuggling, and horses become off-road vehicles” (728). The novel’s shift from the natural belongings to the artificial or technological ones indicates the attention of the modern generation on money and goods. The argument gets bolstered with the support that everything in the novel

oscillates around money. The conversation between Carla and Sheriff Bell about money, Chigurh's following of Moss and money, Moss's giving of money to the unknown lady hitchhiker, the drug war and the satchel as a result, the buying of shirts on the way by Chigurh and Moss in different times from the passersby, and the buying of guns emphasize the subject of money and goods. Nature, which is "eclipsed by the technological" advancement, so, appears as an antagonistic force to the late capitalism. The characters desire to manipulate and to create useful objects from the raw materials remains" (729). The exchange value of goods, here, suggests the negation of the predetermined use and status of the commodity as the goods take new forms and functions after their reproduction into new commodities indicating the model of rugged consumerism.

According to Malewitz, McCarthy hints a lot by the imagery of coin to strengthen the theme of misuse value and rugged consumerism. Chigurh plays with the coin to decide the life of people who confront him on the way to his crime mission. In fact, the coin gets liberated "from its status as an object of mass production and circulation" (735). Instead Chigurh misuses the coin to decide the fate of others. Moreover, the misuse of the commodities tells about the end of their use in the future. Stephen Tatum questions the nature of evil rooted in the modern world through the narrative of Sheriff Ed Tom Bell in *No Country for Old Men*. Tatum identifies that evil with the crisis in political, financial, moral, ethical and linguistic levels in the US-Mexico border. He argues, "McCarthy produces an internal corrido or border ballad, whose emergent sense of mourning indexes both directly and indirectly the political, financial, moral, ethical and even linguistic crisis emerging along the US-Mexico border in the wake of Vietnam War" (79). Tatum's exploration suggests monstrosity existing in the modern mercantile world of that borderland.

In “The Dance of History in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*,” John Emil Sepich endeavors to demonstrate Judge Holden’s “possible motive” behind the death of the Kid with two perspective in *Blood Meridian*. On the one hand, Sepich ventilates Judge Holden’s motive after studying Samuel Chamberlain’s autobiographical *My Confession* that unfolds hostility between Chamberlain and historical Judge Holden. Sepich quotes Chamberlain, who gets hated in the history by the Judge, and the vice versa. Sepich connects that with McCarthy’s presentation of “Holden’s murder of the Kid on his recognition that Holden and Chamberlain hated each other in the story’s eyewitness source documents” (17).

The second motive of Judge Holden’s murder of the Kid is more mysterious and philosophical quite contrary to the first motive that has historical connection. McCarthy employs the tarot card scene in which the Kid happens to choose the Four of Cups, among 78 other tarot cards, that symbolizes “divided heart” and “associates him with the quality of mercy” (18).

In contrast to the association of the Four of Cups with the Kid, the Judge has the association with the Fool, which is considered to be the most powerful of all cards. In fact it indicates “disorganized variety” like divine wisdom, lost wits, juggler, magician, and so on (19). But when it’s understood in Judge Holden, “it is the animating force of the tarot. He stands both as the Judge of the dance that was the scalp-hunters’ war and as a personification of those universal energies” (24). McCarthy’s employment of such tarot card scene and implication of the cards with the characterization locates the genre of the novel to be lying between “historical novel” and “historical romance” (24). In summing up, the dance of the historical content from factual to the traditional and philosophical, in both, Sepich digs out the issue of the Judge’s motive behind the murder of the Kid.

Whereas Kunska studies the mystery and ample possibility in McCarthy's novels, John Emil Sepich interprets *Blood Meridian* by relating it to the historical facts to find the motive behind the murder of the protagonist, the Kid. Stacey Peebles, quite differently, utilizes the cultural subject matters to study *Blood Meridian*. Peebles exhorts that it not only takes the reference from the historical events, it also draws the readers' attention to the mythology of Yuma Indians as well. Peebles relates:

Certainly the bulk of *Blood Meridian*, with its pages-long massacre scenes, breathtaking descriptions of atrocities, and bleak reflection on humanity—all based on the real activities of the Glanton gang—would lend credence to this kind of reading. After the massacre at the Yuma ferry, however, the novel's focus changes considerably. Here, the historical content of the novel ends.....
Specifically, this article will be an exploration of the mythology and ideology of Yuma Indians, their role in *Blood Meridian*, and the resonance of those beliefs with the events and mythmaking in the novel, especially in the final section in which McCarthy expands upon the novel's historical content and creates an allegorical standoff between the Kid and Judge Holden. (232)

Peebles by interpreting two aspects of the novel provides new light to the McCarthy scholarship. While analyzing the plot, character and settings in the novel, he relates the novel with Samuel Chamberlain's memoir *My Confession: Recollections of a Rouge* so as to present historical events that involved Glanton gang and the Indians along Texas-Mexico borderlands. But after the massacre at the Yuma ferry the novel takes a twist in focus from the historical content to the tribal mythological.

Peebles exposes that the Yuma “cultural and mythological intersections occur at crucial moments in the novel: the Kid’s birth, the trek into the desert following the ferry massacre, and the Kid’s death” (237). Again the critic focuses on the Kid’s plight based on Yuma cultural significance, “Like his birth during Leonids, a meteor shower of cultural significance to the Yuman Indians, here his death is also marked by falling stars, another important signifier for the Quechan” (242). In this way, McCarthy seems to be very meticulous in presenting the predicament of the protagonist guided by the Yuma belief system. In the mythological lines, it seems as if the topsy-turvy in the life of the Kid had already been ordained. Moreover, the struggle between the two Yuman Gods Coh-coh-mak and Thouts-e-pahts is identified with the struggle between Judge Holden and the Kid respectively. Coh-coh-mak is “stronger” and “shape-shifting” God with omnipotent power matching the characteristics of Judge Holden. Similarly, Theuts-e-pahts is a weaker God, who “is blind, and is forced by Coh-coh-mak to dwell in the center of the world. Theuts-e-pahts, then, is the Kid, impotent and unseeing” (242). Hence Peebles concludes the interpretation with succinct analysis suggesting the Quechan mythological reference in McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.

Like Peebles’ scanty favor of *Blood Meridian* as a historical novel, Denis Donoghue understands it to have been based on the historical sources, especially Samuel E. Chamberlain’s *My Confession*, John Woodhouse Audubon’s *Western Journal 1849—1850* and Mayne Reid’s *The Scalp-Hunters*. Donoghue reports that as the Governor of Chihuahua contracted with John Joel Glanton in June of 1849 to hunt Apaches and to pay \$200 for every scalp, the characters in *Blood Meridian* also perform similar activities to “hunt the Apache leader and to scalp Apaches and other Indians” (406). Both of the events in history and novel of McCarthy match well in purpose, characters, performances and the disordered consequences.

Donoghue opines that *Blood Meridian* is novel that erodes all forms of virtues that human beings have traditionally been considering. In all the events that happened in the story of the novel, there is strong interrogation on the ethical aspect of humanity. Maximum events reveal the decency of humanity and ethics according to Donoghue presenting only a few of the instances in which the behaviors of humanity and kindness are seen. Donoghue presents:

Near the beginning Judge Holden bears false witness, as if for fun, against the Reverend Green, a man he has never met till now. Toadvine beats up up Sydney and sets fire to the hotel he's lodging in. Glanton tries out a new pistol by shooting a cat, some hens, and a goat. One of the mercenaries kills two infants of the Gilenos. The Judge takes up an Apache child, dandles him on the knee, keeps him for a few days, and scalps him. Glanton's men massacre the peaceful Tiguas. The Judge buys two dogs, only to drown them. One of the Glanton's men, David Brown, sets fire to a young soldier and lets him burn to death. Glanton and a few of his men tie up an alcalde, his wife, and the local grocer and leave them to die. There is no more. The only ethical objection to these acts is made by Toadvine when the Judge scalps the child: 'Goddamn you, Holden.'..... There are a few acts of human kindness. The Kid gives the wounded Shelby his supply of water. Yuma women take care of the imbecile James Robert. The Judge saves him from drowning. (406)

In fact the novel encompasses a series of events on the non-ethical, non-moral and non-civilizational issues. It is rife with malfunctions. All major characters are involved in the events and functions of barbarism. The rare moments in it are for showing kindness. But the kind of

kindness doesn't seem to be for the kindness in the long-run. So the behaviors of kindness shown get overshadowed by the heavily unethical performances of violence.

Donoghue further emphasizes on the character of the antagonistic force getting supremacy over the protagonist. Judge Holden, the antagonist reveals himself with the Nietzschean worldview. There's an expression of "Christian virtues, patience, humility, otherworldliness ..." (412). So, Donoghue rectifies the novel as a "Post-Nietzschean fiction" having antithetical relationship to human civilization" (412). Moreover, the novel places itself into the category of "Other" from the perspective of "Enlightenment" and "Christianity" (418).

Philip A. Snyder interprets *Blood Meridian* by exploring the troupe of disappearance focusing on Paul Virilio's notion of our observation of the world "in the process of disappearing," Jacques Derrida's notion of "tendency to write under erasure" and "post structural notion of language as spectral, that is, a ghostly presence that actually marks absence" (129). According to Snyder, in *Blood Meridian*, "everything seems to disappear," "even the portentous traces of the future disappear" (128, 136).

Patrick W. Shaw presents the thesis for the Judge's motive behind the murder of the Kid different from the one posited by John Emil Sepich. Shaw further argues that "the Judge's essential motivation is to assault the Kid sexually" (103). Shaw claims that the Judge awaits an appropriate time for he wants to get satisfaction from his act of killing the Kid because of which there is delay in the Kid's death even though he could be killed easily by the Judge earlier as well. Moreover, pedophilia is the most significant evidence that the Judge is associated with among the kid and many other children characters in the novel, and noticeably the Kid gets killed in the Judge's embrace. Shaw also draws difference between the historical Judge Holden and the novel's character in that the former had desires of women and blood, and the character Holden in

Blood Meridian shifts his sexual urges from females to male children. In contrast to Holden, the Kid rejects all sorts of homoeroticism as “he has had several earlier experiences with male to male sexuality and is aggressively opposed to its forms and dangers” (114).

Antony Harrison studies *No Country for Old Men* in combination with McCarthy’s another novel *The Road*, in achieving his doctorate degree, to explore the theme of “American Exceptionalism and the ways that this ideology frames the nation’s past, present and future” (183). He reveals that McCarthy doesn’t directly clarify the historical foundation of the USA, his own creation of the story of the American West represents and tacitly indicates violence and trauma arisen out of that during the foundations of New England. Harrison digs out:

In his novel McCarthy develops the theme of history as violence and interrogates exceptionalist notions of past, present and future in the effect Chigurh has on the border community and its characters. Sheriff Bell’s response to the trauma of war and contemporary violence signals the nation’s wounded and fractured identity as it clings to an exceptionalist vision that can no longer be sustained. [.....] Bell’s portrayal as model citizen, war-hero, and yet traumatized subject, allows me to explore how the nation is intent on forgetting trauma and how the official narrative transforms trauma into myth. (184)

According to Harrison, McCarthy questions on the official national history of the USA. It shows that violence was ever present in the foundation of the nation with the Puritan white settlers in New England. There was the psyche of “exceptionalism” and “Othering” of enemies. Violence and trauma that arise in the created story of McCarthy suggest the wounded identity of the American nationhood as claimed by Harrison.

Sean M. George, in his doctorate dissertation, connects the issues of masculinity, agency and trauma in both of these novels. He claims that the presence of violence in McCarthy compels the readers to question the “masculine identity,” which is “neither inherently good nor evil, neither positive nor negative, neither heroic nor cowardly” (80). He also studies both of the novels with the “lack of trauma”(97). He means to say that McCarthy’s protagonists experience and suffer trauma, but they never “allude to trauma” (97). This is how there is “a twist on Hemingway hero as well as a twist on agency” in his McCarthy’s narratives (97).

Taking twist from these varied perspectives of different scholars, especially from the utilization of tool of trauma by George and Harrison, this study focuses on how violence and atrocities emerges to shatter the lives of people in both of the novels of McCarthy in the different light of trauma theory. So this dissertation departs from them with the help of trauma theorists like Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, and the commentators on them to explore through the agendas of wounds, history and belatedness, betrayal, ghostly horror and terror, lack of ability of law enforcement, unspeakability, pervasion of evilness, and empathic unsettlement arising out of them.

Chapter 3

Analysis of Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men* and *Blood Meridian* in the Light of Trauma Theory

This study probes into how Cormac McCarthy's both novels, *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men*, present atrocities, violence, crimes and chaos, deaths and supremacy of evil in the history of the United States of America. Whereas *Blood Meridian* connects these issues by taking the historical references of westward expansion of Americans killing and massacring numerous indigenous tribes innocently, *No Country for Old Men* raises the conditions of killing and massacring relating them with the post-Vietnam war era when the society gets degraded because of the backdrops and evil remains of the war after nearly four decades in the society. In both conditions, McCarthy targets to emphasize the plight of people's traumatic life in America. In fact, these novels are full of wounds in physical, emotional and psychological levels. They create horror and terror in the people in and out the novels through the ghostly presence of evil forces particularly represented by Judge Holden and Anton Chigurh in *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men* respectively. Physically and psychologically abundant amount of pain and torture create psychological disorders of the major characters in them represented by Ed Tom Bell and Llewellyn Moss in *No Country for Old Men*, and the Kid and many others in *Blood Meridian*. As evils pervade everywhere in the novels, betrayals of variety get prominence in them. The traumatized conditions display the inability of speaking, presenting and representing the truth while needed. With all such troublesome and dreary experiences of human beings, the witnesses of the events get unsettled empathetically in the text and outside as well.

To prove the given analysis of the novels, the ideas and concepts related to trauma studies in systematic way is a must. For that, it becomes quite pertinent to mention meaning, origin,

development, and key issues in understanding trauma theory in relation to literature. Since the advent and development of trauma studies coincides with the time of McCarthy's writing, development and different facets of trauma literature could be easily compared with and explored in McCarthy's novels.

The study of literary texts since the last decade of twentieth century has emerged as a prolific new dimension in the form of trauma studies in the literary circle of the academic institutions. Especially by the contributions of Cathy Caruth through her *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), and her *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) have been "groundbreaking" works for "the analysis of literature, trauma and psychoanalysis" (Marder 1). Similarly Shohana Felman and Dori Laub's collaborated *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992) yields new vent on the concept of testimony and how "the act of bearing witness to the traumatic events" of the survivors gets conditioned (1). The latter books on trauma like *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, and *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory and Trauma* (1994) by Dominick LaCapra add more ideas regarding trauma, history, literature and their interconnections among themselves. As the study of trauma interconnects the issues within the field of literature, such influence in feminist issues could heavily be found in the works of Kali Tal, who deals with the "testimonies of women survivors of incest and child abuse" along with the "testimonies of Holocaust survivors" and "American veterans of the Vietnam War" (Berger 570). These writers themselves and their influence in varied forms on others have widened the field of study of literature in the light of trauma theory in the academies at the turn of the twentieth century into twenty first century, and in the early decades thereafter.

The issues raised in the interpretation of literary texts in the light of trauma theory are of varied nature. On the one hand, it deals with the events occurred in the history creating terror and horror. Political atrocities, chaos, violence, terrorism, attacks, lawlessness and so on create so. The terrific and horrific experiences traumatize the concerned people. There is unraveling of degradation and dehumanization of the subjects. On the other hand, when realized later in delayed form, through storytelling, testimony or so on, there is a kind of healing of the wound of the victims and survivors as well. Transforming the negative consequences of the traumatic events and hopelessness into hopefulness through owning of trauma gets space in this study. This shows the recuperative motive remaining as the other side of the coin of trauma in literature. The traumatic representation of the events has ghostly nature because of the haunting fears. The lack of agency during the occurrence of trauma, acting out and working through are other issues to be studied and dug out in the trauma narrative. Trauma theory deals with issues of ambiguity of perception because of unknowability of actual events. Sometimes, the traumatic conditioning also remains as unpredictable, un-representable and unspeakable as well. Such inability of finding out of the real events has the cause, the cause of belatedness of the experience since the experience of trauma remaining in the latent form and gets revealed after the triggering of the similar catastrophic events as the earlier one. Hence things disappear, get repressed, and again appear. Trauma also arises when the places, people, time and things confided with don't reveal their very nature. In other words, betrayal, denial, repression, and evasions traumatize the subjects. Moreover, trauma is not an issue of individual, rather it takes communal, social or collective form. To study the matters remaining in trauma literature, recollection and memory of history remain at the center. These agendas and interpretation of literary texts through these tools

validate the richness and profundity of literary study in the light of trauma theory. *No Country for Old Men* and *Blood Meridian* are heavily based on and influenced by such conditions.

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines trauma as “a very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes someone to have mental or emotional problems usually for a long period of time,” or with reference to medical field “a serious injury to a person’s body.” The trauma theorists take this definition as their base and combine it with social, psychological, cultural, political and ethical dimensions. Elissa Marder tells that trauma is a “wound” by referring it to the ancient Greek meaning (1). With similar sense, James Berger focuses on the importance of trauma in the study of history, and in the interpretation of cultural symptoms to relate it to “the growths, wounds, scars on the social body, and its compulsive repeated actions” (573). Both Berger and Marder have consent in understanding trauma as a wound, but it’s not an ordinary type of wound related only to bodily understanding. Rather they relate it to a wider socio-politico-cultural dimension. Marder posits that “it is a peculiar kind of wound,” in that she means it can’t be understood through the appearance, but “it almost invariably produces repeated, uncontrollable, incalculable effects that endure long after its ostensible ‘precipitating cause’” (1). It has so many facets with the causes guided by so many forces. Marder identifies the seemingly unidentifiable nature of trauma with having “political, historical and ethical dimension” in itself (1).

Jenny Edkins delineates trauma in the senses of Marder and Berger, but with a different term, “injury.” She widens the meaning of trauma as an injury, “First the word meant an injury to the body, but now it is more commonly taken to mean an injury to the psyche, or even the community, the culture, or the environment” (109). Her claims suggest the injury’s physical, psychological, emotional, social, cultural and collective forms. Dominick LaCapra defines trauma by problematizing the history on trauma in his often quoted *Writing History, writing*

Trauma. For him, “Trauma is a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence...” (41). LaCapra means the experience of trauma interrupts the normalcy of life by creating crisis in identity. Rhetorically speaking, such crisis could be understood as the ‘injury’ or ‘wound’ of life of the traumatized people. In other words, the injury traumatizes the victims, witnesses, survivors, and the readers of trauma literatures.

McCarthy’s *No Country for Old Men* and *Blood Meridian* are full of wounds. In fact, the wounds begin from the starting of both novels to their end. The wounds in them shake and shatter the lives of people in physical, psychological and emotional levels. Seemingly physical wounds, bleedings and deaths of variety of humans cause and affect the psyche and sentiments of people, community, society and the nation in McCarthy’s works.

In *No Country for Old Men*, Llewellyn Moss, the protagonist, bears all sorts of wounds. The antagonist, Anton Chigurh, afflicts them upon others from early to the end of the novels. Ed Tom Bell begins the narration, “He’d killed a fourteen year old girl It was a crime of passion” (1). Events after events Chigurh plays with body and life of people. Shortly after being caught, he topples a police officer and attacks him with “cuffed hands over the deputy’s head and leaped into the air and slammed both knees against the back of deputy’s neck and hauled back on the chin” (2). This event not only results in wounds, but also in bleeding and death. As a serial killer, he attacks upon a man at the side of the highway with appalling blood and death proving himself as a wound creator without any reason or a quite representative of evil force. Except Chigurh, other situations and people in the story are responsible for wounds as well. As Llewellyn Moss happens to encounter drug war scene while hunting in the forest, it is full of wounds and death. In the beginning, Moss himself shoots an antelope and makes it wounded. But he gets wounded by another group of attackers later. In the middle of the story, Chigurh shoots

some people perhaps waiting to wound Moss, and wounds Moss as well while getting out of hotel room. So happens with Chigurh as he gets wounded by other attackers at dawn in the same event. Moss wounds a bird sitting on a tree. He kills Wells, another police officer and Carla Jean, Moss's wife at the end. These representative attacks, bleedings and deaths and others prove the supremacy of physical wounds and injuries in *No Country for Old Men*.

The physical attacks, bleedings and deaths become the causes of emotional wounds in the engaged characters and their relatives. The seen wounds need to be analyzed in depth. The words "Blood Everywhere" touch the heart of everyone. The warring events leave indelible marks on the people. Moss's regardless behavior with a going to be dead man at the drug war scene while the later one was asking "agua, agua" for water makes him emotionally touch later on. He gets belatedly touched. The protagonist's body is full of wounds, but his sentiments and psychology get more wounded. With the money in his hand, he rushes hither and thither. His family life is torn. The greatest emotional family wound is the separation between him and his wife. He becomes a lope-sided character living for himself without any longer vision and meaning in life. His existence is shattered. As they never meet, the wound remained unsolved and unhealed. Once he parts away from his wife, he parts forever. Similarly, emotionally and psychologically, the Sheriff Ed Tom Bell gets wounded. Finding out it difficult to maintain peace and order in the modern country, he sorrowfully abandons the job. There is political wound in the story of the novel, for the government mechanism can't do the attributed job. Moreover, there is psychological wound of fear of getting wounded forever with the rule of evil. All in all, the physical wounds on the surface suggest emotional, psychological, social and political wounds as well.

Like *No Country for Old Men*, *Blood Meridians* sheds light on omnipotence of wound and blood in the story. The unnamed protagonist, the Kid has to leave home at the age of fourteen being helpless. The blood oozes from the very beginning as “On a certain night a Maltese boatswain shoots him in the back with a pistol with the blood running out of his shirt” (3). McCarthy balances the exposition of the protagonist in the beginning with that of antagonist, Judge Holden’s through his blaming of Reverend Green as “an imposter” without proof and creating the environment of mob attacking the Reverend to death (5). After fighting against each other and getting reconciled, the Kid and Toadvine kill Sydney and blaze the bar. The Kid sees several places of human carnage while travelling with Sproule as many of American filibusterers get slaughtered by Comanche warriors. Before he joins Glanton gang, the Kid finds the killed people with “holes punched in their under-jaws” and “goats and sheep slain in their pens and pigs dead in the mud” (53). Even within the gang, blood easily oozes. The black Jackson without much conflict with the white one “swapt off his head” (97). Similarly, Owens, one of the members of the gang is shot as the black Jackson’s “... pistol jumped and a double handful of Owens’s brains went out the back of his skull....” (198). Wounds shatter the lives of animals and humans in these death scenes.

The wounds, full of blood, could be described representatively with the performances of Glanton and Judge Holden. Glanton’s inhuman and barbarous treatment is seen as he shoots a woman, and “A fistsized hole erupted out of far side of the woman’s head in a great vomit of gore” (89). Likewise, an old man desperately prays for the country and expresses, “This country is give much blood. This Mexico. This is a thirsty country. The blood of a thousand Christs. Nothing” (93). This indicates the ruthless killing of Glanton gang. Similarly, “Blood bubbled from the man’s chest and he turned his lost eyes upward...” in another firing of Glanton

gang (136). An Apache boy is killed by Judge Holden “and the judge had scalped it” (141). This even infuriates Toadvine for cruel demonic treatment of human being by the Judge. As the members of Glanton gang get massacred by Yuma Indians, the Kid luckily gets life, but being wounded with an arrow in his thigh. The Judge, the main role player to create wounds, continues it through the story with the final noticeable wounding and killing of “the man,” the former Kid in 1873 (282). In short, the wounds, bleedings, death are not easily counted. The readers get tired of encountering them.

McCarthy strengthens the politics of wounds with the cruelty of scalp hunting of the dead ones. The American gang people kill and scalp hunt them to get money for each scalp hunting. The narrator vividly presents the fact about Glanton, “He’s a contract with Trias. They are to pay him a hundred dollars a head for scalps and a thousand for Gomez’s head” (72). At Chihuahua, as the gang counted, “There were one hundred and twenty-eight scalps and eight heads...” for which “They were promised full payment in gold at the dinner...” (142-143). They people are fed and paid well. This shows the State governor’s strategy of defeating Mexico indirectly with the use of gang. With such contract the gang people randomly kill and scalp people in dozens of occasions in the story. One of the heart touching scenes of is seen as scalp on decoration while the gang goes toward Texas. Here the “heads had been raised on poles above the lampstandards.....” (143). A more wounding of wound is seen when Glanton shoots a Mexican woman with his “blade of the knife about her skull and ripped away the scalp” (90). Another Mexican man named McGill got similar harsh treatment in the hand of Glanton as he “had been scalped and the bloody skulls were already blackening in the sun” (136).

The wounds are of peculiar nature in McCarthy for they are not limited in the wounds themselves. They traumatize people variously. The wounds bring great breaks in lives. The

social and cultural existence of people is shaken. Many tribal people get extinct with the carnage as the Kid and other characters feel on the life long journey. The hunting and killing of animals is profound and heartbreaking. The wounds are the holes in the existence of the characters. The Kid, a fated character, has his life holed from the very beginning with the death of his mother at the time of his birth and the cruel treatment of his father. Neither he has family life, nor has he a social life. The Kid's struggle in life gets holed because of his nowhere existence. He runs from his home at the age of fourteen in search of home. He encounters hardships in life, but gets killed finally in the hand of the Judge in the lavatory. This traumatic life can't define the meaning of life from the perspective of the Kid. His life is socially, psychologically, and emotionally wounded as well. Holden's declaration of Reverend Green as an imposter and then his death epitomizes the great social holes. Such holes from the beginning foreshadow the world of the novel as would-be full of crisis. The plights of many Mexican tribes and people remains same. Even the scalp hunters and the American filibusterers meet tragic deaths. Those who hurt and dehumanize others get hurt and dehumanized at the end, except the demonic figure Judge Holden. As John Emil Sepich opines "the dance of history" remaining in *Blood Meridian*, there is great historical wound as well that reminds the Americans time and again. As Elissa Marder has told the wound of trauma as "a very peculiar kind of wound," social, psychological, cultural and historical dimensions of the wound get revealed in the study of this novel (1).

The wounds of *No Country for Old Men* and *Blood Meridian* traumatize by horrifying and terrorizing the victims and survivors regularly. They taunt and haunt like the ghosts. In fact, wars and conflicts yield atrocities and violence. To say it differently, in Michael Humphrey's words, "atrocities horrify and terrify by producing wounded and mutilated bodies Torture, rape, mutilation, and massacre are acts of excessive violence whose effects flow from

the production of horror in victims and witnesses” (1). Once such horrors and terrors crop up in individuals, they haunt regularly. In her “Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History,” Cathy Caruth focuses on the “repeated nightmares” as “a central and recurring image of trauma” in the twenty first century. While the experiences come overwhelmingly in belated forms, they appear repeatedly through “hallucinations” (181). Caruth’s definition could be assimilated with the notion of horror and terror in Humphrey. Connecting to the idea of ghostliness of traumatic experiences, Jane Kilby strengthens the argument that the force of violence generates horrendous effects. She posits, “Outliving violence changes one’s grasp on reality precisely because it leaves one haunted by a death experience, an encounter with death that language cannot accommodate” (8). She means the death experience in the survivor tortures him/her time and again. By taking reference from Judith Herman, Kilby concentrates:

Violence, according to Herman, will always announce its presence, its force being such that no matter how we might refer to wish it away as a reality, it will return to haunt us. Thus she maintains that matching the ‘will to deny horrible events’ is a ‘will to proclaim them aloud’, the latter of which is driven by the reality of violence: by the very fact of its happening. Herman works to personify history by figuring ‘atrocities’ as ‘ghosts’ that are always speaking to us. (10)

The nature of traumatic violence declared by Herman, for Kilby, suggests the similar horrors and terrors felt frequently by the victims. Elissa Marder buttresses the issue while interpreting Caruth in her issue of “absence” because of being belated consequence of “missed experience” (2). Marder adds that this absence furthers the trauma’s “ghostly quality” (2). Marder exhorts, “... because of this absence, people who have suffered traumatic experiences can become so ‘possessed’ by them that they frequently describe themselves as living ‘ghosts’” (2). The spectral

haunting of trauma marks permanently in the survivors of trauma. Speaking on the similar lines, Dominick LaCapra in the preface of *Writing History, Writing Trauma* terms the “aftereffects” of “the traumatic events or conditions” as “the hauntingly possessive effects” (xi). In short, the trauma thinkers like Caruth, Humphrey, Herman, Kilby and LaCapra come to the consensus that trauma arises with the ghostly experiences emerged due to wars, crimes, conflicts, atrocities and violence against human beings in different circumstances as proved by history.

McCarthy’s novels are crowded with criminal activities and violence taunting the bearers and witnesses heavily. In *No Country for Old Men*, the events and dialogues of Anton Chigurh horrify and terrorize. Chigurh’s killing of people coming on his way as he travels iterates in the same pattern. He just kills without great cause or future benefits. It seems as if he is ghost or demon born. His arrogance and aggression shocks everyone. His words are realized so when he talks to a hotel proprietor. He returns the dialogue, “.....You don’t know what you’re talking about, do you?..... You’re deaf, aren’t you? I said what time do you go to bed? I could come back then....” (20). The proprietor turns so frail in front of him. His this taunting behavior is supported by his coin toss technique while deciding life or death of people coming in an encounter with him. The proprietor gets saved luckily in the first coin toss scene, but he can’t be forgotten. Chigurh also states, “Anything can be an instrument..... Small things” (22). He rigorously presents his style to threaten everyone on his way. The words flow inside the people.

Chigurh’s presence haunts time and again. In fact, the whole story is made up prominently of Chigurh’s spectre. He identifies the truck of Llewellyn Moss, follows its footsteps and reaches to a motel where Moss has hired room at Del Rio. The transponder in the money, like the coin, supports him in the job of terrorizing people. Moss even hires another room getting afraid of terrible future, but Chigurh’s search doesn’t leave him. Fear resides in Moss.

The narrator expresses “.... that he would probably never be safe again in his life.....” because of being unknowingly fallen into an abyss (44). His getting up at 4:37 in the morning at a hotel room means he is followed, followed by a ghostly force named Chigurh. Chigurh attacks and wounds him. His force frightens the law enforcement officer Ed Tom Bell which compels Bell to tell about the possible danger to Moss’s wife Carla Jean. Bell tells, “These people will kill him, Carla Jean. They won’t quit” (51). The first sentence of Bell gets supported by the second one because of the inevitable killing of Moss. Chigurh is “The invincible man” as nobody can control and arrest him because he appears, takes lives, and disappears suddenly (58). He performs his nature even the innocent bird that sits upon a tree. He wounds it without any reason, but to prove his ruthless habit and way of life. Carson Wells reports, “The people he meets tend to have very short futures. Nonexistent, in fact” (62). He tells Moss that he’ll go to Odessa “to kill your wife” (63). The amount of fear increases in Moss as he is getting treatment at the hospital. Wells wants to clarify:

You cant make a deal with him. Let me say it again. Even if you gave him the money he’d still kill you. There’s no one alive on this planet that’s ever had even a cross word with him. They are all dead. These are not good odds. He’s a peculiar man. You could even say that he has principles. Principles that transcend money or drugs or anything like that. (64)

Chigurh ghostliness traumatizes almost all the characters. The law enforcement officers seem to have been defeated by him. Hence Wells informs Moss about that rather than giving solution to the problems. In other words, Wells tells there is sure death of Moss and his wife in the hands of Chigurh. Who doesn’t get unsettled and mad in such surety? Wells’ words provide more pain

and torture about Moss's future. But it's troubling and absurd that Wells himself gets killed before Moss and his wife.

The unidentifiable nature of ghost yields confusion and pain. Ed Tom Bell understands Chigurh, "He's a ghost. But he's out there" (107). Even though Moss gets killed by somebody else, Anton Chigurh arrives before Carla Jean to take her life at her residence. Bell again focuses, "He's pretty much a ghost" (129). Anton Chigurh, the ghost, the antagonist, the criminal, the inhuman human, becomes the pivotal around which the innocent people move and meet their destiny. He's created horror through words, expressions and performances proving himself a Satanic force for the people leaving them traumatized.

Blood Meridian is the story of reiterative presence of cruelty of war, deaths, supremacy of vices over virtues and so on. It unfolds terrible and horrific scenes of human carnage, public hanging and scalp hunting. As the brutality of war spreads everywhere, the novel proves itself to be a ghostly tale of McCarthy. Moreover, Judge Holden, could better be understood as a ghost as well in the way Anton Chigurh is in *No Country for Old Men*. He appears, disappears and again reappears like a supernatural being.

One of the beginning human carnages was the scene of "a bush with dead babies" (53). Going further, the Kid finds "people lay murdered in all attitudes of death in the doorways and the floors, naked and swollen and strange" (53). The Kid seems heartbroken as many of the American filibusterers get massacred. While travelling by Casas Grande River, the Glanton gang encounters death scene "where Mexican soldiers had slaughtered an encampment of Apaches some years gone, women and children, the bones and skulls scattered along the bench for half a mile" (82). The American gang in the mission of scalp hunting one night "..... sat at the fire like ghosts in their dusty beards and clothing, rapt, pyrolatrous" (100). The narrator supports

their ghost like quality. The death of a half-bred boy in the hands of Americans was looked over by the people “in silence” and “they were conversing senselessly about the merits and virtues of the dead boy” (106). The horror of brutal war is in the town of Carrizal where the American gang’s “..... horses festooned with the reeking scalps of the Tiguas. This town had fallen almost to ruin. Many of the houses stood empty the inhabitants seemed themselves made vacant by old terrors” (148). The human settlement gets unsettled because of immeasurable fears. Glanton inhumanly treats the Mexican Captain as he “was bleeding from a gunshot wound in the chest and he stood in the stirrups to receive the charge with his sabre. Glanton shot him through the head and shoved him from his horse with his foot and shot down in succession three behind him” (153-154). The novel’s special feature of the brutality of war is not lopsided. The earlier hunters get the similar treatments from the opposite sides. The American filibusterers died with cholera and lack of food. They passed life being haunted by “wolves” and plagued by “wind blow” and “sand” (43). They realized “death seemed the most prevalent feature of the landscape” (44). Glanton meets death as a Yuma old man “raised the axe and split head of John Joel Glanton ...” (230). At Los Angeles, the Kid sees “the hanged men at their rope-ends looked like effigies for to frighten birds. he saw that it was Toadvine and Brown” (261)”. The Kid is heartbroken from these scenes.

Judge Holden’s presence and absence are common. There is no explanation how he appears and disappears. However, his role traumatizes from the very beginning in the novel. He proves himself as life taking ghost blaming an innocent Reverend Green as “an imposter” (5). This blame creates the mob that attacks the preacher to death. Tobin, an ex-priest, describes him, “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,

you'd have give something to of heard them...." (110). As soon as the Kid closes the eyes and opens them, "the judge was gone" when both of them are in extreme conflict (258). All major characters die in the events in the story, but the Judge even doesn't become in the long period of more than thirty years. Instead the narrator tells, He never sleeps. He says that he will never die" (283). This is the most terrifying report that evil force never dies. There's possibility of its haunting at any time and any conditions. He is all in one and knowledgeable man in languages. Tobin describes his "ears like a fox" (118). His announcement "Whatever in creation exists without my knowledge exists without my consent" (166). He declares himself a supernatural being knowing everything in the existence. He seems to be an omniscient personality. As he tells the quality of the divine resides in the devilish Holden. The Judge himself presents, "The truth about the world is that anything is possible" (206). His declaration confuses and terrifies audience including Tobin and the Kid in the way Anton Chigurh's statement "anything can be an instrument" does in *No Country for Old Men*.

His physical attributes are themselves terror creator. He is "enormous man bald as a stone and he had no trace of beard.... no brows to his eyes or lashes to them close on to seven feet in height....." (4). His watch, smile and nakedness haunt the Kid and fellows regularly. The first watch and smile of the Judge after the bar blaze foreshadows haunting of something further. The smile of the Judge even in the death scenes and human tragedy mocks at human values and humanity. The Kid, who turns to be a man, sees the absurdity and contradiction that "the judge smiled" as "the girl was sobbing" at the ending part of the novel (276). Rather than watching people for their care or smiling for wishing good, he presents his technique to enjoy the downfall of people. Quite contrary to the virtues, he places himself in the position of demon. His nakedness is so vulgar and repetitive. It seems to be gross violation of

human values and feelings, and extremely uncivilized. As the Judge pitilessly kills a half bred Mexican boy, “someone had reported the judge naked atop the walls...” (105). While preaching about the knowledge of the universe, he “stood half naked” (206). It’s ridiculous to see so, but still he doesn’t abandon smile. Toadvine and the Kid notice “the judge and the imbecile naked...” (235). The imbecile is so being helpless, but the judge performs so do devalue others and present his supremacy of actions. Just before getting killed, the Kid sees the Judge, who “was naked and he rose up smiling” (282). Moreover, the judge admire the dance of violence, war and bloodshed. Even after killing the Kid, he is seen back in the saloon dancing in the nude, playing among the whores and claiming that he will never die. Hence the Judge has proved to be an appalling ghostlike force through his speech, performances and physical displays as done by Chigurh in *No Country*. Both of the characters are arbiters of chaos, atrocities, violence, killings, barbarity and dehumanization of humanity.

Trauma theory has the premier notion of history. Cathy Caruth questions if the history of war is possible without trauma theory and the vice versa in an interview with Aimee L. Pozorski. She opines, “That trauma (as an experience and as a theory) has a history that it appears on the scene, disappears, returns, etc” (78). Caruth refers history to the events that have delayed consequences in the form of trauma. Such nature of trauma in her words is ‘the return of the repressed’. At the end of her interview, she claims “historical dimension” significantly remains in trauma (84). Caruth holds that it is neither simple understanding of history, nor it is the general memorizing or recollection of the past. Rather it’s deeper implication of physical and mental trauma. She associates the historical agenda in trauma theory taking reference from Freudian psychoanalysis through *Moses and Monotheism*. In her “Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and Possibility of History,” she presents, “The captivity and return, while the beginning

of the history of Jews, is precisely available to them only through the experience of a trauma” (185). In this dynamics of trauma, she digs out the notion of disappearance and absence, and return of the repressed. She posits that the recognition of “possibility of history” is not based on simple reference, but it needs “rethinking of reference” that helps us at “resituating” of history in our understanding (182). Like Caruth’s interpretation of historical notion in trauma study, Minrose Gwin adds relationship between the past events through memories and the possibilities in the future. Gwin cites Kelly Oliver’s argument that “only reading the conditions of the possibilities of that future into the past ... can we open alternatives to the present” (qtd. in Gwin 1). Susannah Radstone decrees that “Trauma theory is associated with the turn to memory in history.....” (21). She clarifies that even if the history is difficult to be noticed because of “without a witness,” the events are known “afterwards through representation, through language, through the always partial and situated discourses and languages of their telling” (21). Radstone’s analysis bolsters the deeper entanglement between history and trauma studies.

The historical events have aftereffects in delayed form in trauma. Cathy Caruth, who revolutionized the field of the study in literature by combining it with psychoanalysis, delineates trauma, in her “Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and Possibility of Trauma,” as “an overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrollable repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (181). Incomprehensibility of trauma in simple way arises because of the response of the victims to the catastrophic events taking place in delayed form. In such situation, the real historical past is no more there, rather the repetitive taking place of the response happens in the forms of hallucinations in “numbed state” or “repeated nightmares” or any other

“catastrophic responses” (181). To actually unfold the traumatic state of the Vietnam War veterans surviving and witnessing the events, she analyzes their experiences. They remembered the experiences of war in the forms of nightmares in numbed states and through hallucinations. Elsewhere in an interview with Aimee L. Pozorski, she defines, “That is, an event to be called traumatic, it must be experienced, and in a sense take place belatedly” (77). Her opinion reveals that the awareness of the feelings of trauma gets connected with to an event whose impact always remains afterwards.

Traumatic experiences can’t be easily identified easily or even if they get identified, they can’t be identified exactly for their being conditioned in the history. Trauma occurs when similar event like that of past takes place and triggers the victim to go back. Until the secondary triggering of trauma, the primary experience remains in latent form seemingly hidden or disappeared or missing condition. Caruth analyzes trauma’s historicity as “it appears on the scene, disappears, returns, etc.....” (78). Marder puts forward that, in response to the actual past event, the victim “fails to be present to the event in the moment of its occurrence” (2). The response of traumatic experience gets caught between the past and the present. The trauma theorists relate such latent nature of traumatic memory with the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud. James Berger refers Freud to clarify ‘latency’

.... valuable is the concept of ‘latency,’ of how memory of a traumatic event can be lost over time but then regained in a symptomatic form when triggered by some similar event. ... each national catastrophe invokes and transforms memories of other catastrophes, so that history becomes a complex entanglement of crimes inflicted and suffered, with each catastrophe understood—that is, misunderstood—in the context of repressed memories of previous ones. (570)

Berger adds his concept of latency with that of Caruth and Marder via Freudian concept of psychoanalysis. The traumatic events of history remain hidden until another catastrophic event occurs, and get the survivors to memorize the earlier historical event. The actual events of the past become difficult to notice. In his *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCapra emphasizes that “Trauma indicates a shattering break or cesura in experience which has belated effects” (186). Similarly, by interpreting the holocaust testimonies of survivors, he concludes, “Traumatic memory may involve belated temporality and a period of latency between a real or fantasized early event” (89). Like Caruth, LaCapra identifies it a belated experience with the characteristics of vagueness and ambiguity. So LaCapra himself tells that “it has belated effects that are controlled only with difficulty and perhaps never fully mastered” (41). We can only handle trauma so as to normalize life in well-manner through realization, and the mastery over it remains a matter of impossibility.

Anarchy and criminal activities of the present century seem to be the historical byproducts in *No country for Old Men* from the perspectives of these above mentioned trauma theorists. The law enforcement officer Ed Tom Bell opines that killing, blazing, rape, murder at present have historical reference to the time of 1960s when the US was in the Vietnam War. He realizes the belatedness of the historical events. During the time he was in the war, he got saved and got medals. On the contrary many other of his fellows lost their lives. But the young school children didn't have any problems related to war, violence and crimes. Their questionnaire forms were filled by such problems:

And the biggest problems they could name was things like talking in the class and runnin in the hallways. Chewing gum. Copying homework. Things of that nature. So they got one of them forms that was blank and printed up a bunch of em and

sent em back out to the same schools. Forty years later. Well, here come the answers back. Rape, arson, murder. Drugs. Suicide. So I think about that. Because a lot of the time ever when I say anything about how the world is goin to hell and tell me I'm getting old. (83-84)

In fact, the young generation was indifferent to the time of war forty years back, but the same generation bears the atrocities and anarchy prevalent in the American society. He personally got saved, but he can't save the people now in the complexity of lawlessness. The drug war, as the belated consequence and main event in *No Country for Old Men*, excites or incites further developments in the story. For example, had there not been the war and the satchel of 2.4 million dollar not found by Llewellyn Moss, at least Moss wouldn't have got the tragic destiny.

In the crowd of careless people in the current American society of the first decade of twenty first century, Ed Tom Bell broods upon the bad times. He concludes that the present time is not for the old people where the youngsters attempt to satiate their self by hook or crook regardless of the benefits of others. He laments in his testimony while losing his friends in war. He reaches to the past:

I'VE LOST A LOT OF friends over these last few years. Not all of em older than me neither. One of the things you realize about getting older is that not everybody is going to get older with you. This country has not had a unsolved homicide for forty one years. Now we got nine of em in one week. Will they be solved? Everyday is against you. Time is not on your side. I don't know as it'd be any compliment if you was known for the second guessing in a bunch of dopedealers. They dont have no respect for the law? They don't even think about the law. Of Course here a while back in San Antonio they shot and killed a federal

judge. I guess he concerned em. Add to that that there's police officers along this border gettin rich off of narcotics. That's a painful thing to know. A crooked peace officer is just a damned abomination. He's ten times worse than the criminal. And this aint goin away..... Where would it go to? (92)

The testimony of Bell exposes the evils cropping up in the present century with the big background and reference in the past. The evils in the society torture innocent people time and again. The supremacy of corrupted people treads the common innocent people down. In such situations, killings and shootings easily happen. When the government apparatus cease to perform benevolently, there is no existence of virtues and humanity. After these forty years in the US history, people are destined to be puppets in the hands of "crooked" police officers indulged in money from narcotics. These anti-human officers have plagued the country. The deaths of judges and true people turns out to be of no value. By evoking the bitter truth about law enforcement condition in the borderland, Bell attempts to relate the crimes committed by Anton Chigurh in the same thread.

Llewellyn Moss also remembers his past while struggling to live at the present. His being conditioned into uncertainty between life and death is an outcome of the issue of drugs. He gets caught by the longtime influence of drug dealing at the drug war scene where he happens to find a satchel of 2.4 million dollars, the torture creator for him. In short, the historical backdrop of drugs makes his downfall. Even while talking to a female hitchhiker, he reveals his belated consequences. He can't think properly. He becomes impatient, insomniac and terror-stricken with the unwanted money he got. The historical influences that combined with his fatal mental weaknesses to decide right things in life shatter his life and make holes in his existence.

Blood Meridian, like *No Country*, can't be studied without referring to the historical background. The production or publication of the book after more than a hundred years of the events that happen in the story proves itself to have a long history. As mentioned earlier in the literature review of this study, Denis Donoghue understands it to have been based on the historical sources, especially Samuel E. Chamberlain's *My Confession*, John Woodhouse Audubon's *Western Journal 1849—1850* and Mayne Reid's *The Scalp-Hunters*. In this context the historical knowledge of McCarthy could be understood as greatly a belated consequence of the past events. However, this study attempts to analyze history, latency and belated consequences within the text.

If the birth of the Kid is realized as historical moment in his life, the later events work as the belated consequences. The way the Kid was brought up and cared in life, he begins to present. His mother died at his birth, but his "father never speaks her name.... He has a sister in this world that he will not see her again" (2). Hence, no family member supports him throughout his hardships. He never gets a proper name as well in his whole life. Because of fated history, he runs from one place to another, but his dwelling becomes everywhere and nowhere altogether. The father dispossession of him as the son in the beginning of the life continues for the whole life until the judge kills him in the lavatory. The life beginning with devilish father gets continuity with the Judge, the devil forever. For nearly twenty nine years after 1849, nobody knows the whereabouts of the Kid and the Judge. But then in 1878, he appears with the whole background of his life. His description of hardships in life with the old hunter suggests his remembrance of past. His rage even after these many years remains same as he shoots Elrod at the end. His enmity with the Judge gets awakened in the final encounter between them when the judge "gathered him in his arms against his terrible and immense flesh and shot" (282).

Moreover, the dissatisfaction of the Americans with the treaty with Mexicans captures more space than any other things in the story. The history of United States' treaty with Mexico is not accepted by people, and the States' government supports the filibusterers indirectly. Captain White asks the Kid, "What do you think of the treaty?" unknowingly the Kid joins them (31). After the death of many filibusterers and getting parted from them in the Chihuahua prison, so does he with the scalp hunting Glanton gang in the mission of foiling the afore-mentioned treaty. Toadvine defines the leader of the gang that 'his name is Glanton. He has a contract with Trias. They're to pay him a hundred dollars a head for scalps and a thousand for Gomez's head" (72). All these causes and effects are the aftereffects of the history of the Westward expansion of United States of America. McCarthy uses the traumatic technique of vague revelation of the past through fictional presentation of historical aftereffects which are completely unidentified.

Along with the historical backdrops creating the traumatic conditions in the novels of McCarthy, the agenda of betrayal remains prominent in them well. Trauma arises with dispossession, segregation, genocide, Holocaust, racism, classicism, sexism, refusal, political violence, slavery and the like result from betrayal as well. Jenny Edkins opines that betrayal arises when the power holders and protectors transform their roles into tormentors. As people's faith turns into faithlessness, betrayal works vigorously and rigorously. Edkins defines:

It seems that trauma is more than a shock encounter with brutality or death; in an important sense, trauma is the betrayal of a promise or an expectation. Trauma can be seen as an encounter that betrays our faith in previously established personal and social worlds and calls into question the resolutions of impossible questions that people have arrived at in order to continue with day-to-day life: 'what we call the trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced

will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a sight of danger'. (110)

In trauma, hope turns into hopelessness; expectation betrays to be unexpected thing; protector changes into tormentor; faith becomes faithlessness, and security into insecurity. Edkins thinks that it is not only the state powers and authorities betraying the citizens, she even analyzes the human made corporate buildings and architecture committing betrayal of their inhabitants in the modern commercial world. By giving evidence of the collapse of the twin towers in the US on September 11 in 2001, Edkins expresses that “buildings seemingly intended to protect betrayed their inhabitants” (110). To cut it short, in the material world, the corporate buildings, security personnels, and institutions have been unable to protect the inhabitants and citizens; instead, are cheating and betraying time and again.

Cathy Caruth, in her “Confronting Political Trauma,” strongly argues for the emergence of trauma with the political betrayal of the soldiers and the public by the American Government while going to the war against Vietnam. As the American Government was unable to justify the motives for escalating war, the PTSD analysts have sought that the survivors of the war have been “compelled by a mission to reveal the truth” (179). The experience by soldiers of “flashbacks, numbing, repeated return of the images from the war,” according to Caruth, are not only the “effects of war,” rather they are the “political consequences of betrayal” (179, 180). She understands the nature of decision making in a crisis in the American politics as political blindness. She further interprets that at the heart of “traumatic responses,” there remain political blindness and betrayal as people got deceived without understanding the meaning, motive and importance of waging war in Vietnam.

The country betrays the people in many forms in *No Country for Old Men*. The topic of the text clarifies the betrayal of old people in the technology driven war sophisticated weaponry world. Innocent, old, experienced and sensible people fall victims in the hands of crazy rascals in the machine driven material world. More importantly, taking reference from Cathy Caruth and merging it with McCarthy, the betrayal happens when the US government becomes failure in proving the significance of American attack in Vietnam; even without the victory. Instead, as McCarthy attempts to claim, it tamed the seeds of evil deeds in the American land resulting into “Rape, arson, murder. Drugs. Suicide” (83). Even after forty years, all these symptoms peep in the borderland country as presented by Bell in his testimony.

By coming to the individual in the novel, Llewellyn Moss, though a good person in Bell’s narration, betrays information time and again to his wife amidst the violent, barbaric disastrous events and sudden attacks. He hides information about 2.4 million dollars that brings unsettlement in life and continues up to the final tragedy. The response to his wife’s question “Where did you get that pistol?” is “At the getting place” (7). Without providing reason of their leaving house, he tells Carla Jean to “go to Odessa wait there till I can call you” (18). Instead of telling the truth about the money, he cheats his wife, “I robbed the bank at Fort Stockton” (19). Hence the beginning of betrayal done to the Moss family is by himself. He doesn’t seem to have any aims to do with the money he gets. He is betraying himself and his innocent wife.

Money solves the problems of people if utilized properly, but in *No Country*, it betrays people after people. Moss encounters the drug war scene in which he finds many people meeting death for the issue of the satchel of 2.4 million dollars. Moss realizes the money baffling him as Chigurh warns him, “You bring me the money and I’ll let her walk. Otherwise she is accountable. The same as you.... I wont tell you you can save yourself because you cant” (78).

The money gets stuck in his throat without the outlet inside or outside. Ironically, Moss enjoys in communication with a lady hitchhiker evading his distant wife.

Questions arise with the capacity of law enforcement in the country by the concerned authorities. The security personnels arrive at the accident spots only after the events take place. Ed Tom bell himself laments on the difficulty of maintaining peace and order. The Sherff focuses, “It takes very little to govern good people. Very little. And bad people cant be governed at all. Or if they could I never heard of them” (25). Sheriff’s declaration saddens the people. If they can’t, who can? The state apparatuses puzzle and betray people in the issue of defense and security. Carla Jean’s lack of trust with law enforcement authority “Can you trust them?” strengthens Bell’s acceptance about themselves (77). With the lack of implementation of law, the criminal activities and atrocities get prominence. The democratic and freedom seeking individuals as dreamed by the American forefathers get entangled in the abyss of atrocities.

Betrayal not only happens because of the fatal weakness of the protagonist, the history of the US and the weak influence of law implementation, it happens because of place settings as well. Private houses, hotels and motels yield solace and shelter to the people, but they don’t in *No Country for Old Men*. Moss and Carla don’t find comfort in their house. Moss comes from hunting late in darkness, leaves home again in darkness, and returns in darkness in the night. Even the night time passes in troubled way in the family. With the money in hand, they get compelled to leave the house. Moss scares his wife, “Carla Jean you need to get out of there.....” (76). Carla’s grandmother’s house doesn’t welcome her, either. So is the case with Moss, who shifts from one motel to another, but is destined to be caught in the hands of the criminals. It’s paradoxical that the security providing buildings with officials turn out to be death spots represented by deputy Sheriff’s in the beginning and Carson Wells’ in the middle of the

story, both of them by Anton Chigurh. Insecurity inside the buildings suggests the turbulent situation of the traumatized society at the turn of the century in the United States of America's borderland with Mexico.

Betrayal in *Blood Meridian* could be found from the State level to the small events of the participants in the expeditions. The historical betrayal is more related to the treaty between the United States government and Mexico. Captain White convinces the Kid to join and fight against the Mexicans providing that fact about the greatest contribution of the Tennessean men as the Kid was also from there. He further underestimates Mexico, "Hell, there is no God in Mexico. Never will be. We are dealing with a people manifestly incapable of governing themselves. Do you know what happens with people who cannot govern themselves? ... Others come in to govern for them" (32). The group of American filibusterers continue to attack Mexico. The US government knows about it, lets the group go betraying the treaty indirectly. The captain reveals the fact that the warlords from Tennessee were "sold out by their own country" as they lost their lives and were bled (32). Hence, they are in the mission of capturing Mexico. Another group known as Glanton gang terrorizes the human settlement, massacres people and scalps them in barbarity. But there is no peace and security of innocent people. What the government is for? Without fulfilling the duty, the government supports the ongoing criminal activities. For example the gang gets paid and fed in well manner for the killing and scalping of people. What could be greater betrayal of governments than this?

The protagonist of the novel gets betrayed from the family, especially by his father compelling him to live on his own in the small age. Because of the father's betrayal, "He can neither read nor write and in him broods already a taste for mindless violence" (2). It foreshadows the hardships coming on in his life. As his birth home betrays him, none other

places welcome him. Because of such destiny, he becomes beggar, thief, and gets involved in criminal activities. Seemingly, the Judge seems to support him, but in the company of Glanton gang, he is left on the way with Tate. The Kid feels, “We’ll get cut off now. We will never find Glanton” (177). He is betrayed by the Judge and Glanton. The greatest betrayal of the Judge against the kid in in the outhouse as “he gathered him in arms and shot” (282). The betrayal takes place in the land where evil pervades everywhere epitomized by the Judge.

The Judge appears as an arbiter of sorrow and pain. He begins to create disaster by lying and blaming Reverend Green as “an imposter.” He further continues, “On a variety of charges the most recent of which in the very first appearance involved a girl of eleven years” (5). As soon as he presented, the rain of people attacked the Reverend and was killed. But, while asked later, he tells, “I never laid eyes on the man before today” (6). This is one of the greatest of betrayals against the life of innocent people. Similarly, the Judge plays with the lives of many characters like a Mexican half bred boy, many girls and an imbecile with joy and kills them in different circumstances. He betrays lives of humans categorizing himself as supernatural being. The events of betrayal of lives happen within the gang as exemplified by black Jackson, who kills both the white Jackson and Owens. In a nutshell, *Blood Meridian* is also a saga of betrayal.

Incomprehensibility of traumatic events in actual form automatically appears due to the latency of the event and its belated understanding. Even though there is no forgetting of reality, it isn’t completely known. For Caruth, “The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known; but in an inherent latency within the experience itself” (187). Her sense clarifies the connection of the present with the past experiences. She posits “that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence” (187). In other words, “absolutely opaque” sense of

understanding trauma sheds its paradoxical nature as well (190). Cathy's argument gets supported by a number of trauma theorists. In the words of Jane Kilby, "...time and space take on another reality for the traumatized victim of violence, and as a consequence determining its context and thereby its meaning is a complex task," (6). Trauma simply doesn't display a framework, rather it happens in a random form, incomprehensible in contexts. Kilby again cites Caruth's argument "the 'attempt to gain access to a traumatic history' is a project of listening *beyond the pathology of individual suffering*, to the reality of a history that in its crises can only be perceived in unassimilable forms" (5). Regarding the surficial reality of the traumatized individuals, one can't dig out the original reality of theirs. R. Clifton Spargo insists "the rhetoric of trauma... already contains an ambiguity of perception..." (14). For Spargo, the incomprehensibility of trauma displays interchangeable status between victims and perpetrators regardless of the roles they played historically during the actual happening of the events.

Dominick LaCapra vividly emphasizes the problematic issue of veracity in identifying trauma in his *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. For LaCapra, because of the "shattering break", between the "events" and their "belated effects," trauma "involves processes of acting out, working over, and to some extent working through in analyzing and 'giving voice' to the past--achieve articulation in different combinations and hybridized forms" (186). LaCapra convinces us that the veracity of trauma could be analyzed through different processes though the truth remains unidentified in reality. While analyzing the Holocaust testimonies, he again finds the traumatic memory as "not be subject to controlled, conscious recall." Rather he sees "it returns in nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety attacks, and other forms of intrusively repetitive behavior characteristic of an all-compelling frame" (89). The incomplete ability of

knowing real events is one of the chief facets of traumatic experience. The result of analysis of the traumatic experiences appears in complications and hybridized forms.

Along with opacity and vagueness of trauma experiences emerged from the actual event and belated response, the theorists have raised questions of representation and speaking of them. Denial, silence, evasion, pretensions, repression due to various factors, and other factors show ‘unrepresentability’ and ‘unspeakability’ of truths in the victims. In other words, the survivors of trauma become unable to reveal the veracity about the events. While researching through the testimonies of Rwandan victims, Lee Ann Fujii identifies that the rumors in post conflict settings force the victims not to tell the truth. She concludes, “Rumors can indicate the source of people’s fears about talking to a researcher. The greater the suspicions, the less likely people will talk openly about past violence or related subjects” (234). Because of the constant fears of the past experiences and their implications in the present and the future, the war survivors lose their actual capacity of telling the truth. She further bolsters the idea that the war victims also deny to tell the truth because of government policies and future fears. Naturally the information gets evaded resulting into “vagueness.” She focuses, “Like evasions, silences, too can be polyvalent. Their meaning can be multiple and contradictory. They can both hide and reveal” (237). In short, Fujii puts the issues like rumors, silences, evasions, denials under the rubric of metadata that “obscure the identities of perpetrators” and other veracities (239). The questions in the reality of the actual causes and consequences remain hidden because of ‘unrepresentability’ and ‘unspeakability’ caused by varied forms of fears.

In trauma, according to Judith Hermann, victims deny the knowledge of their experiences. That leads them to forget what happens to them because of prolonged abuse and victimhood. Especially the victims of sexual abuse express such denial. She tells that “certain

violence of the social impact are too terrible to utter aloud” (qtd. in Kilby 2). The victim silence makes it difficult to identify the truth. Jane Kilby presents that “... Victim silence was figured in terms of social censorship: women remained silent because there was a social taboo on speaking about sexual violence, not because they had lost the capacity to talk per se (3). The further social stigmatization and difficulty of living life in society compel the women survivors of trauma not to speak the truth. For example, while speaking about truth, there is fear of being more raped. Adding on the point, Cathy Winkler defines “silence is a method of protection, protection from more rapes” (qtd. in Kilby 3). Berger opines that trauma theory as “a discourse of the unrepresentable, of the event or the object that destabilizes language and demands a vocabulary and syntax in some sense commensurable with what went before” (573). Berger clarifies that trauma problematizes the general ability of speaking of things, and so the reality becomes unrepresentable. Commenting upon the ideas of Caruth, Wulf Kansteiner and Harald tell that “Caruth believes, for example, that the trauma experience will and should remain inaccessible to representation” (231). LaCapra questions about the information in the aftermath of war. He holds that the survivors as witnesses in testimonies lack agency of responding. He puts, “Response is a pressing issue, and one may feel inadequate or be confused about how to respond and how to put that response into words” (97-98). The survivors lack the ability of telling the truth.

McCarthy’s novels centralize the evils as main subject in the story. Evil pervades everywhere in the stories. That begins from early to the end. So they are the sagas of tragedy. In the traumatized situations there is the problem of representation of the reality and ability of speech. In *No Country for Old Men*, evil walks with Anton Chigurh everywhere. Life of common people gets shattered. Even some of the common people don’t know why they face violence and

atrocities. Such difficulty of representation and speaking is realized when Llewellyn Moss becomes unable to speak to his wife.

What's that, Llewellyn?

The truth.....

You aint goin to tell me, are you?

No.

What happened to your leg?

It's broke out in a rash.

What's going on, Llewellyn?

Where's what's going on, Carla Jean. (18)

The psychic dilemma and confusion of Llewellyn Moss tortures his wife. He is in the difficulty of telling the truth of his experience at the drug war scene and how he got wounded after the attack from another group of attackers. His pain is unspeakable and unrepresentable which otherwise would add more complexity in their lives. His betrayal of information matches with that when he tells "No. I just said that to get you stirred up. Go on now" as his wife becomes curious "Did you get shut?" (19). He pretends and neglects the feeling of his wife, who worries, "I got a bad feelin, Llewellyn" (25). In response, he tells "I got a good one. So they ought to balance out" (25). These words are for the sake of show, but the hidden truth remains unrepresented from the perspective of Moss. The former Vietnam War veteran knows about the life style of his society, and perhaps he might have thought about the future consequences. That's why, he decides to leave the house and send his wife to her grandmother's house in Odessa. He undergoes psychological digression having the money in hand and experiencing the attacks upon himself, upon others, and the possible attacks upon himself in the future. Moss also becomes

sorrowful and unspeakable when Carson Wells informs him about Chigurh's reason of going to Odessa "To kill your wife" (63). Rather than answering Wells, he keeps silent with pain and agony while getting treated at the hospital after getting shot by Anton Chigurh outside the motel at Del Rio. Beyond so, Ed Tom Bell also becomes unspeakable in front of Carla Jean perhaps realizing incapacity of defending her husband from the criminals.

As the byproducts of Vietnam War and drug war influence the life style of people in *No Country for Old Men*, the American Westward expansion creates the byproducts of killing and massacring of so many indigenous communities through the treaty between the US government and Mexico, and dissatisfied gangs indirectly supported by the US government. As Anton Chigurh epitomizes the villainy in the first novel, Judge Holden fulfills that space appearing time and again, and making and influencing notorious events and conditions. Like with Anton Chigurh, evil travels with the Judge in *Blood Meridian*.

The beginnings of life of the Kid and plot of the novel are gloomy, so are their endings. Hence, it is the tragic tale of the Kid. He becomes dumb and unspeakable as his school teacher father "lies in drink, The boy crouches by the fire and watches him" (2). As a child, he can't raise his demands, rights and opinion. He has an inability of taking action against him. At this crucial point, the readers dig out his traumatized self in the beginning of his life. The Kid loses the guts to raise questions against Glanton and the Judge as they abandon him with Tate in the dreary risky forest with the loss of many company members of scalp hunting. As they betray, the Kid bears, "We'll get cut off. We never will find Glanton" (177). The Kid's position is so sympathetic at this moment. As the Kid thinks the Judge has caused more sorrow in his sorrowful life, he wants to take revenge against the Judge. He "tried to steady the barrel of the pistol and let off the shot and then dropped to the sand" (227). His fellow ex-priest, Tobin,

suggests him not to dream of shooting the Judge, so the second attempt of the Kid to take revenge gets stopped. Both of the characters seem frail before the Judge. At the end of the story, the Kid again couldn't take action as the Judge easily shoots him in the lavatory.

The spectators perform their inability of speaking for innocence and justice in front of demonic force, Judge Holden's proof less blame of Reverend Green's being "an imposter." As the Judge himself tells, "I never laid eyes on the man Never even heard of him," "There was a strange silence in the room. The men looked like mud effigies" (6). Common people lack the ability of fighting against a big criminal and liar. The claim of knowledge of the Judge frightens many of them. His speech on astronomy keeps them silent. There is no query from the audience. Again he speaks on war, ". . . . War endures. . . . War was always here. Before man was, war waited for him. The ultimate trade awaiting its ultimate practitioner" (208). In another instance he terms war as "God." When the Judge asks for the response of Tobin, he "looked up. The priest does not say" (110). The Judge, as an evil force, has silenced others by comparing his evil nature and power with the divine power in words and performances.

Caruth, Spargo, Edkins, Kilby and LaCapra unanimously concur the fact that trauma spreads beyond the individual arena even though it gets afflicted in the individuals. Cathy Caruth at the end of "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History," expresses that "that history, like trauma, is never one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (192). Caruth associates trauma with the historical referentiality so as to establish the argument that trauma is the return of the repressed. In such return, she links trauma and history not to the personal level, but to the collective one. In short, history and trauma have not only personal, but public owning. Speaking on the similar lines, Jane Kilby focuses on the

trauma from excessive violence and atrocities of various types. While explaining the issue of sexual violence in the line of Carine Mardrossian, Kilby puts:

Alternatively put: *violence is catastrophic because it doesn't register as a personal reality*. So while it might be thought that there is no experience more known, more our own, more personal than the experience of violence, the contrary is true: it is the experience least known, least our own and least personal, and as such, I want to argue, it remains permanently beyond our recuperating powers. (9)

Kilby focuses on the tragic events which don't remain individual ones only. Even if call them 'own', it is mistake as violence interrupts our possessive grammar. It creates a paradoxical situation that we forget our own personal experiences. As there remains gap between the event of violence and our realization, the real trauma always in abstraction. That's why, it remains far from personal owning, and beyond being healed. Though we want to repress the issue of violence because of many social stigmatization, she tells "violence cannot be pushed permanently away as a secret: it will rise up" (11). In a nutshell, trauma has no secret, individual personal orientation for Caruth and Kilby.

Jenny Edkins identifies collective language and setting in trauma. She vents "trauma can never be a purely individual event, in the same way as there cannot be a private language, because it always already involves community or the cultural setting in which people are placed" (107). In the same line, Jeffrey C. Alexander focuses on trauma's social extension and implication. He tells that the events themselves are not the traumas, rather "trauma is a socially mediated attribution" (91). This suggests that the events are represented, understood, analyzed and interpreted later through society in which the victims are related to. He further puts, "What is

at stake is the collectivity's identity, its stability in terms of meaning, not action. As the collective identity is affected, the experiences of events turn to be traumatic. His notion of "sociocultural process" which arouses the feelings of being traumatized in the victims, survivors and witnesses help us to identify its collective appeal.

The collective concern in trauma gets highlighted by LaCapra through the notion of empathic unsettlement. The readers, as secondary witnesses, of trauma literature get unsettled by reading the trauma of the survivors and the victims. The readers empathize with the pain and sorrow of the victims. He exposes, "Being so responsive to the traumatic experiences of others, notably of victims, implies not the appropriation of their experiences but what I would call empathic unsettlement ... With respect to the perpetrators, who may also be traumatized by their experience....." (41). LaCapra doesn't limit the trauma with the victims only. It is a matter of being responsive with the traumatic experience of victims as well. Even the perpetrators also get unsettled afterwards. In a broad sense, it is the trauma of race, society, region, and so on in which the individual belongs to. Trauma gets lessened when everyone talks about trauma and brings it into discussion. The acknowledgement of trauma attempts to patch the holes in the existence and identity created by the traumatic events. Realization of other's trauma as our own lessens and unburdens the sorrow and intensity of trauma.

By taking the ideas from these trauma thinkers to analyze McCarthy's novels, this study discloses how good and innocent characters' plights unsettle other witnesses within the texts, the readers outside the texts, and the entire human world in general. So the traumas of both novels suggest the collective forms. The events regarding murder, strangling, shooting, killing, threatening, and their hauntings horrify and terrify people. The events and the cruelties of the

antagonistic forces in both novels empathetically unsettle them, who stand for humanity, rule of law, truthfulness and security of people.

Evil deeds collaborate to culminate sheer fear in the lives of majority of characters and readers in *No Country for Old Men*. Especially, Anton Chigurh, who represents the group of criminals seizing the happiness and life from people, plays as significant agent to unsettle others through variety of actions and crimes. Ed Tom Bell, Moss, Moss's wife and other people bear such unsettlement from the heart along with the assent of the neutral readers. Bell pleads for well implementation of law and order in the society, but finds it quite difficult. He puts, "I DONT KNOW if the law enforcement work is more dangerous now than it used to be or not" (14). With the realization of difficulty in the contemporary time, there is danger in the life of people. Bell empathizes with people suffering from the atrocities. The narrator empathizes with the Moss's rush to save life from the attackers near the drug war scene. "His feet were already hurting. His leg hurt. His arm. The river dropped away behind him. He hadn't even taken a drink" (14). The report comes from the profundity of feelings of pain as if Moss's pain was felt by the narrator. Bell doesn't believe in Carla Jean as she confidently speaks about her husband's status and security, instead reveals, "These people will kill him Carla Jean. They wont quit" (51). His emotionality suggests to get safety from the unavoidable circumstances. He works not only to follow his general profession of maintaining peace and order, he takes his works with the feelings of humanity. Bell understands the feelings of Carla even after her husband's death and "covered Moss's face," and hitchhiker's face as well realizing that Carla won't "like that part of it" (104). Hence, everywhere in Bell's narration and testimony, his sympathy and empathy lie with the victims and out of order situations.

Bell gets unsettled because of his inability of maintaining peace and order, and being touched by the deaths of innocent people in the hands of criminals. Beyond that the readers get empathetically unsettled by those circumstances, and Bell's unsettlement as a secondary trauma in the words of LaCapra. His frustration takes place as black seeds in the country are cropping up against humanity because of the "crooked" police officers, who have caused and tamed drug dealings and criminal activities to corrupt and destroy the society. Hence Bell feels that a crooked peace officer is "ten times worse than the criminal" (92). Such frustration doesn't come in hurry, rather the development of bad things has touched him empathetically and upset him heavily. In addition to Bell, Carson Wells empathizes with Moss at the hospital suggesting him about bad luck to come. Chigurh's deciding of life and death of people with the toss of coin shocks the victims and readers forwarding a question what the significance of life is for. Moreover, the drug war scene and demand of water by a victim fill the heart of readers with tears. While Chigurh attacks and kills on the spot, the readers always get unsettled emotionally. Like evil and cruelty of Chigurh rule throughout the story of the novel, participants in the novel and outside collectively are heartbroken everywhere.

There is no difference between McCarthy's novels in moving the readers sentimentally. Reverend Green's murder by mob because of the false blame of Judge Holden saddens and upsets the readers in the beginning of *Blood Meridian*. It indicates the nascence of demonic force to rule throughout the plot of the story. Judge Holden's preaching on war as holy thing supports his homicidal vision of life. Because of the rule of his vision, no one lives alive among the people with whom he continues the journey in the beginning and in the middle. He is an epitome of that evil force remaining alive alone. The Kid's life is itself unsettled, the disturbance he creates makes it more traumatic. The Judge's watch and smile add pain in the life of the Kid. His

keeping eyes on the Kid doesn't stop even after nearly thirty years of their partition. It seems as if the Kid's death was predestined in the hands of the Judge. Moreover, the Kid, who never got welcomed at any houses in life meets death in the lavatory in the Judge's hands. At this crucial point are the readers traumatized vehemently. The narrator puts at the end, "He never sleeps. He says that he will never die" 9283). His declaration profoundly disturbs the mental and emotional states of audience. Mexicans and Indian tribal people like Apaches and Yuma bear genocide. Human scalping after killing people, human carnage, rapes of young girls and their deaths by the rapists, making show of the dead bodies, oozing of blood everywhere in the story of *Blood Meridian* prove it to be a "hell" story (my focus). The psychology of the readers is upset and disturbed. Their hearts are torn. They realize the status of characters and become heartfelt in the manner as though the characters are the readers themselves.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

After digging out the issues of excessive violence and their aftereffects, the researcher comes to the conclusion that violence creates wounds, horror, terror and betrayal in McCarthy's novels. It has belated consequences while referring to the history of violence. These conditions traumatize the people within and out of the texts. There is opacity and vagueness of understanding reality of events and empathic unsettlement in traumatized condition.

The research has explored that in *No Country for Old Men*, the protagonist, Llewellyn Moss, lies in the vicious circle of drug war smuggling; gets wounded physically, emotionally, psychologically, in familial matter and socially with the satchel of money of drug war smuggling that he finds in coincidence; and gets his life shattered in all the ways. Once he gets parted from his wife, he gets parted forever. As morning shows the day, the money found early in the plot brings restlessness in the rest of his life. He happens to betray his own wife conditioned by bad luck and bad times in the borderland. Even the human settlements like private houses and motels can't provide shelter and seem to betray in bad times of the country. However, the great betrayal in his life has been caused by the lack of ability of law enforcement by appointed authorities. The seen authority named Ed Tom Bell and the people like him are again betrayed badly by great chain of security personnels' involvement with the smugglers of drugs. Such foul game performed by the responsible officers regardless of the service to the people and their suffering from excessive violence in the long run suggests the American government's betrayal of people in the broadest sense.

Moreover, the horror of attacks with sophisticated weapons upon the people violently and repeatedly establishes the fiction to be a trauma literature. Because of repetitive appearance,

disappearance and reappearance of the villainous and horrifying Anton Chigurh as well as his atrocious performances compel the people be silent as felt by the hotel proprietor, Carla Jean, Carson Wells, Deputy Sheriff, and many other innocent people. Either they lose their lives and keep silent or they keep quiet to save their lives. The characters are in confusion in many situations. Moss himself can't tell reality of things to his wife regarding the money he gets and how he gets wounded or in what condition he lives after being followed by the "ghost," Chigurh. There is vagueness and confusion in the law enforcement authorities like Bell, who seems to be unable to take action by himself and unable to report it to the officials above him in ranks. So terrifying and ghostly is his coin-toss used by Chigurh to decide life or death of people. Indirectly understanding, Ed Tom Bell himself remains silenced because of the drug war gangs and atrocious Chigurh. In all these situations, people lack their ability of expression of words and deeds in need with confidence in front of the supremacy of evil forces in the lawless borderland affected by drug smuggling supported by high security officials themselves. In other words, Ed Tom Bell's inability of rescuing people before the events and his final retirement furthers no possibility of future law enforcement with violent ghost or demon like Chigurh hidden and alive. Hence the underperformance of virtues against vices suggests that evil is profound and never dying in the country of the novel. Instead of the solution of the condition of the borderland, more confusion seems to have been created.

Likewise, the research has explored *Blood Meridian* as a blood saga. Without oozing of blood, no interactions of people get complete. In fact, blood oozing begins from early page and remains until the great blood of the Kid at the end, as he turns out to be a man, in the hand of Judge Holden suggesting it to be continued with never dying Holden.

The blood in the novel hasn't only meant a simple physical wound of participants, it has been emotional, psychological, social, national, and in broad understanding the wound of humanity as well. The death of Reverend Green without reason is so terrifying for humanity that anything could happen with the demon's presence in the mortal world. The abandonment of the Kid with his father suggests the family wound foreshadowing his coming life to be full of wounds. His world gets supported by the filibusterers, Glanton gang, and the haunting Judge. Similarly death and extinction of aboriginal tribes create greatest wounds in the history of human civilization. Rapes, killings, shootings, scalp hunting and massacring of groups of people, and traumatize repetitively.

Like in *No Country for Old Men*, the betrayal of Judge with the Kid by inviting him time and again and finally taking his life proves the Godlessness of the historical moment in the US-Mexico borderland. American government betrays Mexico by exciting or inciting the filibusterers and Glanton gang to weaken and attack Mexico even after doing great treaty with this nation. Moreover, the fellows attack their other fellows being in the same mission without any bad reasons. Many of the innocent tribal people along with the preacher Reverend Green didn't know about their causes of death. The bad politics of the nation and its backdrops betray the denizens. The pervasion of evil everywhere causes fears, horrors and further threatening with Judge Holden's insomnia and immortality as claimed by himself.

The turbulent and violent settings in both of the narratives of McCarthy unsettle the participants by hitting their hearts. The survivors, victims, witnesses and the readers of McCarthy's novels get empathetically unsettled because of the shattering of and making holes in the fabric of life of people. This research, so, concludes that McCarthy's utilization of violent and atrocious events and conditions questions the human world if the values of humanity have

died. He further seems to invite the human world to realize and identify with the deeds performed by human beings against their other fellows in the history of mid-nineteenth century and at the turn of the present century. We need to explore more on the justification of how law enforcement becomes easier and for humanity. His politics behind the disclosing of the traumatizing events doesn't place him in the position of supporter of violence, rather an anti-violence advocator summoning the conscious human beings in the similar lines.

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