

CORMAC McCARTHY

BORDERS AND LANDSCAPES

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

23 – 25 July 2014

UWS Parramatta campus



WRITING AND SOCIETY
RESEARCH CENTRE



WELCOME

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 2014 'Cormac McCarthy: Borders and Landscapes' international conference, the first of its kind to be hosted in Australia. The conference is brought to you by the Writing and Society Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney, in collaboration with the Cormac McCarthy Society. We have three very exciting days in store, with events including a masterclass, art exhibition and film screening, as well as keynote and panel presentations, making this a truly interdisciplinary affair, one that promises to broaden the network of international McCarthy scholarship.

McCarthy's work is attracting an increasing number of scholars, critics and fans, from a range of disciplines within the humanities and beyond, from political philosophy to linguistics, from science to musicology. The aim of the conference is to promote interest in this developing field of research, investigating the way his works speak to other works within the broader fields of American literature, border literature, International literature and other forms of comparative literature. It will also explore his literary antecedents and the movements out of which his work has emerged, such as modernism, romanticism, naturalism, genre-based literature (western, southern gothic), folkloric traditions and mythology.

We are pleased to welcome keynote speakers: Dr. David Holloway (from the U.K.), Rick Wallach, Dr. Stacey Peebles, and Dr. Steven Frye (from the U.S.) and Dr. Petra Mundik (from Western Australia), as well as exhibiting artist, photographer and

author Peter Josyph, whose exhibition 'The Lost Blood Meridian Notebook' is currently on display in the West Wing of the Female Orphan School. In addition to visiting guests from the U.S., U.K. and other parts of Australia, we have participating speakers from as far afield as France, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Singapore, Qatar and Guam. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for attending 'Cormac McCarthy: Borders and Landscapes' – presenters and participants.

Many thanks go to Anthony Uhlmann, Chris Peterson, Rick Wallach, Suzanne Gapps and Ben Denham, for their ongoing assistance through all stages of the organisational process, as well as to Arka Chattopadhyay and Adam Daniel for their help during the conference itself. In addition, special thanks must go to Stacey Peebles and Peter Josyph for their facilitation of the Masterclass, and to Palmer Murphy and Peter Josyph for their provision of artwork and images for the conference poster, exhibition postcard, and masterclass invitation.

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land. Parramatta campus stands on the traditional lands of the Darug people. Uncle Greg Simms, a respected Darug elder in the community, will be giving the Welcome to Country to open conference proceedings.

Lou Jillett

Conference Convener

'Cormac McCarthy: Borders and Landscapes' 2014
Writing and Society Research Centre
University of Western Sydney

CORMAC McCARTHY BORDERS AND LANDSCAPES

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

University of Western Sydney
Parramatta Campus
Room EA.G34

DAY 1

WED 23 JULY

9:00 - 12:00 PM

POSTGRADUATE MASTERCLASS

Working with Literature: Beyond Borders

In this masterclass, Peter Josyph and Stacey Peebles will use the critical landscape surrounding Cormac McCarthy's career (which includes his novels, plays, screenplays, and film adaptations by others) to discuss the different ways one can engage with an author's work. Josyph and Peebles will address various scholarly and creative responses to literature as well as the different career paths that those responses make possible.

Facilitators

Peter Josyph & Stacey Peebles

Room EA.G.33

12:00 - 12:30PM

REGISTRATIONS

lobby of Building EA, ground floor

12:30 - 1:00PM

WELCOME LUNCH

lobby of Building EA, ground floor

1:00 - 2:15PM

WELCOME & KEYNOTE SESSION 1

EA.G.34

Uncle Greg Simms, Darug Elder

Welcome to Country

Anthony Uhlmann – Director of Writing
& Society Research Centre, UWS

Welcome and introductory remarks

Dave Holloway –
University of Derby, England

Mapping McCarthy in the Age of
Neoconservatism

2:15 · 3:45PM

AFTERNOON – SESSION 1

Bioregionalism & Nomadism in McCarthy's Western Literature

(Moderator: Petra Mundik), EA.G.34

Katja Rebmann – University of Warwick, England	McCarthy's Topography of Violence
David Gugin – University of Guam, Guam	The Blood of a Nomad: Cormac McCarthy and <i>All the Pretty Horses</i>
Kate Montague – University of New South Wales, Australia	A Geographical Sketch of America – <i>Blood Meridian</i> and Baroque Tragedy

3:45 · 4:00PM

AFTERNOON TEA

EA lobby

4:00 · 5:30PM

AFTERNOON – SESSION 2

Liminal thresholds

(Moderator: Peter Josyph) EA.G.34

Lou Jillett – University of Western Sydney, Australia	Wandering Bodies, Wandering Landscapes: The River Motif in McCarthy's novels
Julia Tulloch – University of Melbourne, Australia	Rinthy and the reconfiguration of the nature/ culture divide in <i>Outer Dark</i>
Anthony Uhlmann – University of Western Sydney, Australia	McCarthy, Joyce and Flaubert

5:45 · 7:45PM

EXHIBITION OPENING

Female Orphan School, Gallery room EZ.G
Parramatta campus, refreshments provided

Artist: Peter Josyph – New York, U.S.A.	THE LOST BLOOD MERIDIAN NOTEBOOK
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THE LOST BLOOD MERIDIAN NOTEBOOK

Works on Paper by Peter Josyph

The Lost Blood Meridian Notebook is a new series of works on paper tributing Cormac McCarthy's great novel *Blood Meridian Or The Evening Redness in the West*.

DAY 2

THURS 24 JULY

9:00 · 10:30AM

MORNING – SESSION 3

Frontier Justice

(Moderator – Lydia Cooper) EA.G.34

Daniel Davis Wood –
Ecole d'Humanité, Switzerland

Tracing the Borders of Justice
in McCarthy's Southwestern Novels

Lucy Neave – Australian National University
& University of Western Sydney, Australia

'Creatureliness' and Frontier Justice
in *All the Pretty Horses*

Jon Bishop –
Salem State University, United States

The Definition of Modernity: *No Country
for Old Men* and the Violation of Borders

10:30 · 10:45AM

MORNING TEA, EA lobby

10:45AM · 12:15PM

MORNING – SESSION 4

Philosophy & Politics of Power

(Moderator – Chris Peterson) EA.G.34

Julius Greve –
Cologne University, Germany

'Another Kind of Clay' – On Blood
Meridian's Okenian Philosophy of Nature

Lydia Cooper –
Creighton University, United States

Death of a Cross-Dressing Bear – Gender,
Sex & Violence on the Western Frontier in BM

Joshua Comyn –
University of Melbourne, Australia

The Frontier as a Landscape of Control
in *Blood Meridian*

12:15 · 1:00PM

AFTERNOON – KEYNOTE SESSION 2

EA.G.34

Petra Mundik – UWA, Western Australia

Terra Damnata: The Anticosmic Mysticism
of Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*,
or the Evening Redness in the West

1:00 · 1:45PM

LUNCH, EA lobby

1:45 · 2:30PM

AFTERNOON - KEYNOTE SESSION 3

EA.G.34

Rick Wallach

A World Read from the Inside Outward:
How Patrick White and Cormac McCarthy
Inhabit the Landscape

2:30 · 4:00PM

AFTERNOON – SESSION 5

Textual Borders, Rhetoric, Trauma & Psychoanalysis

(Moderator: Anthony Uhlmann) EA.G.34

Beatrice Trotignon

University of Paris-Dauphine, France

Exploring the Textual Borders of McCarthy's
novels

Daniel Johnson –

Salve Regina University, United States

The Judge's Hold – A Struggle for Voice
in *Blood Meridian*

Benjamin West –

State University of New York, United States

Personal Foul – Lester Ballard's
Post-Concussion Syndrome

4:00 · 4:15PM

AFTERNOON TEA, EA lobby

4:15 · 5:45PM

AFTERNOON – SESSION 6

Memory, geography, auto/biography, psychogeography (Moderator: Lou Jillet)

Martin Edmond –

University of Western Sydney, Australia

Cormac McCarthy's West Previsited

Dave Harris –

Deakin University, Victoria

Life on *The Road*: Breaching the Borders
of the Child

Lucas Thompson –

University of Sydney, Australia

'Dont Even Ask': Cormac McCarthy
and David Foster Wallace

6:00PM

CONFERENCE DINNER

Boilerhouse Restaurant, Parramatta Campus

DAY 3

FRI 25 JULY

9:00 · 10:30AM

MORNING – SESSION 7

Comparative Literature & Landscape (Moderator: Rick Wallach) EA.G.34

Jan Nordby Gretlund – University
of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Man in the Landscape

Tom Lee –
University of Western Sydney, Australia

Death and the Natural World in
Blood Meridian

Joel Found –
University of Southampton, England

'It is the bed of a dried up sea' – Melville's
Sea & Desert in McCarthy and Winton

10:30 · 10:45AM

MORNING TEA, EA lobby

10:45 · 12:15PM

MORNING – SESSION 8

Ecocriticism and Geographies of Space & Time (Moderator: Dave Holloway), EA.G.34

Matthew Farley –
University of Virginia, United States

The Apocalypse as Human
Wilderness: Cormac McCarthy's
Philosophical Progress in *The Road*

Thomas Wells –
Georgetown University, United States

An Ode to Hylozoism:
Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*

Adam Morton –
University of Sydney, Australia

Warp of the World – Geographies
of Space and Time in the Border Trilogy

12:15 · 1:00PM

AFTERNOON – KEYNOTE SESSION 4, EA.G.34

Steven Frye –
California State University, United States

Cormac McCarthy, Influence,
and Literary Empowerment

1:00 · 1:45PM

LUNCH, EA lobby

1:45 · 2:30PM

AFTERNOON – KEYNOTE SESSION 5, EA.G.34

Stacey Peebles, Centre College,
Danville, Kentucky, United States

Moving through Media:
Cormac McCarthy and Performance

2:30 · 4:00PM

AFTERNOON – SESSION 9

Further Comparative Approaches (Moderator: Steve Frye), EA.G.34

Bernadette Russo –
Community College of Qatar, Qatar

A Cowboy & his Horse – Deconstructing
the Iconic Cowboy through the Horse
Symbol & Borderless Morality

Thomas Lynch –
University of Nebraska, United States

Uncanny Ecologies – The Haunted
Settler-Colonial Landscapes of McCarthy
and Randolph Stow

Mark Steven –
University of Sydney, Australia

Thy Crimson Disk: Milton, Blake, McCarthy

4:00 · 4:15PM

AFTERNOON TEA, EA lobby

4:15 · 5:30PM

AFTERNOON – SESSION 10

Cinematic & Interdisciplinary studies (Moderator: Stacey Peebles), EA.G.34

David Otto Fitzgerald –
University of Sydney, Australia

Cinematic Borders, Disordered Cinema &
Historical Perception in *The Orchard Keeper*

Miranda Seitz –
University of Illinois, United States

Crossroads, Middles & Meridians –
The Counselor: McCarthy's Remaking
of *Blood Meridian*

6:00 · 9:00PM

FILM –SCREENING, EA.G.33

Child of God – Directed by James Franco, 2013

KEYNOTE PAPERS & SPECIAL EVENTS

KEYNOTE SESSION 1

Dave Holloway – United Kingdom
Wednesday 23 July, 1:30-2:15pm – EA.G.34

Title – Mapping McCarthy in the Age of Neoconservatism

Abstract – This paper will investigate some of the ways in which McCarthy's recent work resonates, ambiguously, with the political tensions of the War on Terror, paying particular attention to the accommodation of neoconservative positions and precepts in *The Road*.

Bio – David Holloway is Senior Lecturer in American Studies at the University of Derby, in England. His books include *9/11 and the War on Terror* (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), *The Late Modernism of Cormac McCarthy* (Greenwood, 2002) and, as contributing co-editor, *American Visual Cultures* (Continuum, 2005). Holloway has written for journals including *The Southern Quarterly*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, the *Journal of American Studies*, and *PUBLIC*, and has contributed chapters to a variety of collections on American cultural and intellectual history.

SPECIAL EVENT EXHIBITION OPENING

Peter Josyph – artist, United States

Exhibition Title – The Lost Blood Meridian Notebook

Wednesday 23 July, 5.45pm – 7.45pm – all welcome, refreshments provided

Female Orphan School, EZ.G Gallery room, Parramatta campus

Exhibition Abstract – *The Lost Blood Meridian Notebook* is a new series of works on paper tributing Cormac McCarthy's great novel *Blood Meridian Or The Evening Redness in the West*. Employing a wide range of media—acrylic, oil, wax-oil crayon, Lyra pencil, ink, paper and cloth collage, and textual elements from a variety of sources—the series improvises around the theme of the notebook as an archive, a journal, a log, a lab, a ledger, a diary, a theme-book, a sketchbook, and, ultimately, a form of expression that is also a conversation with oneself: the private before the public. Whether a notebook is used for the jotting of intellectual/observational memoranda or the trying out, chronicling, or mapping of ideas, it is always either a keep or a kind of workshop. Often it is both. In addressing the question “*Whose Blood Meridian notebook*—that of the artist, the author of the novel, or one of its characters?” with a layering of answers competing and sometimes warring for

space and recognition—often within a single piece—the series celebrates the complexity of reading a great work, responding to it emotionally, retaining it as an accomplice or a touchstone in life, and, in this case, choosing it as a theme for one’s own artistic pursuit. Unlike the pages of most notebooks, however, the series has been painted on some of the best-made paper in the world from paper mills in Canada, France, and Mexico, most of it handmade and no longer available: lost! But whoever views *The Lost Blood Meridian Notebook* outdates the title in the act of finding it, reclaiming it and returning it to life.

Bio – Peter Josyph is a painter who works concurrently as an author, an actor-director, a filmmaker and a photographer. His series *All the Pretty Horses: A Tribute* exhibited at the Longwall Gallery in Berea, Kentucky, as did his series *Cormac McCarthy’s House*, which also exhibited at the Centennial Museum in El Paso, Texas; at the Kulturens Hus in Luleå, Sweden; and at the CAPITAL Centre in Warwickshire, England. Site-specific installations of large canvases and portable murals include the Cannon Building of the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC; the New York State Vietnam Memorial Gallery in Albany, NY; and in the historic landmark Central Savings (now Apple) Bank on Broadway in Manhattan, an installation called *New York Signatures* that made him a *New Yorker* Talk of the Town.

His new series *The Lost Blood Meridian Notebook* is part of an ongoing challenge to respond to the literary genius of Cormac McCarthy in paint, in photography, in film, and in his own work as an author. In January 2014 he will respond as an actor by playing White in McCarthy’s *The Sunset Limited* at the Weisiger Theater in Danville, Kentucky.

Josyph’s books include *Cormac McCarthy’s House: Reading McCarthy Without Walls*; *Adventures in Reading Cormac McCarthy*; *The Way of the Trumpet*; *Liberty Street: Encounters at Ground Zero*; *What One Man Said to Another: Talks With Richard Selzer*; and *The Wounded River*, which was a *New York Times* Notable Book of 1993. He directed the award-winning *Liberty Street: Alive at Ground Zero*, and co-directed *Acting McCarthy: The Making of Billy Bob Thornton’s All the Pretty Horses*. His photography has been used for the Portuguese translations of three of McCarthy’s novels: *Suttree*; *Blood Meridian Or the Evening Redness in the West*; and *The Crossing*. Josyph is represented by Galerie Signum Winfried Heid in Heidelberg, Germany, and by Michele Brangwen at his website peterjosyph.com. A full bio of Josyph’s work is at wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Josyph.



KEYNOTE SESSION 2

Petra Mundik - Australia

Thursday 24 July, 12:15-1:00pm – EA.G.34

Title – Terra Damnata: The Anticosmic Mysticism of Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, or the Evening Redness in the West

Abstract – Although Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* does have a carefully researched spatio-historical setting, any reading which focuses solely on the conquest of the West as an imperialist process drastically limits the wider scope of the novel. In fact, as my forthcoming book makes clear, the novel, like other McCarthy novels, is concerned with metaphysical profundities, depicting evil as a timeless phenomenon, extending beyond the specificities of individual countries, cultures and histories. In *Blood Meridian*, evil is explored within the microcosm of individual human beings, as well as within the macrocosm of the manifest world. In its preoccupation with evil, the novel frequently employs distinctly Gnostic symbols and concepts, the most immediate being the novel's anticosmic depiction of surreal, nightmarish landscapes. Sam Smith defines the anticosmic, or world-rejecting, position as a "belief that the material creation is inherently flawed and thus cannot be made suitable for any ideal purpose" (1). Conversely, the procosmic position "views the natural world as created for and suited to the fulfilment of the eternal promises and purposes of God for man" (*ibid*). Gnosticism is clearly anticosmic in its insistence that "earthly material existence, like the world itself, is a product of the Demiurge and correspondingly is a sphere hostile to God, dominated by evil powers" (Rudolph 88). If the character of the creator can be gauged by the nature of his

creation, then the depraved human beings and savagely hostile landscapes that abound in *Blood Meridian* point to a supremely indifferent, or downright malevolent entity. In *Blood Meridian*, divine silence does not signify the non-existence of a creator God, but rather the presence of a malicious demiurge.

The narrative voice within *Blood Meridian* is markedly anticosmic, repeatedly referring to the landscape in terms such as a "terra damnata of smoking slag," (61) "a godless quadrant cold and sterile," (293) "a purgatorial waste" where "nothing" moves "save carnivorous birds," (63) "a country where the rocks would cook the flesh from your hands and where other than rock nothing was" (138). This nightmare vision offers no relief and no hope of escape; journeys only take the traveller "into a land more hostile yet" (152). The landscape in *Blood Meridian* often evokes the imagery of T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*. For example: "the rock trembled and sleared in the sun, rock and no water and the sandy trace and they kept watch for any green thing that might tell of water but there was not water," (62) recalls "What the Thunder Said": "Here is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road" (lines 331-2). As in *The Wasteland*, the desolate landscapes through which McCarthy's characters wander serve as symbolic projections of spiritual desolation.

Impermanence and illusion also constitute the nature of the manifest world as revealed in *Blood Meridian*. For example, the violent lightning storms that persist throughout the novel, illuminate "a land of some other order out there whose true geology was not stone but fear" (47). The description of a landscape in which fear is more real than stone suggests

a nightmare world; nightmarish in the sense that it is grounded in subjective perception rather than objective reality and is therefore ultimately illusory. Such a view imbues the anticomic vision within *Blood Meridian* with a minute fragment of hope; if the world as depicted in the novel is indeed an evil nightmare, then its bloodstained landscapes and frenzied acts of violence are ultimately only the products of the Hindu and Buddhist concept of *maya*; a cosmic illusion from which one may eventually awaken through spiritual development.

Bio – Petra Mundik completed her PhD on the Western novels of Cormac McCarthy at the University of Western Australia and is now putting the final touches to *Diverging Equity*, her book on the same subject. Her articles on McCarthy have appeared in *Southwestern American Literature*; *South Central Review*; *The Gnostic: A Journal of Gnosticism, Western Esotericism and Spirituality*; *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*; *Beyond Borders: Cormac McCarthy's All the Pretty Horses*; and *They Rode On: Blood Meridian and the Tragedy of the American West*.

KEYNOTE SESSION 3

Rick Wallach – United States

Thursday 24 July, 1:45-2:30pm – EA.G.34

Title – A World Read from the Inside
Outward: How Patrick White and Cormac McCarthy Inhabit the Landscape

Abstract – At first glance, Patrick White and Cormac McCarthy wouldn't seem to have much in common. McCarthy has lived on intimate terms with the land, both as a youth in eastern Tennessee where he widely roamed the countryside and kept collections

of fossils and minerals. White, on the other hand, was an habitué of the sophisticated London theatre scene, but also a sickly youth beset by respiratory issues. Although he spent two years working as a stockman on the edge of the Snowy Mountains in south-eastern Australia and developed an affection for the land, he never felt that he was suited for rural life.

Even so, the rugged outback and dangerous tropical coasts of eastern Australia came to form the settings of some of White's most memorable novels, especially *The Tree of Man*, *Voss* and *A Fringe of Leaves*. One critic noted that in White's descriptions of natural settings, he seemed to exhibit an all but "molecular sense" of what was going on inside the inanimate world. Cormac McCarthy, meanwhile, early on became something of a darling of ecocriticism. His descriptions of the wilds of Appalachia or the vast wastes of the southwestern American and northern Mexican mountains and plains have been described as so vivid as to become "characters" in their own right.

Moreover, both novelists share a penchant for the dark side of both human and wild nature. In my discussion, I will explore the psychological and rhetorical techniques utilized by both White and McCarthy to "get inside" the world at large and explore its attraction and the influence it exerts upon their characters. I believe that I will demonstrate that, in fact, both authors share a similar vision of the natural world and man's place – or isolation – within it.

Bio – Rick Wallach is the editor of John Sepich's *Notes on Blood Meridian* (Bellarmine Press, 1993), *Myth, Legend, Dust* (Manchester University Press, 2000)



and co-editor with Wade Hall of *Sacred Violence: A Reader's Companion to Cormac McCarthy* (Texas Western Press, 1995). He is the senior editor of the Cormac McCarthy Society's casebook series. His current book in progress is a critical study of the Canadian alternative rock band Cowboy Junkies entitled *The Songs of the Their Climate*. He has also written on Patrick White, Charles Brockden Brown, Herman Melville, William Faulkner, Ishmael Reed, Vassily Aksyonov, Dennis Potter, literary and film theory, and other topics in modernist and postmodernist writing. His criticism and reviews have appeared in *Antipodes*, *The Southern Literary Journal*, *The South Atlantic Review*, *Southwestern American Literature*, *Southern Quarterly*, *Brilliant Corners*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Humanities and Technology Review*, and *Texas Books in Review*. From 1972-1975 he was seminar director for mythologist Joseph Campbell. He retired from teaching literature and American studies at the University of Miami in 2007 to concentrate on writing and editing.

KEYNOTE SESSION 4

Steve Frye – United States

Friday 25 July, 12:15-1:00pm – EA.G.34

Title – Cormac McCarthy, Influence, and Literary Empowerment

Abstract – Cormac McCarthy is one of the most radically innovative authors of our time, in many ways extending the modernist aesthetic of experimentation to its logical conclusion. But like T. S. Eliot, he claims with forthright honesty that a thoughtful use of influence is central to any genuine transformation of literary tradition. Essential to this aesthetic ethos is a respect, even a reverence, for the primacy of story, the revolutionary power of language, and

the active participation of the audience as witness. Through a creative alchemy unprecedented in our time, McCarthy's works as a whole claim the power of tradition, language, and narrative, integrated in the singular consciousness of artist and reader, as a mode of literary empowerment, which in its beauty and embodied reality stands against the human and cosmological void he so frequently explores. In his western works, the evocation of the border serves a multiple purpose. First and most clearly, as an exploration of America's frontier past, but also and most presciently as the borderland between the material and the transcendent, the subjective and the objective in human consciousness, the perceivable and the mysterious, the known reality of "the world" and the ghost reality of "the world in its making."

Bio – Steven Frye is Professor of English at California State University, Bakersfield and President of the Cormac McCarthy Society. He is the author of *Understanding Cormac McCarthy*, editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*, and a member of the editorial board of *The Cormac McCarthy Journal*. He is also the author of *Historiography and Narrative Design in the American Romance* and editor of two collected volumes on the tales and poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, as well as author of numerous articles on Cormac McCarthy, Herman Melville, and other authors of the American Romance Tradition, appearing in *American Studies*, *MFS*, *The Oxford Handbook to Literary Naturalism*, *The Centennial Review*, *The Southern Quarterly*, *The South Carolina Review*, *The Kentucky Review*, *Western American Literature*, among others. In addition, he is editor of the forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American West*.

KEYNOTE SESSION 5

Stacey Peebles – United States

Friday 25 July, 1:45-2:30pm – EA.G.34

Title – Moving through Media: Cormac McCarthy and Performance

Abstract – In Richard Woodward's much-quoted New York Times interview with McCarthy in 1992, he describes the author as a warm storyteller who's eager to talk about his many interests, but as someone who is also, in his words, "hermitic" and "an obstinate loner." It's a romantic portrayal of an artist whose status as "the kind of writer who has almost ceased to exist" reflects his own "pre-modern" characters and their ideas of virtue. But that notion of a staunchly old-fashioned, solitary author is somewhat misleading, and ignores his interest in film adaptations of his work (which dates back to at least 1967), his writing for the screen and stage, and his enthusiastic collaboration with others for many of those projects. Just as his stories often follow characters moving through new environments, McCarthy has never shied from working in different formats, and the story of his creative life is one that must include his longstanding interest in performance.

Bio – Stacey Peebles is Assistant Professor of English and Director of Film Studies at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, as well as Vice President of The Cormac McCarthy Society and editor of *The Cormac McCarthy Journal*. She is the author of *Welcome to the Suck: Narrating the American Soldier's Experience in Iraq* (Cornell UP, 2011). Her research addresses the representation of violence and war in contemporary literature and film, and she has published in *PMLA*, *The Journal of Film and Video*, *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, and anthologies

like *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy* and *Sacred Violence: A Reader's Companion to Cormac McCarthy*. She is currently completing a monograph on McCarthy's work as adapted for the screen and stage and editing an anthology on violence and literature.

FILM-SCREENING

Friday 25 July, 6:00-9:00pm –EA.G.33

Child of God – Directed by James Franco, 2013

"What things is he done, we ain't found out yet..."

Set in mountainous Sevier County, Tennessee in the 1960s, *Child of God* is structured in three segments with each one describing the central character's ever-growing isolation from society and social mores. *Child of God* is directed by James Franco (*Interior. Leather Bar, As I Lay Dying*) and written by Cormac McCarthy, adapted from his novel of the same name. Scott Haze plays the lead, Lester Ballard, a dispossessed, violent man whose life is a disastrous attempt to exist outside the social order. Consecutively deprived of parents and homes and with few other ties, Ballard descends literally and figuratively to the level of a cave dweller as he falls deeper into crime and degradation. *Child of God* first premiered at the Venice and Toronto Film Festivals last year.

