University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies

PhD Dissertation

The Rewriting of the Western Myth in Four Novels by Cormac McCarthy

PhD Candidate: **Kitti Somogyi**

Supervisor: **Dr. habil. Gabriella Vöő PhD**

Head of the Doctoral School: **Prof. dr. Péter Müller DSc**

Pécs, 2022

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

1 Disciplinary Narratives of the American West: An Overview 1

2 Cormac McCarthy's Position in the American Literary Canon 11

3 McCarthy's Four Novels in Theoretical and Critical Contexts 14

3.1 Wilderness and Wildness: Masculine Performances 16

3.2 The New Pastoral, the New Western 20

3.3 Material Agency, Ecological Posthumanism 22

3.4 Postapocalypse, Place-Space, Heterotopia-Dystopia 25

4 The Ecocritical Reading of Four Novels by McCarthy 27

Chapter 1 Performances of Masculine Hegemony in the American Wilderness: *Blood Meridian* 29

1 Introduction 29

2 Gendered Identities in the Southwestern Wilderness 30

3 Historical and Cultural Representations of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Wild West 37

4 Images of Wilderness and Wildness in the American Southwest 45

5 The Discourse of Wilderness and Wildness in the Southwestern Landscape 49

6 Conclusion 58

Chapter 2 The Rewriting of the Western Myth and the Pastoral Tradition in *All the Pretty Horses* 60

1 Introduction 60

2 Identity Construction and Character Analysis through the Pastoral and the Western Story-telling Traditions 61

3 Frontier Closed, Never Existed, or Imagined? Historical, Social, and Cultural Representations of the Southwestern Landscape 69

4 Western Environmental Perception through the Literary Devices of the Pastoral 78

5 The Discourse of the Western Myth and the American Pastoral 83

6 Conclusion 90

Chapter 3 Facing the Posthuman: Ecological and Material Relations in *No Country for Old Men* 92

1 Introduction 92

2. The Shaping of (Post)Human Identities through Material Relations 93

3 The Creation of Social, Cultural, and Material Relations in Ecosystems 101

4 The Narrative Agency of the "Storied Matter" 109

5 The Discourse of Posthumanism and Material Agency 118

6 Conclusion 124

Chapter 4 Eco-Apocalyptic Visions of Space and Place in *The Road* 126

1 Introduction 126

2 Self-Construction in the Barren Place and the Structureless Space 128

3 Social and Cultural Representations of the Postapocalyptic City and Countryside 134

4 Damaged Places and Imaginary Spaces as Postapocalyptic Literary Devices 144

5 The Discourse of the Postapocalypse 150

6 Conclusion 156

Conclusion 158

Works Cited 163

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my research supervisor and colleague, Dr. Gabriella Vöő, for her guidance, encouragement, valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of my PhD dissertation. I thank Mom for the homemade treats and Dad for fixing things in my flat while I had been busy researching. I am grateful for my dear sister, Dominika, for her guidance and loyalty amidst times of madness and for always giving me faith, hope, and new perspectives on life. I owe special thanks to my stray cat, Master Czong, who found me on a cold winter evening and has been my "warrant" since, feeding my soul throughout my doctoral studies. She has taught me patience, the appreciation of time, and plodding on in hard times.

Introduction

1 Disciplinary Narratives of the American West: An Overview

Cormac McCarthy's revisionist literary oeuvre coincides with the premises of the New Western History and its reconceptualization of the notions of American exceptionalism, the frontier, and the landscape. His fiction addresses ethnic relations, culture, and history in the American southwest. He not only explores the relationship between various ethnicities but investigates their interaction in, and with, the environment.

The American West has been an important and integral part of the American experience and its conceptualization has been a central concern for US historiography for more than a century. There have been many attempts to define how the distinctive character of the western landscape affected and influenced the evolvement of national trends in the United States before and since the westward expansion was outlined in the nineteenth century. The West, as "a specific, identifiable place" (Neel 106), has not only influenced history writing but had a great impact on the cultural, intellectual, and literary articulations of national myths and symbols. This chapter gives an overview of the definitions of the West in American history, American Studies, and American Literary Studies. It explores the changing notion of the frontier in the disciplinary narratives of western history, examines the rearticulations of the concept in the discourses of ecocriticism and literary ecology, and addresses the specifics of the pastoral mode of writing in the context of the American West.

The American continent and its character have been shaped by European settlement and colonization since the early sixteenth century. The western land and the landscape have had various understandings from the European perspective. After establishing the first colonies and the Atlantic frontier in the seventeenth century and gaining independence from Britain in the 1770s, the early nineteenth-century westward movement and the West inspired narratives of national character. Initially John Winthrop's Puritan vision of a "city upon a hill," then Thomas Jefferson's political ideas about the American polity—defined by the notion of "the empire of liberty"—, and later on, nineteenth-century American territorial expansion—in the name of Manifest Destiny—contributed to the discourses of American exceptionalism. Such colonialist ideas emphasize the uniqueness of American values, institutions, culture, politics, and economy compared to Transatlantic colonial powers, and consider American citizens worthy of a distinctive role among other nations, including the indigenous Native American population.

The sense of American exceptionalism and the political, social, and cultural mission to civilize the western wilderness emerged with Frederick Jackson Turner's concept of the frontier. The American historian's hypothesis regarding the significance of the West was first articulated in his 1893 lecture "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Turner argues that the distinctive social experience and landscape of the West shaped the "American character" (3) throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For Turner, the American frontier meant "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (2). According to his frontier hypothesis, free land, the experience of the vast wilderness, and the necessity of collaboration between the pioneers as social equals contributed to the development of the American character, the emergence of a democratic society, and the formation of specific American political institutions. In his view, the frontier also implied social evolution from the stage of savagery (the Indian and the hunter), the process of civilization (the trader), the pastoral stage in ranch life (exploitation of the soil by farming), and the manufacturing organization (the city and the factory system) (Turner 11). Based on the census of 1890, Turner acknowledged that the West had run out of free land, the frontier was closed, and, a significant period in American history had come to an end (38).

Turner had a great impact on American historiography—especially on western history— and influenced many scholars and historians throughout the first half of the twentieth century. However, beginning with the 1980s the disciplinary focus of western history changed considerably. Through the contribution of the new Western Historians Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner, Donald Worster, William Cronon, and the literary historians Richard Slotkin. Clyde A. Milner's anthology *Re-Envisioning the History of the American West* (1996) gives an overview of new interpretations of the American West and the frontier by notable scholars of Western history, written for the Turner Centennial Conference in 1992, dedicated to Turner's groundbreaking but now debatable writing. The book emphasizes the reinterpretation and reconceptualization of western history and regionalism, the role of pioneers in American development, and pays attention to members of ignored or oppressed social groups (women's history, Native American history, history of ethnicities), and environmental issues.

There are "as many [American] wests as there are interpreters" asserts Margaret Walsh in her study, "The frontier and the west: realities, myths and the historians" (2013). The scholar explores the changing notion and acknowledgment of the frontier from Turner's vision through New Western Historians up to the present interpretations of the concept. Walsh reminds us that Turner's frontier thesis considered the American West as a process of civilization, social evolution, and economic and national development. The encounter of European settlers with

the wilderness shaped the frontier traits, which later became American traits (3). The Turnerian school of history supported the ethos of exceptionalism, Progressivism, national pride, and imperial influence at the turn of the century. Such progress and optimism were broken as the Great Depression hit the American economy in the the1930s, and former views about American history were declining (3-4). The frontier became an ambivalent term for intellectual shortcomings and its internal contradictions for it referred to the rural past, while urbanization and its effects were neglected (4). However, the Turnerian view of America had a renaissance after the Second World War, when national pride after military successes, economic productivity, and material wealth resurrected the sense of uniqueness. The so-called Old Western Historians extended the scope of the Turnerian frontier and started to explore regional and topical histories (the Mexican borderlands, Native Americans, and women), and established the international agenda of the comparative frontier (5-6). President John F. Kennedy also supported the idea of new frontiers, opportunity, and achievement due to the space race in the 1960s that supported the superpower position of the United States (6).

Nevertheless, with the emergence of American Studies, continues Walsh, the academic revisionism of the history of the American West paved the way for new perspectives and an interdisciplinary approach to the west (6). She states that The New Western Historians defined themselves in contrast to Turner in order to reveal the "dark side of western history" (7). The New Westerners criticized the former standpoints of western historians by emphasizing ecological perspectives to disclose the exploitative effects of capitalism on the natural environment, started to investigate ethnohistory to reveal the experience of the Native population and the continuity of regional history, and made women visible in contrast to the former romantic and heroic masculine ideal (6-7). The awareness of minorities and diversity was transforming the image of the American West and consolidating or even demolishing the myths and symbols that held up the characteristic features of Americanness for over a century (8-9).

According to Allan G. Bogue, Turner's interpretation of the westward movement was problematic because he all but ignored issues of ethnicity (Native Americans), gender (female voices), and class. In his study "The Course of Western History's First Century" Bogue claims that although Turner mentioned the indigenous population in his essay about the significance of the frontier, he did not explore anthropological and ethnographic literature but applied the concept of conquest, which involves the subordination of Native Americans. The challenges of interacting cultures were also ignored, while the uniqueness of white European settler culture was understood as homogenous American culture. As Turner put it, "Our early history is the

study of European germs developing in an American environment" (2), referring to the white American pioneer perspective about the western region. In addition, Turner dealt with the American economy (industrial empire, capitalism, individualism, competition) but ignored low-scale agricultural and industrial production, like the contribution of farmers or miners. Another problem with the late-nineteenth-century perspective of western history was that it had a colonial tone, which emphasized control over natural resources and valued the natural environment as a commodity (Bogue 10-11).

Turner's assertion on history writing, "Each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time" (323), is controversial to his frontier thesis but reinforces contemporary voices on the reinterpretation, reevaluation, and rewriting of western history according to the current environmental agenda. Further weaknesses of Turner's history are the artificial terms "civilized" and "savage," or the denotations of nature as deterministic, yet vaguely mystical. Susan Rhoades Neel challenges the nationalistic, simplistic, and muddled metaphors of racial and sexual domination (108) in Turner's rhetoric. She presumes that the frontier is at once a too broad and too narrow concept for it is "more mythic than real, not a place but a process" (108).

The contemporary interpretations of the western narrative see beyond the aesthetic view of the environment and highlight human interaction with and on the landscape. Patricia Nelson Limerick's book, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987), reinterprets the significance of the West and the frontier in American history by accentuating a grim version of the West. She calls attention to some neglected realities of the western experience, like misery and oppression, and argues for a more balanced view of the past. Although Limerick and other new western historians do not reprehend the merits of Turner's description of the nineteenth-century West, she underscores the excessive economic overtone in his thesis. Limerick thinks that Western America had utopian visions about the land and argues for a more thorough understanding of ethnic history, cultural diversity, and the role of nature in shaping western society.

In "A Place of Extremes: Nature, History, and the American West," Susan Rhoades Neel writes that Limerick's theory—concerning the greatest significance of the West—is the legacy of conquest (117) which is the basis of the ideas of new regionalism. In her opinion, conquest refers to Anglo-American culture driven by capitalism, subjugation, exploitation, and economic development in the previous century, and it is an assault on nature at the same time. The ecological changes were caused by expansion and inappropriate land use, which transformed the indigenous landscape.

For a more thorough exploration of the western past, the new western historians shifted their perspective from instead of the stale notion of the frontier to region, a more suitable spatial category for capturing the diversity of human organization (Neel 117). New regionalists maintain that the West is a place and not a process, as Turner called it. They also replace the frontier paradigm with regionalism, which "reflects a particular ideological outlook as well as a personal sense of western place and experience" (Neel 109-10) to get the history of a real place or places. The application of new concepts by new western historians contributed to the emergence of the notion of the postfrontier.

The postfrontier defamiliarizes (disassembles, then reassembles) western history, the concepts of the American frontier, and of the American West. The frontier used to be regarded as the locus of rapid growth, dynamic expansion, violence, and disdain for authority, while the postfrontier focuses on the representations of the richness of the American past and supplements the fragmented parts in western history. Although the concept of the West pervaded American life through myths and legends connected to the land (Bogue 17)—forming a "dreamscape" (Deverell 37) of national destiny (Manifest Destiny), the American dream, democracy, and egalitarianism—, it has had various interpretations: a place, a process, or a "middle ground" (Deverell 30). The re-envisioning of the West, as William Deverell puts it, is the "understanding of power, . . . and the ways in which power fills space on the western conceptual landscape" (32). Thereby the West creates power relations in terms of race, class, gender, and environment. Deverell calls the West "utopian escapism", for it is "a place-process amalgam of a dangerous, threatening landscape" (37) combined with the narrow understanding of a capitalist nation-state and industrial demands.

The environmental exceptionalism of the western region has been a driving force for the exploration of western history and the distinctive natural landscape created a distinctive western culture and society according to Progressive historians. The New Western historian Susan Rhoades Neel's environment-centered approach accentuates that nature and culture together have made the West (106). She argues that human beings are not merely part of nature but bound by it, so humans alone are not the measure of all things (106). Neel's opinion opposes the anthropocentric (human-centered) worldview and resonates with Walsh's proposal that the environmental conditions influenced human behavior on the southwestern landscape and vice versa: they led to incorrect land use, the application of technology to tame and civilize nature caused a disharmonious existence with nature (15).

The ecological interpretation of the West as a region replaced Turner's narrative form with a narrative about the interaction of people and the natural world. William Cronon surmises

in the “Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner” that “the story of human beings working with changing tools to transform the resources of the land, struggling over how that land should be owned and understood, and defining their notions of political and cultural community, all within a context of shifting environmental and economic constraints” (172). Cronon’s (neo-Turnerian) approach toward the American past connected the controversial notions of frontier and region, place and process to the formation of the nation and the western narrative. According to him, the environmental narrative is a human-nature dialectic, which is about how nature shapes the lives of western peoples, where the connection of nature and culture is the focus. Cronon maintains that the western narrative tells new stories of the West and in another study, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” he argues that those “narratives remain our chief moral compass in the world. Because we use them to motivate and explain our actions, the stories we tell change the way we act in the world. We find in such stories our histories and prophecies both, which means they remain our best path to an engaged moral life” (1375).

The American literary historian and literary ecologist Karen E. Waldron emphasizes the importance of literary ecology, a specific method of literary analysis in which scientific ecology, ecocriticism, philosophy, and space theory intersect. In her book *Toward a Literary Ecology: Places and Spaces in American Literature* (2013), Waldron claims that literary ecology extends “beyond nature writing” (xii) and focuses on representations and understandings of nature, place, space, as well as social, cultural and ontological challenges to nature and man, the latter considered as part of nature. Place is a fundamental concept in literature because it is “an open and interconnected region within which other persons, things, spaces, and abstract locations, and even one’s self, can appear, be recognized, identified and interacted with” (Waldron viii). Thus, place determines the relationship between human beings and various forms of environment and defines the perception of the connection between nature and culture. In the center of the American literary tradition, the understandings of nation formation and re-formation, culture, geography, landscape, and place are significant concerns that involve social, environmental, economic, political, ethnic, and therefore cultural issues.

Waldron differentiates between ecological identities, ecological cityscapes and landscapes, and ecological rhetoric in literature. These contexts form the conceptual basis of each subsection of my dissertation because they apply to an ecocritical analysis of four novels by Cormac McCarthy. The ecological aspect of McCarthy’s works regards the problematic relation of his (anti)heroes to the land and the surroundings, the precarious representations of the landscape from historical, cultural, social, ethnic, legal, and religious viewpoints, and the

arbitrary literary devices about the environment, just as the ambiguous discourse about the multiethnic, multicultural and highly patriarchal milieu of the borderland. By exploring ecological identities, we can understand how persons are bound to places, reveal their relationship to the place they inhabit or dwell in, and examine human (inter)actions in the environment. The definition of place in American literary texts, as Waldron puts it, is "the product of interactions among human dwellers, nonhuman nature, and cultural institutions" (x). Ecological cityscapes and landscapes focus on the "individual and collective human relations to place" (Waldron x). This approach distinguishes natural (landscape, nature) and man-made (city, architecture) environments and analyzes them taking into account the (human) character's perspective. However, Waldron confronts the binary ideas of city and country and argues that the two are ecologically and environmentally interdependent. The urban and the natural environments are equally affected by environmental destruction and injustice. Ecological rhetoric examines the language and narrative forms of literary works. This "new" type of nature writing emphasizes novel ways of seeing, using, and recognizing ecology. Its focus is on American ideas of the literary landscape and environment, the cultural history of environmental catastrophe, and moral action in mind. In addition, it investigates the "sublime of placefulness" (Waldron xi) and the metaphors of place, space, and nature.

Michel Foucault refers to space as "the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems" (1) that determines man's cultural perception of nature and its ecological experience. The concept of space was defined diversely through centuries, from the Medieval 'space of emplacement' idea to Galileo's notion of 'extension' (a point in its movement) toward 'localization' and the concept of 'site' that we refer to today as the "intersection of time with space" (1). The American New Western historians used this assumption to define the US-American West as a place of continuous history, opposing Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 thesis that asserted the closing of the frontier. This philosophy and historiography do not examine the West as a space where American national character and identity were formed in a particular period as Turner did but deal with the history of the western territories in the US in terms of environment, culture, and society through time.

The complex systems of nature, people, and their cultures intersect in American literature, as a particular place implicates a specific behavior, specific ways of thinking, and distinctive rules of law. However, Waldron claims that some literary scholars "resist the idea of place or the environment as deterministic" (xxv). At this point, the question arises: how could we make connections between the character of the environment and the nature of people's interactions on a particular site? As the American continent became progressively inhabited,

people brought their ways of life or different national ideals and communities. They developed new ways of life, involving interaction with land (its cultivation, dwelling in it, and using its natural resources). The inhabitants did, beyond doubt, shape a place's characteristics by spreading their customs and distinctive identities. The land did not directly determine their behavior. However, it unequivocally defined the way of life that could be implemented in that area.

In *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, Lawrence Buell points out the significance of Thoreauvian writing about the American natural environment. According to Buell, by studying environmental perception and considering the place of nature in the history of western humanistic thought, there is a possibility to imagine a more "ecocentric" way of being. American environmental imagination requires a revision of the thoughts of environmental philosophers, western metaphysics, and ethics in order to address today's environmental problems and find better ways of imagining nature and humanity's relation to it (Buell 2). "[E]nvironmental interpretation," as Buell argues, "requires us to rethink our assumptions about the nature of representation, reference, metaphor, characterization, personae, and canonicity" (3). Besides Thoreau's *Walden*, he mentions Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* as prominent literary texts that conceptualize American environmental writing. As Buell explains, the American natural environment has been constructed three times throughout history: first, it was constructed in the image of old-world desire, then reconstructed in the image of American cultural nationalism, and finally reconstructed again in the scholarly discourse of American exceptionalism (5-6). In environmental texts, this appears as pastoral ideology, American cultural distinctiveness, and later on as environmentalism (Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, 1962), or the machine-in-the-garden trope.

There are several myths about the landscape in American culture embodied in literature, which reinforce the national ethos. Richard Slotkin explains that the mythology of a nation shapes the psychology, worldview, attitudes, and perception of the contemporary reality of people (3). In the United States, the frontier experience in the wilderness, frontier communities and settlements, the progressive ideas of democracy and the national Constitution, and "reason in nature and in human affairs" (Slotkin 3) have shaped national characteristics. In *Regeneration through Violence*, it is revealed that in the American mythogenesis the founding fathers were not those statesmen who established the country but those who "tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness" (Slotkin 4). Thus, the wilderness is considered a key

element in American literature, and the wilderness experience requires frontier heroes, who are able to conquer and tame the wildness in it.

In Richard Maxwell Brown's words, new western literature is "the luminous stream of writing about the West [in] a period that roughly coincides with the rise of the new western history" (56). Brown believes that the western myths shaped the arrogance and machismo of the mythic cowboy hero, just as the oversimplified good-guy and bad-guy moralities in literary narratives. The most common topics in new western works are the romantic myths about "liv[ing] a ranch life during the summer: breaking horses, tending the hay meadows, and running a little stock" (58). However, the growing economy (the proliferation of the oil industry from the mid-twentieth century) and the pursuit of profit involved the change of ranching and the cowboy myth. Brown holds that the new western writers revealed the problem with the myth of the West: what that myth has meant and what it has done to their own lives (57)—referring to social and environmental consequences (failed illusions, scarred lives, degrading ecology, environmental wounding, sterilization, and degradation).

The pastoral is a crucial element of nature writing in the American literary tradition. Pastoral is a literary mode, and the pastoral ideology is central to American cultural self-understanding. Terry Gifford seeks answers to the query of how the relationship between people and the environment can be developed nowadays, through his concept of the post-pastoral. In the essay, "Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral and Post-Pastoral as Reading Strategies," Gifford initially describes pastoral—based on his own experiences with the natural environment—, as writing about nature, wilderness, and the countryside, and contact with the natural environment, as an escape from the city for renewal, re-creation, and retreat (2-3). Then he specifies pastoral literature as originating from Greece in Theocritus's poem *Idylls* about shepherds, along with Virgil's Latin pastorals taking place in Arcadia, an idealized location of pastoral literature. The word "Arcadian" refers to nostalgia for a Golden Age and escapism into a comfortingly timeless and stable pastoral writing (Gifford 5). In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American literature, especially in Thoreau's *Walden*, this European mode of pastoralism is demonstrated. Furthermore, Gifford defines six characteristic features of the pastoral: it is idealized, nostalgic, unproblematic, set in a Golden Age, tells a narrative about the retreat and return, and is Arcadian in vision.

The anti-pastoral is expressed in opposition to the distinctive features of the pastoral; it is corrective of the pastoral, unidealized, emphasizes realism, deals with problems, challenges literary constructs as false distortions, and demythologizes Arcadia, which is identical with Eden (Gifford 19). Gifford refers to Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) as a contemporary

apocalyptic anti-pastoral dystopia about “a future in which humans have devastated the environment to such an extent that it threatens their own survival” (19-20). In Gifford’s opinion, this novel is a warning about the prospects of nature and human societies.

Gifford conceptualized the notion of the post-pastoral in order to criticize the conservative and politically biased function of pastoral and to raise complex questions about the co-existence of nature and human beings. The concept derives from the distinction between “sentimental pastoral” and “complex pastoral” in Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden* (1964). While the “sentimental” attribute refers to an indulgence in complacent escapism and celebration of retreat into nature, “complex pastoral” means implicit lessons in ironic disguise (Gifford 17). The “post-pastoral” emerges from the latter one and raises six questions opposed to the idealization of the pastoral and its counterpart, the anti-pastoral. Post-pastoral literary texts investigate whether awe, comfort, and complacency in nature can lead to humility, or reduce human hubris (Gifford 21), or if we can apply a biocentric view of nature instead of the static and anthropocentric perspective (Gifford 22). In addition, Gifford examines the creative and destructive processes in our inner nature and outer nature (23), together with the nature-culture and culture-nature relations in terms of cultural constructs and the poetic imagination (24). Scrutinizing the traits of the post-pastoral, Gifford also pays attention to the role of consciousness and conscience in healing our alienation from nature (25). The last question sets the exploitation of the planet in parallel with the exploitation of human minorities (Garrard 26). Gifford suggests that such a holistic reading of literary texts about the relations of nature and humans contributes to more effective ways to overcome environmental challenges.

Lawrence Buell writes about the American pastoral in his essay “American Pastoral Ideology Reappraised” (1989) as an ideology that is preoccupied with the representations of nature, culture, society, and urbanization in literary works, supporting American exceptionalism, nationalism, imperialism, and the masculinist perspective about the landscape. Buell suggests that the literary narratives about wilderness emerge in the form of romance in American literary tradition because they stand for a nostalgic fantasy, a romantic male perspective about the social, and technological transformation, and “civilization” of the land. Revisionist literary scholars believe that the aesthetic idealization of nature is a conservative and hegemonic formation drawing on the myths about the land. The European settlers’ view of America as arcadia, the Jeffersonian agrarian vision, and the industrial revolution together formed the perception of the American wilderness. The grand narrative of the American pastoral is Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) which is about the contradictory appraisal of nature, yet the acknowledgment of technological advance and the rise of

industrialism. Both Marx and Buell consider American pastoral the Old World recreation of the elite and patriarchal methods over nature and culture (Buell 4) that required the reexamination of the myth of development.

Opposed to male-focused writing about the natural environment, Buell emphasizes the role of women and female authors in the deconstruction of the Thoreauvian pastoral tradition and the male-dominated status quo (5). He regards feminist revisionism of the American wilderness romance dealing with women's frontier experience that sharply differed from men's but whose voices were rarely heard. According to Annette Kolodny, contemporary pastoral imagination had an impact on the female perspective on the understanding of nature, and research on Thoreau was influential among women in the nineteenth century. Buell calls attention to the numerous prominent nature essays by female authors in the *Atlantic Monthly* journal in the previous century and recognizes radical thoughts about the destructive human activities in the natural surroundings by mentioning Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), or discussing contemporary literary works, like Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977) on the female Native American perception of the role of the natural environment and the effects of warfare on nature and the human psyche.

2 Cormac McCarthy's Position in the American Literary Canon

Cormac McCarthy's large fictional oeuvre resists classification. Although he is frequently discussed along with Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, and Philip Roth, he is not considered to be a postmodernist writer. In his critical monograph *The Late Modernism of Cormac McCarthy*, David Holloway discusses McCarthy as an author who resists postmodernism's "perspective of estrangement" (2). His writing style is frequently compared to William Faulkner's for addressing historical, social, and cultural issues of the Southwest, or James Joyce's on account of his intricate use of language. Because of the earnest nature of his characters and the slow unfolding of the stories, McCarthy's books are compared to the young Hemingway's. For the themes of life and death, the writer is often related to Henry James and Marcel Proust, which correlation he rejects, admitting that he does not understand their works and holds them "strange" (Woodward). His interest in Gnosticism and the metaphysical concerns of evil, fate, and free will remind the reader of the great predecessor, Herman Melville. Undoubtedly, the distinctive feature of McCarthy's novels is that they address ecocritical issues and pay particular attention to the relationship and confrontation between nature and human beings.

McCarthy is a reserved writer who rarely gives interviews and seldom participates in literary discussions and events, claiming that "everything he had to say was there on the page" (Woodward). However, Richard B. Woodward had a thorough conference with him in 1992. From this interview, the audience learned that although McCarthy was not much interested in reading and writing literature until serving in the US Air Force in Alaska when he started reading books in his twenties. Today, he is one of the major authors in the US. His stance on literature is that "books are made out of books" and "[any] novel depends for its life on the novels that have been written" (Woodward). On the one hand, this means that written works allude to former literary pieces, so "as Montaigne's Plato became Emerson's, so Melville's Shakespeare becomes Cormac McCarthy's" (Bloom). On the other hand, writers who undertook the elaboration of the theme of life and death in literary works by their greatest predecessors, like Melville, Dostoyevsky, or Faulkner, are themselves inspiring new generations of authors. McCarthy is reckoned as a visionary and revisionary novelist: he is visionary for seeing continuity between the past and the future, aware of where current social, environmental, and cultural trends may lead to, and revisionary for establishing links among all the creatures and phenomena in the environment, representing a biocentric viewpoint.

The Southwestern landscape plays a major role in McCarthy's fiction. The author's interest in natural history, the observation of nature, and conversation with scientists instead of writers make him a peculiarly ecologically minded writer. He has been living in El Paso since 1976 (Woodward), is well-acquainted with the borderland landscape, and knows its creatures intimately. Environmental awareness about places he has often visited (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, the Rio Grande River, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Coahuila) is conspicuous in his writings. For McCarthy, the sublime landscape of the Southwest accommodates violence, evil, and nihilism, and the vacant desert becomes a metaphor for death and the abyss. The characteristic natural environment in the region is referred to as a wilderness, and McCarthy admires the wildness of animals, landscapes, and people inhabiting that land for their austerity and simplicity. Another peculiar feature of McCarthy's eco-centered prose fiction is the invitation for the reader to participate in the creation of the reading experience by taking part, imaginatively, in the interaction of nature and people.

In the American literary tradition, the American West is equivalent to American Arcadia, which stands for the American pastoral. In McCarthy's epic narrative *Blood Meridian*—regarded as "the ultimate Western, not to be surpassed" and "the authentic American apocalyptic novel" (Bloom)—, the southwestern region is a place of eternal war (Bloom), affirmed by the motto "*Et In Arcadia Ego*" engraved into the Judge's rifle. While Leo

Marx's *Machine in the Garden* highlights the binary opposition of the natural environment and man-made constructs, like machines, or urban sites, creating an anti-pastoral (26), McCarthy raises ecocritical concerns in the fashion of another mode that Terry Gifford coins as the post-pastoral. The characteristic features of the post-pastoral are awe and humbling that are required for the "shift from the anthropocentric position of the pastoral to the ecocentric view of the post-pastoral" (Gifford, *Pastoral* 152). McCarthy's post-pastoral is raising ecocritical questions about the representation of nature, people's connection to and interaction with the landscape. His fiction creates the possibilities of a biocentric viewpoint that would enable a more ethical and sustainable way of life in and with the environment, and the improvement of human attitudes toward nature.

McCarthy's apocalyptic vision is closely related to his environmental perception as it incorporates both life and death. Such a catastrophic imagination is not only a feature of the American sublime (Bloom). Adventure and journey are also central themes in apocalyptic literature. McCarthy's western and pastoral writings are embedded in the context of the American Southwest, a region that has acquired symbolic significance in American history and literature. Beside the violent imagery associated with the Old West and with the vagaries of Mexican and United States history, the Southern Gothic tradition also appears in McCarthy's works, for example, in his play "The Stonemason" (1995). In *Understanding Cormac McCarthy* (2009), Steven Frye refers to McCarthy's literary works as "frontier romances," which contain philosophical narratives, elements of the Southern gothic—following Faulkner's writing style—and grotesque features (*Understanding* 9). McCarthy himself considers Melville's *Moby-Dick* as his favorite book (Woodward) and applies its philosophical queries about evil, human nature, and the sublime environment in his own narratives.

As for the cast of characters, McCarthy's narrative is often centered on (anti)heroes: outcasts, criminals, homeless people, vagrant riders, illiterate characters, and various other forms of uprooted, independent life. In the 1992 interview with Richard Woodward, McCarthy admitted that "[he] was always attracted to people who enjoyed a perilous lifestyle." Similarly to Flannery O'Connor, McCarthy sides with the misfits and anachronisms of modern life against "progress" (Woodward). His most eminent antiheroes (Judge Holden in *Blood* Meridian and Anton Chigurh in *No Country for Old Men*) assume a mythic status. They are demoniac, persuasive, uncanny, Machiavellian, immortal, or supernatural, like Gnostic archons (bad angels). The tragic protagonists in McCarthy's works are grounded in Shakespearian prototypes. Harold Bloom calls this the literary tradition of the Vice, recalling Shakespeare's

tragic questing figures. The peculiarity of McCarthy's tragic characters is that the problem of evil is closely connected to the geography of the region and the landscape.

Language and style in the McCarthy narrative elicit terror, grandeur, biblical gravity, religious feeling, and perturb the moral sense. Minimal punctuation (no quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, or semicolons) is a unique feature of McCarthy's syntactic structure and conscious text-building strategy. His early works, *The Orchard Keeper* (1965), *Outer Dark* (1968), and *Child of God* (1973) are characterized by Faulknerian traits with "recondite vocabulary, punctuation, portentous rhetoric, use of dialect and concrete sense of the world" (Woodward). As Harold Bloom contends, McCarthy's themes, characters, language, structure, and allusions convert goriness into terrifying art (Bloom). His writing style also relies on linguistic ambiguity, and the archaic language use gives his works a note of timelessness and universality.

3 McCarthy's Four Novels in Theoretical and Critical Contexts

Cormac McCarthy's novels *Blood Meridian, or The Evening Redness in the West* (1985), *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *No Country for Old Men* (2005), and *The Road* (2006) offer panoramic representations of the interaction between man and nature from a historical and cultural perspective. Each work scrutinizes, reviews, criticizes, and rewrites nineteenth- and twentieth-century myths and aspirations (the frontier myth, manifest destiny, empire building, the American Dream, the myth of the self-made man, pastoral idyll, the myth of wilderness, anthropocentrism, and the apocalyptic vision of the future). McCarthy explores the ideological foundations of the American national space—especially in the American Southwest—, emphasizing the dominance of white Anglo-Saxon male supremacy over natural resources, the subjugated indigenous population, and various ethnic cultures.

McCarthy's oeuvre extends over a period in which extensive paradigm shifts occurred in the study of US American culture, literature, and history. Beginning with the 1980s and 1990s, the New American Studies and the New Western History "actively challenged national meta-narratives and highlighted the explicitly dialogic, international, and comparativist nature of American Studies" (Oppermann 18). The literary and historical revision of the past implied a close focus on ethnic cultures and societies, the re-evaluation of the relation among the notions of place, space, nature, and, therefore, contributed to the emergence of ecological and environmental concerns in literary narratives. McCarthy's novels are set at major turning points in American history. The US-Mexican War and its aftermath, the devastating ethnic conflicts

on the borderland territory in the mid-nineteenth century, is the backdrop to *Blood Meridian*. The post-Second World War era and the rise of industrial production and commercialism in the mid-twentieth century frames *All the Pretty Horses*. The period following the Vietnam War, characterized by excessive materialism as well as mental and technological warfare, is the world of *No Country for Old Men.* Finally, *The Road* records the threatening sentiment of annihilation after 9/11 when faith in civilization, technological development, territorial advance, and prosperous economic endeavors obscured savagery, violence, exploitation, and greed.

The western myth, as conceptualized by Frederick J. Turner at the end of the nineteenth century, represented a symbolic space for nation-building. Turner's ideas were challenged by New Western historians at the end of the twentieth century, claiming that the American West was not a symbolic space but a place with a continuous history. Similarly to the New Western History, Cormac McCarthy's works aim to undermine former theories about the Southwest and interpret historical realities by means of fiction, representing and interrogating space, place, nature, and the environment. While different schools of Western historians have been conducting politically and ideologically charged discussions since the end of the nineteenth century, McCarthy de-politicizes and de-centralizes the West and Americanness through his historically, socially, culturally, and environmentally oriented literary works. He uses the basic ideas of the Turnerian progressivists and the theories of the new western historians to create the long-aspired to, and long-debated interdisciplinary approach to address the notion of the American West and the meaning of Americanness intertwined with the concept of the frontier. His novels convey a multi-dimensional perception (diachronic and synchronic) of both environmental and human history.

McCarthy realized the deficiencies of past national and environmental conceptualizations of land and nationhood. He articulated views about America in his novels by contextualizing their plots with historical turning points and crises in American politics, economy, culture, and society. He drew a parallel between those key processes and the destruction of the environment due to always seeking exaggerated advancement and unsustainable growth. In opposition to biased ideologies about western American cultural history, McCarthy examines the complex relationships among European-American settlers, indigenous people, and Spanish-Mexican populations on the "middle ground" and considers all environmental forms—natural and non-natural, animate and inanimate, human and nonhuman beings—equal. Unlike Turner, who argued that the experience of the West forged the unique American national character, McCarthy focuses on the imbalanced power relations and the disturbance of harmony within the historically complex context of the American frontier.

3.1 Wilderness and Wildness: Masculine Performances

The perception of the wilderness in America is a political and cultural construct influenced by modern civilization and the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures of the Old Continent. The American wilderness is not as majestic and mysterious as the explorers of the American West had described it, but an imperious image of the symbolic natural phenomenon defined by the existing conceptual frame of the colonizer. According to Greg Garrard, “wilderness” denotes “nature in a state uncontaminated by civilization” (59). On account of the aesthetic and moral impulses, the wilderness promises “a renewed, authentic relation of humanity and the earth . . . in a space of purity” (59). Such construction of nature considers the landscape as a place for reinvigorating the morally tired and materially polluted urbanites in the New World. For Euro-American men, the wilderness also meant the struggle to tame and utilize nature’s resources instead of developing a co-ordinate and harmonious relationship with it.

With the appearance of non-fictional nature writings in the eighteenth century, wilderness narratives shared the motives of escape and return with the pastoral narratives, but the two are different in their conceptualization of nature. While Old World pastoral narratives referred to settled places and domesticated landscapes, the New World wilderness dealt with the settler experience on untamed landscapes, distinguishing the forces of nature and culture (Garrard 60). Since the cultural preconceptions of European settlers shaped the construction of the landscape in the United States, wilderness in the American West meant an open landscape, a Promised Land for the “chosen” people, which the settlers believed to have a manifest right (Garrard 60). The Old World concept of “wilderness” meant the beast “beyond the boundaries of cultivation” (Garrard 60), opposing human culture in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. This approach toward nature assumes terror and spiritual bewilderment in the untamed nature. The ambivalence of the wilderness concept was resolved by introducing the idea of the sublime, implying outright hostility in modern terms. According to Garrard, the sublime means “shadow and darkness and dread and trembling” (64), but it is also something beautiful, a feeling of pleasure and astonishment with some degree of horror. While beauty was associated with smallness, softness, and delicacy, the sublime was connected with vastness and overwhelming power (Garrard 64).

Garrard emphasizes the Wordsworthian thought that the beauty of the wild commenced the interactivity of mind and landscape (65) that constructed ideologized images of nature. The aesthetic workings of the mind connected the mental concept of the colonizer and the material

view of nature in the New World, and the notion of wilderness became identical with the symbolic taming of the vast and wild American West and its "savage" inhabitants. The immensity of the wild land required men with good stamina and hard hands, encoding the land with gender-specific terms, glorifying masculine power capable of managing and controlling the feminized wilderness. The wilderness, the sublime landscape in the United States, is described as "something savage and awful, though beautiful" (Garrard 66), and it is definitive of the American cultural identity (Garrard 67). The iconic status of the wilderness in America is based on the dualistic association of the landscape with purity and divinity compared to the morally and spiritually declining urban areas and urbanite inhabitants living in them.

William Cronon calls the differentiation of wilderness from civilization "otherness" because it reproduces the values it seeks to reject. Cronon defines wilderness as "the natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul. It is a place of freedom [and] the ultimate landscape of authenticity. Combining the sacred grandeur of the sublime with the primitive simplicity of the frontier" (16). According to Cronon, the myth of an "uninhabited wilderness" implies that nature is authentic if man is entirely absent from it. Purity is recovered by the independence of nature and by the absence of human society, activity, culture, and history. In agreement with Cronon's statements, Garrard reveals that wilderness narratives consistently misinterpret the wild, ignoring the fact that human subjects are present in nature. This makes texts of—and about—the wilderness ideological. They constantly seek authenticity and truthfulness, eliminating man, who is substantially part of nature (70-72).

Nineteenth-century American wilderness writing had been anthropocentric, seeing man as the conqueror of the land connecting moral values to nature. In contrast, contemporary writing looks upon human beings as part of the land following a rather biocentric view of a diverse environment (Garrard 72). The biocentric description of the Southwestern landscape deconstructs the concept of the wilderness, challenging the masculine myth connected to the subjugation of the territory and the self-reliance of the heroic Western male. The concept of the wilderness as paradise in line with nationalistic notions is, Garrard argues, the falsification of history by "the exclusion of working people, white, Hispanic and Indian" (Garrard 77). Moreover, wilderness construction in recent narratives rests on a different set of cultural assumptions and provides a representation of the wilderness that includes human beings residing in it.

Michael Lewis separates the American wilderness from the historical viewpoint, as defined by the observer's culture, and highlights that "wilderness is a real thing, not an idea or a construction of culture" (5). Similarly to Garrard and Cronon, Lewis claims that the perception

of American wilderness is predisposed by European religious and cultural concepts "see[ing] wilderness as evil, dangerous, and ungodly" (7). This Old World assumption is contradictory but applicable to the wilderness along with the American urbanite perspective that wilderness is a pure yet "dark and mysterious landscape illustrating God's original paradise, a fearsome haunt of the devil, or even a collection of marketable commodities" (Lewis 6).

Lewis calls attention to the distinctive notions of "wilderness" and "wildness": wildness is found on the small-scale in the forms of localized ecosystems, while wilderness is a concept for a "particular type of wild environment—with its plants, animals, and ecosystems" (6). The wilderness is measured on a larger scale than the human. Overall, wild nature occurs everywhere in the world, while wilderness is present in particular areas. The interaction between settlers and the wilderness had been central to the creation of American history since the pioneers struggled to settle the southwestern wilds in the mid-1800s (Lewis 6-7). Defined in Frederick Jackson Turner's terms, such frontier enterprise in the wilderness forged the national character throughout the nineteenth century, but its closing meant that no more empty wildlands were attainable for pioneers.

However, William Cronon's definition of wilderness (a landscape untouched by human hands) is, according to Lewis, built on the dualistic Western concepts of wilderness (nature) and civilization (human) (9). He also stresses—relying on Cronon's idea—that more attention should be directed to wildness than to wilderness because wildness can be found on the "middle ground" (Cronon 21), blending the human and the natural. Lewis, on the other hand, seeks to correct Cronon by arguing that wilderness exists outside of human history (9). Lewis believes that the wilderness idea, deriving from the human understanding of modernity (Euro-American experiences of the scientific revolution, exploration, colonialism, industrialization, and the dramatic transformation of the natural world) is crucial to US identity and history (12). Besides the emergence of nationalism, industrialization, and the spread of liberal democracy adjusting to the conditions of wilderness, its idea is also linked to environmental degradation (12).

Cormac McCarthy adopts the historical, political, and cultural descriptions of the American wilderness and deconstructs the myths of the southwestern frontier representing imperial nationhood ruled by the superior white male masculine prototype in *Blood Meridian* (1985). He utilizes Cronon's conception of the middle ground, or, as Lewis calls it, the middle landscape, where the wildness of the landscape and the savagery of humankind are authentically represented along with the cultural construct of the mid-nineteenth century wilderness idea: shaping the politics of taming and conquering every agent of the Southwestern territory. McCarthy employs a non-fictional historical narrative, Samuel Chamberlain's memoir *My*

Confession: Recollections of a Rogue from the 1840s, to portray mid-nineteenth-century social relations among various ethnicities and their violent practices towards one another as not even the New and the Postwesterners had accomplished. Lydia R. Cooper writes that the historical context of *Blood Meridian* gives a disturbing sense of the reality of violence and "de-familiarizes a familiar history" (25).

Beyond the Romantic notion of the sublime—affected by former cultural, literary, and religious aspects—, the political ideology of Manifest Destiny and Turner's theory of the frontier ruling the nineteenth century, along with the idealistic pastoral visions about the landscape shaping the national character, the realities of the West are the manifestations of a gendered power-play among various races, genders, and classes striving for authority and dominance on the land. *Blood Meridian* reconsiders the western genre, implying that the dominance of one gender (masculinity) is inappropriate for elaborating on the intertwined social and cultural codes of various communities or nations on the borderland. Moreover, masculine performances are not based on cultural norms but on a "primal recognition of and desire to exploit the vulnerability of the other" (Cooper 45). The idealized masculine heroism of the West and the frontier is replaced by a "fictionalized history of atrocity," which corresponds with "the past that was" (Cooper 45), creating a more authentic past through fiction than through history writing.

The imagery of *Blood Meridian* deconstructs the masculinity of the American Western hero, and the hegemony of the genre is stripped from any virtue or romance as the masculine performance of hegemonic power is highly violent (Cooper 24). The narrative is also a critique of nineteenth-century American imperialism and the frontier myth focusing on hegemonic masculine performances, including male-focused sexual violence as an expression of power in conflict (Cooper 25) and the extreme marginalization of women. McCarthy uses the act of rape metaphorically—regardless of gender—as a common tactic of war for expressing conquest over subjugated ethnicities and races. Thus, the aesthetic constructs of iconic images of the frontier—when the acts of violence were illustrated as purgative or sacramental in opposition to the savage actions of Native populations—are presented as misleading rhetorical devices about the wilderness against indigenous people, highlighting the wildness of the white male for control and power (Cooper 25-27).

3.2 The New Pastoral, the New Western

Pastoral is an influential literary trope in the American western writing tradition since the nineteenth century and the environmental perception in fiction, shaping ecocritical concerns of nature in literary and historical writings. The European pastoral as a mode originates in classical antiquity and expresses nostalgia for an imagined golden age when shepherds raised livestock in a nomadic way in the countryside. The pastoral tradition was revived and flourished during the Romantic Movement as a cultural and social construction of nature against urbanization. As Terry Gifford put it, there are three kinds of pastoral in literature: a retreat from the city to the countryside, the contrasting images of rural and urban sites, and the idealization of rural life that obscures the realities of labor and hardship *(Pastoral* 2*).* Along with these ideas, American Transcendentalism drew on the European literary practices of the Industrial Revolution era—as technological advances and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad system were on the political and economic agenda in the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century. At the same time, western literature served as the transmitter of the American national ideology of Manifest Destiny.

The "middleness" of the land resulted in the re-evaluation of modernity and the pursuit of pastoral peace in nature (virtues of silence and contemplation of nature) in opposition to machines (railroad and other man-made constructions). While the sublime (the extraordinary experience in or of nature) was an essential part of European Romantic writing, in the American literary tradition, the wilderness became the key concept to elaborate on. Leo Marx proposed the idea of the "middle landscape" (31), referring to the wilderness, an intersection between civilization (the factual technological development, industrialization, and urbanization in the nineteenth century) and true wilderness (the rural frontier myth and the agricultural economics).

The distinctive feature of the American pastoral is the human response to environmental, social, and cultural history (Garrard 34). According to Garrard, the metaphor of the American pastoral is significant for ecocriticism. Non-fictional nature writing has an "underlying narrative structure in which the protagonist leaves civilization for an encounter with nonhuman nature" (49) to rediscover the fundamental truths of human existence, experiencing epiphany and renewal upon return. Moreover, American pastoral is a domesticated form of pastoral since it promoted the Jeffersonian agrarian political ideology of "land-owning farming citizenry" (Garrard 49). Nature writing emphasized working rather than an aesthetic relationship with the land.

The pastoral, just as the frontier had been for new western historians, is a myth about history promoting an idealized and heroic but not realistic way of life and narrative (Garrard 50-51). In the center of the frontier society, utilizing the land and obtaining its resources stand that underpin the anthropocentric conception of the pastoral and the masculine symbolic order (Garrard 51). American literary history and ecocriticism reconsidered the role of nature writing. They reevaluated the pastoral ideology in American literature as a response to the environmental crisis in the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in the shift from an anthropocentric transcendentalism to a biocentric perspective on wilderness (Garrard 52). Nevertheless, pastoral ecology supports the models of harmony, balance, and stability, while the new postmodern ecology claims that nature itself is not constant—even if undisturbed—but changes in time and space (Garrard 58).

The contemporary American pastoral is the cultural critique of the idealization of the countryside. Writings emphasize that the rural landscape is fabricated and perceived as a place of leisure, refuge, pleasure, and alternative living for people (Garrard 56). While the New West promoted local stories and cultural diversity of the western regions opposing the one national story of the Old West, the Postwest defined the West not as a real place but a place's imaginary other that was represented through cultural artifacts (Baym 816). The misrepresentation of the western tradition resulted in an imaginary landscape and a simulacrum of the socially constructed "reality" (Baym 818).

Nineteenth-century celebration of the majesty of the landscape and the idealization of peaceful harmony of human beings with nature is no longer applicable to contemporary environmental writing and ecological fiction ensuing from the social and political environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and after the paradigm shift in the literary and historical narrative tradition in the 1980s. The first American writer who addressed the unprecedented change in the environment by man-constructed machines (especially the extension of the railway system)—before contemporary environmental authors—was Henry David Thoreau. A century later, Rachel Carson, an American marine biologist, called attention to the ill-treating human activity in nature with the use of pesticides and other dangerous chemicals. From the first wave of New Westerners in the 1980s, Patricia Nelson Limerick raised awareness of the outdated white anthropocentric approach to the land and the environment in her historiographic writings.

In *All the Pretty Horses* (1992) Cormac McCarthy uses the pastoral trope and various elements of the western writing tradition to prove and justify the unreliability and deficiency of the historically, socially, and culturally constructed notions of the frontier myth. The role of the

"middle landscape" and the symbolic borderland between the United States and Mexico are presented from environmental, cultural, social, and historical perspectives. McCarthy rewrites the western genre according to the reconsidered forms of the pastoral and employs the New and Postwestern theories claiming that the representations of the West are false historical and social constructs. The writer presents his characters as attached to the land and nature. However, they have to face—historically untold but present—hardships of the desert borderland territory and experience life-threatening activity on the "Mexican frontier." The retreat to the wilderness is a form of connection with the past when the rancher and cowboy lifestyles had been praised as a virtuous and authentic relationship with nature. Still, as it turns out from the historical credit of the novel, the wild landscape has more dark and unpredictable laws than expected.

McCarthy represents the Southwest neither from an aesthetic nor from a practical viewpoint. Instead, he emphasizes the environmentalist approach toward natural elements and inhabitants of the land with different cultural backgrounds rather than applying the purely human-centered pioneer perspective or the ethnically sensitive new western viewpoint. McCarthy focuses on the cultural representation through the characters' search for a simple way of life and tries to integrate the place (the Mexican-American borderland) and people living in the territory (Texans, Mexicans, and Native Americans) (822)—in line with Nina Baym's theory about the new western narrative.

3.3 Material Agency, Ecological Posthumanism

Cormac McCarthy's book, *No Country for Old Men* (2005) is a posthumanist and material ecocritical work in the sense that human nature and the human spirit have been transformed through the moral crises of twentieth-century wars when the focus from anthropocentric environmentalism turned to the material perception of the environment. The posthumanist turn in cultural theory occurred in the 1960s and 1970s after postmodernism deconstructed the epistemological and ontological notions of humanism, which significantly affected the perception of the human. The concept of "posthumanism," arising in the 1980s and 1990s, entails the discussion of the trends of critical, cultural, and philosophical posthumanism and new materialism, which re-conceptualize the human in post-anthropocentric and post-dualistic ways (Braidotti 439). These approaches dismantle the hierarchical, anthropocentric conceptualization of the human (Braidotti 439). In addition, posthumanism denies the absolute agency of human beings, highlighting the ontological hybridity of the human and relational

traits between the human and the non-human that are also relevant in the context of literary ecocriticism.

The US-Mexican borderland of the early 1980s, the setting of *No Country*, is a significant symbolic space in US history as a liminal site of connection, transfer, and division. The book's main characters are veterans of the Second World War and the Vietnam War. Their psyches had been affected by the extremely dehumanizing and immoral actions and intentions of warfare. Their efforts are carried out with different regards to the surroundings. According to ecological postmodernism and material ecocriticism, human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic entities are in constant relation and interchange with one another (Oppermann 21). In *No Country for Old Men*, human characters' common affairs center around drug trafficking across the border between Texas and Mexico. This liminal space interconnects humans from various socio-cultural backgrounds with, in Opperman's terms, "the narrative expression of the environment" of which human agents are part (31). Environmental agents do not predispose the personality and deeds of human beings; they merely articulate the narratives of human and nonhuman or more-than-human entities the environment produces (Oppermann 34). According to this theory, all substances of the environment omit vibes that interact with one another, creating relations and narratives through creative agencies. As Karen E. Waldron claims, the environment and various places are not deterministic (xxv), but the related entities occurring at one site interact through their expressive creativity.

I argue that *No Country* responds to a posthumanist interpretation, in a cultural and in a philosophical sense. In order to establish the conceptual frame for analysis, the notion of material relations has to be considered. Posthumanism takes into account humans' unethical and immoral acts, transcribing the humanistic values upheld from the period of the Enlightenment in Europe—and its American equivalent, Transcendentalism—until the breakout of the Second World War, releasing forces that Sheriff Bell, a character in McCarthy's novel, refers to as the prophets of the Antichrist into the world. Posthumanism emphasizes the turn away from the human moral values—of searching for happiness without harming one another, seeking justice most peacefully, a sense of community, the fulfillment of social and professional duties, acceptance of the socially constructed rules, and in case of sinning, the sense of guilt and acceptance of the punishment—to the instinctive nature of human behavior: hunting for prey, escaping from danger, survival (kill to avoid being killed), crossing social consensus, possessing material things and solitude.

The French philosopher Bruno Latour rejects the assumption that there is "no relation . . . between 'the material' and 'the social world'" (75). Latour asserts that when workers build

a wall of bricks, humans are connected to humans, and objects are connected to other objects, but this object-subject dichotomy is not an adequate category to define the collective action carried out by all of the actors—including brick as object matter. He emphasizes that "collective action" (74) is accomplished by both material and social actors, which reveals the agency of both human beings and non-human entities and their active and passive interaction.

In her book *Material Ecocriticism*, Heather I. Sullivan creates the notion of "ecological posthumanism" that aims to contextualize the human being within the material environment of the biosphere. However, it is "not grounded on idealized notions of harmony" ("Ecology of Colors" 83) but on the "equivalence between self, body, and environment" (Outka 31). Paul Outka claims that the human subject and the natural landscape are "fundamentally and qualitatively similar material constructions." Thus, human identity is a materialized structure (32). Outka's notion of the "organic sublime" (31) refers to the merging of the borders among environmental entities resulting in the material perception of the self and the environment as belonging together. The materialization of self-construction, the loss of human moral values (in short, posthumanism), and the perception of the land in terms of agency are crucial elements in McCarthy's novel.

From the material ecocritical perspective, McCarthy's book builds around sinister relations among the human (Sherriff Bell, Anton Chigurh, Llewelyn Moss, and other characters) and the nonhuman, or more-than-human agents (the land and its adherent entities: mountain ridges, stones, dust, and animals, human-created objects, such as vehicles or weapons) on the borderland. The factors of relations are the binaries between material entities: actual objects and relational agencies of the environment. Immaterial agencies create random and infinite constructions due to the differences between reason and belief and the arbitrariness of the abstract notions of life and death. The environment seems to be in accordance and cooperation with human action. The environmental agents either foresee and signal the coming processes or echo a warning toward environmental entities as a response to ominous operations, which the reader senses as uncanny effects created by McCarthy's text.

The reciprocity of ecological posthumanism and environmental agency unfold through Ed Tom Bell's recollection of memories from his career, his relation to human and posthuman actions, and the depiction of his relationships through the institution of law enforcement. The contemplations of the soon-to-be-retired Sheriff reveal the probable sources of crime on the US-Mexican border and the relational web of law officers and criminals interacting on the southern US border. Those connections, criminal investigation, and juridical processes also

involve questions of ethics and human moral values. Moreover, the historical memory of the land is recalled through allegories and symbolism in reflections of the past.

The title of the book is borrowed from W.B. Yeats's poem "Sailing to Byzantium" referring to an imaginary journey through the phases of life until old age when the vivid world becomes a space "That is no country for old men" (163). In McCarthy's thriller novel the imaginary land of peaceful settlement from the early historical perspective, personal memories and the actual land of constant conflict among various peoples are represented through the cultural, social, moral, and juridical issues on the borderland. Ed Tom Bell's strongly moral and communal character and his stream of consciousness about the connection of nature and man clash with Anton Chigurh's antisocial traits and posthuman philosophy supported by determinism and fate and controlled by chaos and material agency.

3.4 Postapocalypse, Place-Space, Heterotopia-Dystopia

As America entered the twenty-first century, the great expectations of the new millennium were promptly cut back after the events of 9/11 in 2001. Not only was the power of the United States shaken, but anxiety, insecurity, therefore the anticipation of the end of the world, and moral crisis were cast upon humanity around the globe. *The Road* (2006) is a postapocalyptic narrative embedded in the possible aftermath of social, political, cultural, and moral contexts. For the ecocritical analysis of the work, various theories of space and spatiality (by Foucault, Heidegger, Bachelard, Schama, and Williams collected in Gerry Smyth's book), Karen E. Waldron's approach of literary ecology, along with Greg Garrard's discussion of the literary trope of the apocalypse, serve to reveal the connections of environmental destruction, the recession of place, the anarchic chaos in space, and the moral decay of human civilization at the turn of the century.

Applying Michel Foucault's conceptualization of space, McCarthy's apocalyptic world is a dystopia because it is an imaginary place where a different type of society and unusual laws of existence are formed, and old western social and cultural values are turned upside-down. However, McCarthy's gloomy novel also represents heterotopias, real and mythic spaces (Foucault 4) of the present world through images of the landscape, the natural environment and the man-made environment, such as cities, buildings, blacktop roads, and vehicles, and the visionary postapocalyptic landscape. The environmental dimension of the novel is alarming and worrisome as all organic creatures are considerably devastated. In addition, there is a dichotomy of Christian morality and value judgment in the distinction between good and evil—the basic

element of apocalyptic writings—, but the dividing line is blurred between the two opposing poles of the moral scale. Sometimes fundamentally good people are pushed to commit evil things to maintain positive merits in the world, and intrinsically evil people prompt the good ones to see the meaning of the right path and condemn inhuman behavior.

Before Michel Foucault formulated his ideas about places and spaces, the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard defined space as a phenomenological entity, not "a homogenous and empty space, but . . . a space thoroughly imbued with quantities and perhaps thoroughly fantasmatic" (2). According to Foucault, the internal space is

> the space of our dreams and that of our passions hold within themselves qualities that seem intrinsic: there is a light, ethereal, transparent space, or again a dark, rough, encumbered space; a space from above, of summits, or on the contrary a space from below of mud; or again a space that can be flowing like sparkling water, or space that is fixed, congealed, like stone or crystal. (Foucault 2-3)

While Bachelard approached the notion of the afterlife state from a philosophical viewpoint, McCarthy's father figure in *The Road* refers to this ontological inquiry from the aspect of the Christian belief system, where the souls of good people live eternally in Heaven. In contrast, the souls of bad people are condemned to eternal suffering in Hell by the judgment of God himself. The differentiation between "good guys" and "bad guys" in the novel probably references the binary opposition of people who—according to the man, the novel's main focalizer—, belong to either Heaven or Hell.

Heidegger's philosophy of phenomenology and existentialism is concerned with being in space, which is divided into an abstract space and a specific place. For him, place is an ontological dimension of being and considers the words "house," "dwelling," and "home" synonyms because all of them suggest the union of a human spirit and a material object. Dwelling means to be in and of a place where someone feels secure. It involves the opportunity for mobility, to change place and move, but it is always necessary to have a base to set down to realize one's being and possibilities of here, from which "the world discloses itself" (Smyth 3), and there, to which one can go. These localized and spatial relations are necessary for the significance of human existence. The modern way of life is a threat to authenticity due to the condition of "homelessness" or "placelessness," which "undermines our ability to live with and care for, the earth" (Smyth 3). It also involves the loss of roots and the lack of "spiritual nourishment necessary for an authentic (happy and fulfilled) life" (Smyth 3). Heidegger insists that dwelling means to be set at peace and have a caring relationship with an authentic place

(Smyth 4). A place is an actual physical terrain, but it is also an abstract conceptual basis for empirical and ontological dimensions of human experience (Smyth 3).

The "vision of prophetic imagination" (Garrard 108) or, in short, the apocalypse, has always been a key issue in human consciousness connected to various religious beliefs or philosophies about a possibly occurring cataclysm. In American non-fiction writing the decay of human culture and society through the destruction of nature first appeared in Rachel Carson's ecological writing, *Silent Spring* (1962), warning about the consequences of human carelessness toward the environment and supporting the apocalyptic rhetoric. Carson emphasized the radioactive fallout and pesticide pollution of the environment that changes the very nature of the world (Garrard 94). Contamination of the air, the earth, rivers, and seas with dangerous and lethal materials results in irrecoverable pollution and irreversible change and damage in living tissues. The postmodern literary work, *White Noise* (1985) by Don DeLillo reprehends the artificial behavior of the American people and the consumerist hysteria generated by capitalism and industrialism that completely ignore the natural surroundings and nuclear pollution as a result of an "airborne toxic event" that destroys the natural environment and creates a constant threat of the apocalypse. *The Road* is thereby a menacing vision about the possible subsequent state of the American society and culture which may follow the track the above-mentioned sinister narratives had foreshadowed.

4 The Ecocritical Reading of Four Novels by McCarthy

All of Cormac McCarthy's scrutinized novels (*Blood Meridian, All the Pretty Horses, No Country for Old Men, The Road*) imply the literary tropes of wilderness, pastoral, posthuman, and the apocalypse, however, each of them is featured and highlighted in a particular work. McCarthy's oeuvre includes a more than two-decade period (between 1985 and 2006) when the author delineated the negative development and a backward evolution of American history through the anthropocentric perception and mistreatment of the environment on the North American continent. Throughout most of American history, the wilderness always meant an enterprise for the Euro-American man to expand the frontier, conquer and tame the undisturbed and wild nature and its creatures (indigenous people, autochthonic life forms, and natural habitats, alongside other non-human organisms, materials, and resources), then subject them according to its ideas and beliefs, and utilize them for its sole prosperity, which has become the essence of Americanness since the nineteenth century. The misconceived treatment of the natural environment and the notion of the American pastoral in the sense of "being preoccupied

with nature and rurality as setting, theme, and value in contradistinction from society and the urban" (Buell 1) drifted people away from a genuinely peaceful life in and with the biosphere. The amusement with economic—and therefore technological—development, just as the preoccupation with material and financial growth, indicate the inevitable evolvement of the posthuman condition, where human beings can no longer be the center of existence due to their unethical and unsustainable treatment of the organic and non-human surroundings. Thus, the global destruction of the ecosystem cannot be avoided. These concepts and processes articulated in McCarthy's fiction support his surmise about the aftermath of a future apocalypse through the myth of American exceptionalism and the negative aspects of human nature, especially vice and greed.

McCarthy discusses four main themes in *Blood Meridian*, as he introduces the motifs of wilderness and wildness of the South American terrain and its creatures, the importance of the pastoral tradition and escapism in American fiction writing, the emergence of the posthuman as a result of material relations (through the character of the judge), and the postapocalyptic perspectives of environmental destruction owing to the human-centered, hierarchical view of the landscape. These literary tropes are crucial for understanding McCarthy's perspective on American people's relationship to the land, and how its sublime character overwhelms them. Despite the endeavors of western civilization to control the natural environment and create a New Paradise—based on the Christian ideology and religious traditions of the Old Continent—, the conquest of wilderness entails destruction. F. Scott Fitzgerald's thoughts in *Great Gatsby* (1925) overlap with McCarthy's views on this concern:

> Most of the big shore places were closed now . . . a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, . . . had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. (115)

Although the wilderness of the American landscape and geography fascinated and amazed immigrants from Europe and all over the world, territorial expansion, the closing frontier, and finite environmental resources have proven that the anthropocentric approach, which constantly regards the natural world from the human perspective grounded on man's desire, is insufficient to understand and treat it with respect.

Chapter 1 Performances of Masculine Hegemony in the American Wilderness: *Blood Meridian*

1 Introduction

Cormac McCarthy's lines about "the meridian of that day we come upon the judge on his rock there in that wilderness by his single self" (132) refer to the omnipotence of the novel's antagonist, the allegorical character of Judge Holden, and sets the atmosphere for the heyday of the American wilderness narrative. The author invokes the historical context of the nineteenth-century frontier myth and the imperial ideology of manifest destiny in the vast wilderness that entails violent masculine ideals. The doomed story of American scalp-hunters takes place on the symbolic borderland territory between the United States and Mexico between 1849 and 1850, which is a landscape referred to geographically as "the blood meridian" where ethnic conflicts and genocidal wars unfold. A major McCarthy critic, Stephen Frye calls *Blood Meridian* a "revisionist" frontier romance that evokes the conventions of the frontier in the setting of the West (*Understanding* 9). Furthermore, McCarthy's historical fiction is the artistic transformation of violence into myth (Frye, *Cambridge Companion* 110).

The conquest and the taming of the wilderness in the American Southwest were objectives that justified US imperial ideology and Anglo-American male hegemony in the mid-nineteenth century. Cormac McCarthy's historical western re-examines the identity-forming potential of the sublime landscape, rewrites the classical wilderness narrative, and deconstructs established political, social, and cultural discourses regarding the mid-nineteenth-century borderland territory. McCarthy not only demythicizes dominant frontier and masculine ideals but also defamiliarizes the history of the Wild West. The plot of *Blood Meridian* is based on evidence and facts revealed in Samuel Chamberlain's memoir about the life of scalp-hunters on the terrain in that period, *My Confession: Recollections of a Rogue* (1850). The violent imagery of McCarthy's novel, blended with the Christian conceptual framework, emphasizes the primal wildness of human beings at the intersection of Native American, Spanish-Mexican, and Anglo-American lands. McCarthy applies the notion of "wildness" to the barbarous methods of so-called civilized people over various ethnic groups as they aim to extend power and control over the land and its inhabitants, while "wilderness" is a cultural construct about the natural environment that stands for the "middle ground." The non-heroic historical narrative represents the symbolic decay of civilization, religion, and ultimately humanity, along with the rise of

constant warfare, greed, debauchery, and the metaphorical—and also literal—subjugation and eradication of the weak, regardless of race and gender.

This chapter on *Blood Meridian* examines the identity-shaping character of the gendered southwestern wilderness and the landscape's potential to undermine the concept of the western hero. It argues that McCarthy discredits the various western myths that have shaped historical, cultural, and social perceptions and representations. Further scrutiny will address the philosophical and aesthetic concerns regarding the landscape and the ways in which they frame the literary text. Last but not least, the analysis will reveal the discourse of the narrative in terms of different notions of "wildness" and "wilderness."

2 Gendered Identities in the Southwestern Wilderness

According to Judith Butler, the notion of "normative gender" (particularly masculinity in the Anglo-American culture) affiliated with power is the same act as Franz Fanon's description of racial hegemony and the practice of "othering" (Cooper 34). The exaggerated gender illustration in *Blood Meridian* serves as a criticism of hegemonic masculinity in the nineteenth-century American Southwest along with the process of othering through metaphorical conquest of the unknown and believed to be wild, which is the reversal of the character of the ideal western hero. McCarthy illustrates the Southwestern conquest, following the American victory in the Mexican-American War, as the metaphorical and literal neutering, unmanning, and dehumanizing of the other's agency, and the removal of its identity (Cooper 42). This section reveals the unlucky fate and the powerless character of the kid on his journey through the wilderness, the omnipresence of the evil portrayed by Judge Holden's hegemonic figure, and the representatives of dominant ideologies (the masculine ideal, racism, Anglo-American supremacy) in the nineteenth-century American Southwest.

The character of the kid is referred to as "the child" at the beginning of the narrative, and his identity is initially defined in terms of the family environment he had been raised in. The child is from a poor Tennessean family without a mother, who probably died from pregnancy-related difficulties, as the following passage suggests: "The mother dead . . . did incubate in her own bosom the creature who would carry her off" (3). She is completely unknown to the boy, as they never speak about her. His father is an alcoholic schoolmaster, and he has a sister whom he will never see again for some mysterious reasons. The child is unwashed, pale, and thin, and even though his father is a schoolteacher, the boy is illiterate. The

lack of attachment and the abusive and ignorant family environment establish the child's affinity for alienation and violence.

As McCarthy reports, the child was born during the famous Leonids meteor shower in 1833, and his life and fate are connected to the astrophysical phenomenon. The comet is associated with the birth of the Savior, according to Biblical symbolism. Yet, the kid's savior-like character and his rebirth after an Indian attack are illustrated in a naturalistic way: "one soul rose wondrously from among the . . . dead . . . soaked with blood and with urine" (58), emphasizing his mortal human nature. Although the narrative follows the boy's coming of age and centers on his experiences in the American wilderness, he is neither a heroic protagonist because he does not bear any positive attributes and virtues, nor a savior because he is incapable of self-sacrifice and has "a taste for mindless violence" (3).

The child is labeled as "the kid" upon his first encounter with the judge, and this meeting indicates that he started to follow evil intentions and abhorrent deeds. The child ran away from home at fourteen and since then has been fighting "like some fairybook beast" (4)—an antagonistic character in children's stories, which is meant to lead youngsters on the right moral path. In the meantime, he altered in appearance with scars on his face, his hands and wrists became big, unlike his build-up and height, his shoulders are set close, while his eyes remained "oddly innocent" (4), reminding of a weak character (childish and feminine). Leaving behind the identity of a child means the abandonment of his origins (family and home) and stepping on the track of his destiny vigorously. The laws of the wild and barbarous terrain shape the personality of the kid, designating the wilderness of the landscape and emphasizing the wildness of human beings over the beauty of the landscape, as suggested by the sublime quality of the American wilderness myth. McCarthy compares the creation of wild men in the wilderness to the creation of man by God: "the stuff of creation may be shaped to man's will or whether his own heart is not another kind of clay" (5). The author challenges the aims of the construction of man and questions whether free will is independent of the material which human beings are made of, or whether it defines their existence.

Judge Holden, the antagonist of the novel, has a vast knowledge of the wilderness and he is an organic, yet superior part of it. He is the collector of the natural world and operates as an anthropologist. The judge takes a dead Apache's war bag and finds objects from the natural environment in it, which helps him understand the culture and mindset of the Indians. He gathers objects and information from nature to gain knowledge and power over creatures in the wild landscape. By taking the old dead warrior's scalp, he signals that he defeated him, and puts the bloody wig away into his collection to record it with the rest of the objects characteristic of

the wild southwest. The judge is not only the collector of natural objects, but he shares his expertise in geology with his company, discussing the samples of ores—the messengers of the Earth's origins. His scientifically informed argument is so convincing that even those who believe in Earth's creation by God through the "ordering up of eons out of the ancient chaos" (123) think that God's words are "in stones and trees, the bones of things" (124). The judge frequently records natural phenomena (plants, animals, ores, etc.) in his book and even collects samples of leaves in it as evidence of their existence.

Despite archiving nature and integrating its components into his knowledge, the giant hairless man's philosophy about the world is highly anthropocentric, for he sees that the elements and entities of the environment are present on the Earth to serve people, especially the worthy ones. The judge declares that the aim of the collection of natural elements (leaves, plants, stuffed birds, butterflies) is to control and regulate the activity of wild ecosystems. "Whatever in creation exists without my knowledge exists without my consent" (209)—states the judge as if he had supreme, or godlike, power over the existence of organic creatures. He further argues that scientific knowledge about the operation of nature and the world, which requires discovering a multitude of species, can eliminate man's enslavement (209). Observing and understanding the character of the environment and different forces of nature, man can become a suzerain of it (209). Ubiquitous authority can be gained over autonomous ecosystems, including the smallest units of different life forms (worms, insects, viruses, or bacteria), capable of the destruction of humanity. The judge is therefore not only the agnostic forerunner of scientific development and the theory of evolution in the nineteenth century but he reckons that taking charge of the agencies of the world will enable man "to dictate the terms of his own fate" (210). As Stephen Frye highlights, McCarthy is particularly interested in both ancient and modern philosophical systems. *Blood Meridian* is his most philosophical novel and Judge Holden's figure seems to blend ancient Gnosticism, Platonism and Neo-Platonism, Nietzschean materialism, and existential Christianity (*Cambridge Companion* 3).

The judge is represented as a hegemonic male figure, a superhuman, and a savior for his knowledge of arts and sciences and various skills in persuasion and leadership. Although his origin is unknown, he is the rival of the Devil in his deeds and he aims to be as omnipotent as God through knowledge and, therefore, the possession of all creatures, human and non-human. According to Tobin, the ex-priest, the judge is gifted by the Almighty because he is clever, speaks languages (at least five, including English, Spanish, Dutch, German, and Latin), and is good at arts (he is a dancer, and he is as talented and canny that he can "outdance the devil himself" (130). The judge is an expert in all the seven liberal arts: he is a great fiddler, he can

write with both hands, knows nature thoroughly, and is a great traveler (has been to Paris and London, the cultural centers of Europe) and a good adventurer: “He can cut a trail, shoot a rifle, ride a horse, track a deer” (130). He rides the horse bareback as the Indians do and is the greatest and most able man of all. Tobin, an ex-priest in the scalp-hunter company reveals when they came across the judge that the gang thought of him as a curse, and he also confesses that he has doubts about him. But one thing is for sure: before joining Glanton’s company, each man had encountered the judge and they reckon him as someone who saved them all. Tobin describes Glanton’s and the judge’s relationship as they made a “secret commerce,” a “terrible covenant” (133), and they are also like brothers. It is Glanton who has been leading the gang since they started their scalp-hunting entrepreneurship in the 1840s, but the judge seems to be in charge of the decisions and he is the one possessing genuine power over the people.

The judge is, however, not only a man of intellect but an exhibitionist in terms of his huge and hairless body. He enjoys being seen naked or half-naked and his bareness reflects his wild human instincts laid bare. On a stormy night, at the old presidio in the late Mexican mine town, he is reported to be naked atop the walls “immense and pale in the revelations of lightning” (125) and the next morning a twelve-year-old, probably half-breed Mexican boy, whose origin is unknown, is found “lying face down naked” (126) and dead. Although it is clear to the members of the group what could have happened, the ambiguous narrative only gives hints about the judge’s crime. He was curious about the boy’s origin and he was outside of the building at night—apart from the night watch who reported him—, enjoying the terrible rampage of the storm that set his violent sexual desire and killing instincts free. His physical power enabled him to break the neck of the child. The undisclosed circumstances of the judge’s pedophilic (even necrophiliac) deed allude to the ending of the novel when he reunites with the kid—the only living witness of his actions.

The relationship between the judge and the kid has been ambiguous since their first encounter at the burning hotel. According to the judge, the kid has always been like a son to him. Yet, their animosity—built upon the Oedipal rivalry between father and son and upon their testimony of crimes—had been formed before they met. The kid records and reports the facts and the truth that even “whole bodies of decisions [are] not accountable to the courts of men” (326) for being unfamiliar with the actions and intentions of evil men in the wilderness. Confronting the unbelievable and insane things the kid claims in arrestment, the judge argues with alternative facts and a different reality about the conspiracy with the savages and their betrayal in his favor. The judge’s created reality about the country and the bewildering potential of the desert is more reasonable and believable to legislative officers than the kid’s tales about

the hidden treasures in the hills. While the kid is the only survivor of the ethnic cleansing, the senseless acquisition of material objects, and the conquest of the living space of the aboriginals in the Southwest during the 1840s, he is a witness against himself (323) for participating in the historical judgment of war and making individual decisions. The kid is, therefore, an unreliable witness of American history compared to the judge, whose existence is without a beginning and an end. In addition, the judge's power over the kid lies in the metaphor of a cold-forger, his symbolic partner in crime, hammering out a coin that decides over men's destiny, controlling their choices and decisions through trade, exchange, and the abundance of material pleasure.

The kid, whose character develops to become the man later in the novel, is not only the witness of the nineteenth-century historical, social and environmental changes, but his figure is also the representation and reconstruction of the past through individual memories. Wandering from place to place in the wilderness, he becomes the testimony of the associations, betrayals, and cruelties committed by Americans, Mexicans, and Indians on intersecting southwestern territories. Historical events about the gold rush in the west (1849-1851), the burning of the city of San Francisco several times, and the arrival of the "small yellow men with speech like cats" (329) from China are recollected. Following the recession of land in the west in 1861, the kid was the witness of the travelers who returned to the east after being disappointed by the urban craze in the west (debauchery, overpricing of goods, no fortune and luck for the pilgrims but mainly for the outlaws instead, who are not afraid to take everything from others and who have nothing to lose). Constant enmity and warfare left orphaned children violent in the country without guidance that reproduced the kid's unfortunate past for the new generation. The kid is the observer of the extinction of the buffalo in the southwest in 1876. The killing of animals by the thousands, the inordinate utilization of the abundance of nature, and leaving millions of carcasses on the land, the wasting of rotten meat reveal the unconsidered consequences of territorial expansion coupled with the instrumental view of nature and the environment as expendable resources.

Some allegorical characters represent political ideologies and social standpoints toward ethnicities in the middle of the nineteenth century. The solitary and half-mad old hermit is the voice of social attitudes—disgust and hatred—of black people and the arbitrariness of masculine conduct before the Civil War. As a former slaver from Mississippi, the old man benefitted from human trafficking and slave labor but he quit for getting "[s]ick of niggers" (19). His attitude reveals sadism when he hands "a small dark thing [to the kid] . . .. Some man's heart, dried and blackened" (19). The heart of a Negro is a relic of the old lunatic, a trophy of manly bravery and dominance over the weak. The hermit's "eyes redrimmed as if locked in

their cages with hot wires" (17) are descriptive of his outrage, fury, and insanity. His philosophy, that "[w]omen, whiskey, money, and niggers" (19) are capable of the destruction of the world, echoes the destructive fundaments of masculine lifestyle and performance in the American Southwestern setting. Despite the explicit expression of masculine power, the hermit displays ambiguous behavior toward the kid. His words "Just stay with me" (18), just as his demeanor watching the boy over the dying fire and perversely bending over him while he is sleeping, show that the kid is in constant danger of being killed or raped in the wilderness.

Captain White and his army of unpaid irregulars, who practice power over different ethnicities, represent the US-American schemes to expand the national territory unlawfully. White's army touts bravery in the name of the national purpose. In fact, they are motivated by reward, respect, and social position, not to mention the benefits of looting (horses, ammunition, saddle, rifle, clothes) and the grabbing of Mexican land. The captain's irregulars wear carved boots with high heels, buckskin uniform, and black silk hats (31, 33) to express their serious intention and emphasize their manly look, yet such garments are associated with feminine traits. On the other hand, the Captain's grayish hair and mustache give an impression of an experienced leader. His deliberate movements of sealing the letters with his ring in the red wax spot look like an act of solemnity. White's idea of raiding Mexicans is considered "the path of righteousness" (32) by his followers. However, their operation is not only illegal but violent and cruel.

John Joel Glanton is a historically based figure who appears in Samuel Chamberlain's memoirs *My Confession: Recollections of a Rogue*. The leader of the scalp-hunter gang is a small, black-haired man with political influence over the Mexicans through his contract with the governor of Chihuahua to hunt Indians. His expertise in shooting and killing is tested on American army revolvers and demonstrated on animals (a cat, a couple of birds, and a little goat). The enormous explosion of the pistol leaves "no blood or cry" (87), except for some feathers and a few witnesses. Nevertheless, Glanton is attached to some animals he owns and has control over: his horses and the dog that follows him merely for food. Although Glanton is a cruel person and orders the murder of his own men, he is a broken and solitary man, longing for his family (wife and child), whom he will not see again after he is arrested in Texas. Glanton is not only running from the US law but he is hunted in Mexico for violating the unwritten contract with the governor to protect Mexican lives from the Indians. After a period of bad luck in his unlawful venture—betrayal by the Sonoran governor, defeat by the Sonoran cavalry, losing his men, and starvation—Glanton seizes the operation of the immigrant ferry from Lincoln, a doctor, and a ferryman from New York. The looting of an enormous fortune

(thousands of dollars in gold and silver coins, jewelry, watches, pistols, raw gold, silver in bars, knives, silverware, plates, and teeth (278) revives his hopes to take control over his fate. In contrast, his tyrannical arrogance becomes his destiny.

Glanton's gang is a community of celebrated criminals who are welcomed in Mexico by "lovely darkskinned girls throwing flowers from the windows and some blowing kisses and small boys running alongside and old men waving their hats and crying out huzzahs" (85). Local people appreciate the scalp-hunters' operation because the mercenaries—consisting mostly of Americans—protect them from the fearsome savage and, in return, enhance the American sense of hegemonic power over the subjugated people. The members of the group are vicious-looking bearded barbarians on Indian ponies half-drunk. The bandits' appearance—armed, in skins of animals and wearing human ears as necklaces—and the decoration of their wild horses—probably the remains of Indian skin, hair, and teeth (83)–disclose devotion to eradicate the "savages" and expose remarkable masculine abilities, which is far beyond the aims of taming and civilizing the wilderness. Despite the Indian-hunting profile of the gang, there are some dangerous-looking, filthy, and brutal savages among them, the Delawares, who feed on human flesh. It is so because the southwest was not only the place of national and ethnic interests but also an individual commitment to material benefits. The Indians in the gang get protection, wage, and alcohol—the greatest threat decimating Indian nations beside imported European diseases and the holocaust cast upon them.

The reception held for Glanton's gang is luxurious and elegant, but it turns into an almost one-month-long debauchery and exploitation of the supplies of the city. For gold and acknowledgment, the members of the gang sell their souls to the Devil and destroy everything and everyone in their way. With the depiction of the celebration of criminals McCarthy shows the harsh contrast between sublime ideas and myths about the landscape, the wilderness, and the frontier across boundaries. Also, he exposes the dirty agreements and selfish interests of a political and cultural war. The members of the company dress in clothes of European fashion, imitating the sophisticated aristocratic lifestyle of the Old Continent. The criminals are washed, shaved, and shorn, yet they cannot get rid of their menacing looks and small-mindedness. The abundance of food and luxury products at the feast (fish, fowl, beef, wild meat, cigars, sherry, wine, and brandy) with refined music and dance implicates the cornucopian richness of resources and products for the upper layers of North American societies. The hegemonic arrogance of the Americans is revealed when the Mexicans propose a toast to American heroes (Franklin and Washington) and they undiplomatically ignore their Mexican hosts, disregarding their national and cultural heritage. The drunken looting, fighting, destruction, and debauchery

represent the careless reveling in the land's prosperity and the assertion of the masculine character over the city, the land, women, and the "weaker" men, Indians and Mexicans.

3 Historical and Cultural Representations of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Wild West

In the nineteenth century, the US-Mexican borderland was a place of barbarism, savagery, and violence without limits. The intersection of Native American, Spanish-Mexican, and Anglo-American territories was associated with the American aims to expand the southwestern frontier for imperial purposes, countered by the Mexican claim to their land property taken in 1846 in the course of the Mexican-American wars, and Native American self-defense. All the actions carried out by these ethnicities are displayed regardless of any moral impulses toward one another and the wild ecosystems of the region. Social, cultural, historical, and ideological representation of the American southwestern environment, the illustration of rural and urban customs and practices in Mexico, and the portrayal of various Native American tribes are covered in this part.

Blood Meridian subverts the cultural representations of the glorified sublime wilderness and the majesty of the landscape, and suggests that the discourses of American colonization conceptualized nature in misleading ways. Different races, societies, and cultural practices allow for a dualism of anthropocentric and biocentric viewpoints, offering an insight into the history of the West, as well as its representations or the intentions of people fighting for the possession of the same land.

The Old West, with the expanding frontier line toward the heart of North America, promised a bright future for individuals. The pastoral landscape of the southern states was not praised for its beauty but represented with black people working in the cotton fields. The "shadowed agony in the garden" (4) signals antebellum tensions in American society concerning the slavery issue, as well as the intensive utilization of natural resources in the name of taming wild nature and as a form of civilized progress. The term "wilderness" denotes an uninhabited area from the Euro-American viewpoint and depriving the wilderness of its wild quality completely transformed the landscape.

Not only is the representation of the natural environment as American pastoral unique in McCarthy's novels but so is the attention to and operation in urban places. Also, different attitudes toward the seized lands are prominent features of his works. Washington, the capital and the legislative center of the United States, is the metonymy for bureaucracy, unwarranted contracts, false treaties with the enemy, and freshly drawn state boundaries by "mollycoddles"

(37) in their comfortable seats. In opposition to the slow processes of the administrative system, Captain White's irregular army stands for immediate action and it assumes that his men take the interests of the country seriously. White holds that his unlawful army is "the instrument of liberation" (37) trying to restrain Mexicans in the dark and troubled land and to further extend the territory of the States. Such goals, however, are not driven by patriotism but by utilitarian purposes and fortune-seeking for fine grasslands, minerals, gold, and silver (37). Dominance over the territory and its inhabitants are justified by the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, the policy claiming that further European colonization in the Americas (e.g. French presence in Sonora) is not acceptable. The controversy of this claim, however, makes all territorial interests on behalf of former European settlers (Spanish, French, British) invalid and illegal on the continent because they wanted land from indigenous people since the discovery of the region.

Trading in the desert is a nonsense form of commerce because the price of gold and silver ores cannot be compared to the value of products for survival. The judge is aware of the importance of supplies (water and food), protection from the environmental forces (sun, heat, sand, and cold at night), and safety from other travelers (with arms and gunpowder), so he uses the greed of his former associates to take advantage from their belongings. Toadvine trades his hat for a hundred dollars, and Brown, a former member of Glanton's company, sells him his rifles and all the useful things for a journey through the desert (canteens, a canvas rucksack, etc.), leaving with the "possession of the fruits of their election" (316). The judge claims common property over the kid's pistol and also the drinking well, arguing that they belong together and they share all they have to survive and protect themselves. This scenario points out contemporary queries about public and private property, and ownership of natural resources, which caused conflicts in communities and involved legislative initiatives.

Water scarcity in the desert plains is the main reason for the adventurers' death as the wooden crosses by the roadside testify (65). Every drop means survival and McCarthy illustrates the divinity of pure water as the kid and Sproule drink at the seep "with pursed lips to the stone like devouts at a shrine" (60). Going in the sand for days with Captain White's company, a man prayed for rain among the heathen, which emphasizes the importance of the Christian worldview and conceptual framework connected to nature in American culture. However, without the signs of green life, it is hard to find any source of liquid in the draught unless there is water between the confining layer and the sand. Dried-out wanderers often show the symptoms of seeing what they want to see in the barren land: a mirage of an oasis, a lake, mountains, trees, and settlements (66). The Edenic landscape created by the mind through the physiological needs of human beings is like the reflection of the imaginary landscape of

American wilderness perceived through the western-European and the US-American lens: neither beautiful and promising nor practical, but a distinct type of environment.

Passing across the lake of gypsum, a dangerous place in the natural environment, where the elements of the wilderness reveal their destructive qualities, the riders are exposed to physical and mental threats. The fine white powder of the desert floor can kill men by irritating and causing damage to the tissues of the skin, eyes, and upper respiratory system and often induces bleeding because of its sharp microcrystalline structure. Gypsum powder also reflects the sunrays leading to a so-called 'snow-blindness' if the eyes of the horses or the riders are not protected or covered. Some horses of Glanton's gang are blinded and crazed by the pain that is due to the reflection of the gypsum. The fine white sand is compared to the "armies of lice on the move" (118) because the small, almost invisible pellets creep imperceptibly into the body of the host and cause it to harm or even death. In addition, the microscopic agents leave no evidence of the destruction, which is characteristic of the southwestern environment, as well as the methods of various ethnic gangs toward one another. The sheer material of the desert plain is not only physically dangerous, but the heat waves reflected from the sand—combined with exhaustion and water shortage—may lead to the dissolving of sounds and shapes for the passengers. The elements of nature, therefore, affect the mind, inducing hallucinations and the vision of a mirage.

McCarthy not only depicts the American attitudes to the Southwestern landscape but considers various standpoints of the region, including the Mexican perspective. The capital of Chihuahua—the late administrative and cultural center of North Mexico—is a devastating place of poverty and the residence of prisoners including "old martyrs and patriots" (77) from the US after the Mexican-American war. The fine building of the governor's palace and the facade of the cathedral on the plaza with figures of Christ and the apostles display the Old World architectural and religious traditions of the Spaniards. Next to the fine pieces of art, the dried scalps of the Indians flapping "strung on cords, the long dull hair swinging like the filaments of certain seaforms" (76) look like tragic masks signifying the west as a dreadful play about the darkest times of American history (177). The grotesque vision blending the cultural heritage of Latin Americans with the newly learned barbarous practices from the Indians are the social, cultural, historical, and political representations of the new standards shaped by different peoples, practices, and the clash of their conceptual frameworks and cognition about the environment and one another. Social problems are not just linked to cruelty, but also economic depression and starvation: there are beggars, orphans, and skinny dogs on the main square, and anonymous meat is grilled over charcoal. The meat of unclear provenance might be a hint of

cannibalism deriving from famine, or simply a reference to the "flensed and naked skulls of cows and sheep … and the stiff bodies of deer and javelina and ducks and quail and parrots, all wild things from the country" (77), suggesting that people eat what they find in the wilderness.

In Mexico, Christian traditions rooted in Spanish Catholicism are present in the customs of rural people. They merge with the decay and corruption of the church and priesthood in the particular circumstances of the wild west. The feast of Las Animas in the old town of Jesús María is performed as a hybrid exhibition of various religious and cultural practices. The ancient pagan Yucatan celebration of the passing of souls, resembling the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, today known as "Halloween," and the Catholic parade of carrying around the figure of Christ is a strange mixture of occult and religious traditions. While the symbols of Las Animas are skull-formed pastries and candies for children, the motifs of the remembrance of the dead are lit candles in the cemetery and people praying in the house of God. A horse-drawn figure representing the crucified Christ and the ritual of the priest attempting to exorcise the gang members mock Christian religious practices through secular and superstitious approaches. Besides, the priest's orders to the small boys to give him the gold coins from the ground he had been flung with, as he is too proud to bend down for them, shows his aspiration for secular practices and material possessions. And although the passage of the souls and the commemoration of the dead are sacred holidays for the residents, Glanton's gang violates them with their disgraceful midnight revelry.

The borderland of Mexico is not only the middle ground between wilderness and civilization and the sublime projection of wildness and beauty but also the landscape of various interests and covenants of hostile ethnic groups. On the hacienda of General Zuloaga, the Apaches attack and murder rural farmers (campesinos) with their own equipment. Nearby, along the bench of the Casas Grandes River, an encampment of Apaches had been slaughtered by Mexican soldiers. Each ethnicity in the southwest has its racial hierarchy. Racism toward people of different origins has been an issue in Mexico, generating ethnic conflicts, tension, and judgment. Owens, the owner of an eating-house, represents the racial segregation of black people in the Mexican town. The proprietor serves "people of color" (247) only at certain tables in the inn, referring to the black Jackson (from the Glanton gang) as inferior to them and provoking action on behalf of the Americans. Owens' murder by the black man raises undisputed questions of legislation between the Mexican lieutenant and the judge. Violence is the law of existence (to conquer or get conquered) because of the deficiencies and inadequacies of the legal system on the politically, socially, and culturally newly formed territory of the southwest, inhabited by various races conflicting with one another.

Santa Rita del Cobre is a former Mexican mining town for extracting copper to supply the country with raw materials. The female name of the settlement features its character of abundant natural resources, which had been mined and exploited by male workers intensively. The town is equipped with "dark iron shapes of abandoned machinery" (121), wagons and ore carts, a smelting house, and piles of ore to inform the pilgrims of the operation and function of the late settlement. The extracted copper had been transported to the west into the capital of Mexico by railway in the 1830s—a "dozen years past" (121) before the setting of the novel around 1850—as it was the practice also in the United States around this time. However, the economic development of the area was blocked by the Indians who revolted against their inferior status–ignored and hunted—on their lands. The Indians cut off the supplies and the carriage of minerals to Chihuahua bundled the Mexican residents out. The starving people in Santa Rita del Cobre had no other choice than to set out on a journey to the south, across the desert, where they never arrived due to the wild and harsh environmental circumstances and the rage of the Natives for taking and gutting their terrain (121).

In McCarthy's prose, the Indians are represented from the Euro-American perspective as parts of the wilderness. Their savage practices are part of their culture and customs, as well as the result of self-defense against the disturbance of their natural habitat. They are as wild as the landscape from the white American point of view. The dark and vicious signifiers used for their description support this perspective. The scenery of the abandoned meat camp, which served to process meat and hides for everyday purposes, is detailed as "the blackened sheets of meat draped across the bushes or hung from poles like strange dark laundry. Deerhides were pegged out on the ground and white or ruddled bones lay strewn over the rocks in a primitive shambles" (110). The hunting and meat processing practices of the Natives are described as if they were something evil, much different from the culinary methods of either the migrating or the settled Americans. When the Indians are present on the scene directly, they are depicted in a painterly fashion as mounted archers riding out of the vanished lake in the sunrise as burnt phantoms being lost in the landscape, then appearing again as hellish figures coming from and returning to the world below (116). They are called howling warriors going to war against the "civilized" orders of people under the nineteenth-century representation of uncivilized aboriginals.

The Chiricahuas–a group of the Apaches–are a tribe of indigenous people who have adapted to the freezing weather conditions in the mountains. They ride their horses half-naked except for boots, breechclouts, and hide helmets that cover their most sensitive parts. The "stoneage savages" (240) are shown with disparaging attributes as greasy and stinking

uncivilized heathens with long black hair and dead black eyes, their horses painted under the cover of the dust of the road. Their arms–lances, bows, muskets, and US Army Colts–, and the military attire of the leader suggest they use the belongings of the defeated enemies, which is not unique to Natives on the territory. The formal introduction and diplomatic conversation between the Apache leader, Mangas (a huge man with a huge head), and the judge are conducted in Spanish, referring to the acquisition of the language of the Conquistadors by the Native population throughout the past centuries. Despite initial attempts to civilize and Christianize the "savages", the Spaniards and indigenous people had a convention regarding cultural, social, and territorial division and lived in a relatively peaceful coexistence until the US-Mexican war and the annexation of Texas rekindled territorial conflicts in the southwest. Thereupon, the Spanish created urban settlements at major ports and trading points, and haciendas in rural areas while the Indians were removed into segregated country locations and after losing the huge territory of Texas, the inhabitants were forced to leave for the south, breaking the fragile sectional agreement.

The dead Apache is a specimen of his culture for an anthropological examination performed by the Americans. Skin boots with rawhide soles and the tiger-skin bag are linked to the hunting tradition of using all parts of the animal for practical purposes. Although the dead are frequently referred to as naked, this particular dead man wears a pair of drawers, garments that had been taken over from Mexican culture, lending him a hybrid look. The painted face and torso with natural red and white colors are part of the Indian ritual when going to war or celebrating something. The long, dark hair of Indian males gives them a feminine character in the eyes of American men, and therefore they are considered weak and conquerable. Lice fleeing from the dead man's hair also shows the lack of hygiene and the spreading of parasites in the wilderness. The wounds on the old Indian's body from former battles are decorated with various symbols. It is assumed that the Apaches had fought for their land and their people and turned their injuries into symbols of strength through creativity.

The encampments of Yuma Indians were on the Colorado River in the mid-nineteenth century. Their characteristics were men's haircuts with a knife and plastered up with mud, while women were naked except for skirts, and all of them had tattoos on their faces (266). The Yumas, similarly to many other Indian nations, were exposed to starvation when they were dislocated from their homelands. Therefore, they were compelled by famine to consume their livestock, all of their horses and mules. The leaders of Yumas are strange-looking, small, and wiry men who keep their traditions to walk barefoot or wear bones with small pendants in their noses. But they also try to imitate the garments of immigrants, wool overcoat, a woman's

blouse, a pair of gray pantaloons, or round green goggles, which indeed creates a sense of mimicry. The Yumas, with black and crimson paint on their faces and their hair dyed orange, simulate the image of fire that consumes the mutilated bodies of Glanton and Lincoln, acting out revenge on the dishonest Americans. The dogs of the two leaders are burnt alive, charring and blinding their eyes, and all of Glanton's remaining men are thrown into the blaze. The Indians, sitting by the fire and watching the annihilation of their oppressors—without the complacent signs of victory over the traitors contemplate their own destiny prefigured in "the carbonized skulls of their enemies incandescing before them bright as blood among the coals" (291).

The persecution of various Indian tribes in rural areas by the scalp-hunters is genocide and a historical crime against indigenous cultures. Peaceful Tiguas and Pueblo villages and towns are raided, their serene and unprotected inhabitants slaughtered. Whole groups of people become extinct, entailing the eradication of their culture and traces of their existence from history. Indigenous people are erased from history and the memory of humankind. The judge copies some ancient paintings (with scenes of an animal chase by men) from the stone walls of the Hueco tanks cisterns, where "every fear of man" had been depicted, then scrapples away the designs with a piece of a broken chert "leaving no trace of it only a raw place on the stone where it had been" (182). The fate of the aboriginals is defined by the agency of a dominant culture of violence and greed, aided by a developed technology of guns that obliterates both the living creatures and the non-living creations without a trace. The desert circumstances make it impossible to preserve anthropological evidence for the aboriginal presence, and the existence of indigenous cultures fades entirely just as stains of blood. The signs of atrocity on the landscape disappear with the operation of natural forces:

> [S]ands would crack and break and drift away so that in the circuit of few suns all trace of the destruction of these people would be erased. The desert wind would salt their ruins and there would be nothing, nor ghost nor scribe, to tell to any pilgrim in his passing how it was that people had lived in this place and in this place died. (184)

American adventurers not only reshape the perception of "the other" through their hegemonic preconceptions, but they also leave their "civilized" American selves behind when entering the territory of the Mexican borderland. Bearing American national myths and supremacist ideologies in mind and stepping on the tremendous wasteland, they become "half crazed with the enormity of their own presence" (186) in it. The exotic beauty of the land and the sloe-eyed girls wake the desire for possession in the travelers, demanding supplies and resources violently. The ideas of wealth and well-being through self-reliance in the west are indeed about

dominance: the looting of the residents of the land, taking everything the white man desires claiming that they have manifest right to control the lives, societies, cultures, and lands of the "savages."

The gold-diggers, spreading like a "heliotropic plague" (83) toward the West, were exposed not only to the menace of wilderness and environmental forces but also to the attack by Native Americans and their "wild" customs. The remains of a convoy of wagons looted and burnt, pilgrims murdered and scalped on their ill-fated way to the west signal an Indian attack. However, this case highlights that sometimes white men assaulted other American travelers on their way to the wild west and disguised their actions as the work of savages, imitating their practices of war, hoping for booty. They also intended to scare away competing parties of fortune-seekers from the territory by imitating the violent warfare of Indians. The barbarism of the white men against his kind is exhibited through the outrageous vision of the dead with "strange menstrual wounds between their legs and no man's parts for these had been cut away and hung dark and strange from out their grinning mouths" (161). The riders reckon the scenery with the "hand of a cynical god" (161) who led them as witnesses to the site, but in fact, it is a mirror to the gang to confront them with their own deeds.

The massacre of the Gilenos completely dismantles the image of the mythic western hero through the methods of violence the American scalp-hunters practice against the peaceful and helpless Native population. The vivid and shocking images and scenery of attacks against women, children, and elderly people in their sleep at the wake of dawn illustrate the cruelties of the historical genocide of indigenous inhabitants of the southwest. Although Glanton's gang comprises only nineteen partisans and the Gilenos are over a thousand souls, people are slaughtered with clubs or knives, huts are set on fire with people sleeping in them, the capitulating ones are decapitated, scalps and heads are harvested, slices of skin are cut away from the dead for belts and harness (167), and women are raped as a common practice of war. Mexican slaves kept by the Indians are shot, executed, and scalped by Glanton, including McGill, the only Mexican member of the company. The Delawares always act outrageously in conflict but the brutal killing of the two Indian infants "bash[ing] their heads against the stones so that the brains burst forth through the fontanel in a bloody spew" (165) is a hideous performance of evil and wildness in human beings. The scenery of carnage culminates with the head of the Apache leader on a lance and the dead lying in the lake and its shore like victims of a sea disaster in blood and entrails (165).

4 Images of Wilderness and Wildness in the American Southwest

The visual imagery of *Blood Meridian* deconstructs former aesthetic forms of wilderness as “virginal, pastoral vistas” waiting for settlers to conquest, in contrast with “scenes of carnage and brutality”—attributed to the Native population—supporting the ideology of Manifest Destiny (Cooper 27-28). The contrasting images of the Euro-American self-protecting virtue and innocence, along with civilized institutions and the racially other Native people as savages, express the colonialist intentions of the westward expansion. The book highlights the gendered perspective of power by exhibiting the extreme wildness of male characters. The novel describes violence, undermining the traditional concepts of both the frontier narrative—a sacred and harmonious relationship with the tamed land in a civilized manner—and the wilderness narrative—the West as a sublime space). The novel’s imagery of the southwest is an amalgam of the wild western symbolism related to American cultural hegemony, masculine ideals, and Christian symbolism. Moreover, philosophical concerns about fate are connected to the perception of wilderness.

McCarthy describes the Comanche carrying lances and bows as they used to go to war. The “fabled horde” from hell (55) is disarranged compared to the images of the Christian reckoning: some of them are half-naked and others wear costumes, American uniforms, cavalry jackets, stovepipe hats, or Spanish/Mexican armor of the conquistador, but female clothing—white stockings, an umbrella, and a bloodstained wedding veil—is also part of their outfit (55). Whereas the Comanche had massacred the interfering frontier settlers and collected their livestock, they have taken the belongings of the intruders and put them on to mock the adventurers and fortune-seekers upon ambushing them. Compared to the power-centered and revengeful colonial aims of Captain White to take the land, the lives, and the fortunes of Mexicans, the performance of the macabre attack by the Indians raises similar moral questions.

The images of fierce homicide and the suffering of the dying men with arrows sticking out of their bodies and bleeding, ridden over by horses, and the mutilation of their bodies are detailed in a gruesome way. McCarthy reports how the Indians might have carried out scalping:

> stripping the clothes from the dead and seizing them up by the hair and passing their blades about the skulls of the living and the dead alike and snatching aloft the bloody wigs and hacking and chopping at the naked bodies, ripping off limbs, heads, gutting the strange white torsos and holding up great handfuls of viscera, genitals, some of the savages so slathered up with gore they might have rolled in it like dogs and some who fell upon the dying and sodomized them with loud cries to their fellows. (56-57)

Such an intensely dreadful scene depicts a psychological war of conquest and hegemony, leaving thousands of people dead, slaking the land with blood, and leaving the echoes of groans and screaming of the tormented in the atmosphere. As it is recorded, not only the mutilation and agony of the fallen are shocking images but the rape of the beaten and the dead reveals information about the historically withheld warfare practices of the triumphant party—irrespective of race or gender. The extreme violence of the Comanches against Glanton's lost scouts expresses the wild and inhuman methods of their warfare practices. Horrific images of the dead men (the two Delawares, Bathcat and Gilchrist)—hanging heads down on a tree naked, their torsos sliced open and entrails hanging out, their heads charred with brains bubbling in the skull and their tongues skewered through with sticks—not only shows the revenge of indigenous people toward the bandits decimating their population but displays a sadistic of vengeance that mirrors the war practices of their enemies.

The union of man, landscape, and its creatures forms physical and mental relations among the agencies and creates special circumstances (atmospheres, concepts, feelings, and thoughts) through the link of the resonances among different ecosystems. The riders—crossing the desert and the mountains in the changing climate of drought, aridity, intense precipitation (rain, hail, and snow), and the change of seasons—experience that the western wilderness is not as bright as it had been imagined and promoted. Disappointment from the finite opportunities of debauchery and the outlaws' aimless wanderings on the barren landscape make them "skeptic of the shimmering cities on the distant shore of that sea whereon they trod miraculous[ly]" (197) recently. The long red sunset shimmering in the pools of rain occurs as a basin of primal blood (197) that stands for killing, the primal sin of man that originates from fratricide in the Christian cultural framework. The surrounding rim lands resemble sea beasts emerging from the water of the plains, and the riders moving through it are like the "wardens of some dim sect sent forth to proselytize among the very beasts of the land" (197). Conquering the wilderness and subjugating its people to eradicate the savages are the objectives of the infamous Glanton company, but the wild and dangerous savages are Glanton and his men themselves.

Glanton's gang riding to the south at night toward a more hostile land is a journey into the darkness. It creates the impression of the land as a black space over the land. The members of the company "seem . . . remote and without substance. Like a patrol condemned to ride out some ancient curse" (159) expressing the liminality of the figures in space and the burden of the voluntary venture, the peril of the intrinsic ordeal of men and the adverse qualities of the environment. The barren landscape is lifeless except for some dust devils and an unexpected hail (160). Blood marks on the face and clothes of riders disappear as dust is paling them slowly

and the ragged and ruined army accommodates the color of the land “across the meridians of chaos and old night” (172) lacking the sense of time, place, and order, exhausting the scalp-hunters and blurring the boundaries of the perception of reality and chimera.

Such a perception of the desert environment marks the desert as a place devoid of any features. All the sides are of equal arcature, and the spectators are the locus of the endless circle. The place is defined in mathematical terms, however, signifies areas around the watering places, where carcasses of perished animals are gathered around the wells as victims of “some hazard lethal” (312). The sand does not keep any tracks and the only points of reference in the plainness are the bones of men, polished white from the remains of flesh and skin. The ex-priest’s symbolic claim regards man as the dust of the earth—referring to the creation of man in the Bible from mud—, but he also states that man is nothing more than the surrounding environment around him. Such a biocentric perspective supports and denies the religious viewpoint simultaneously, maintaining the idea that each entity—including the judge’s physical organism—is part of the environment and no greater or more superior to other creatures. Besides, the desert is a metaphor for the destiny of the traveler. The vast, barren, empty landscape, the character of which is the hard and unfruitful stone (348) that entombs and slowly silences him. The journey of the kid across the desert, therefore, is a mission of his destination to die in that desolate wilderness (316).

The rough and barren landscape of the malpais, the lava land, is related to the place of hell, where the fierce struggle against the greedy savages takes place. Fighting the wildness of indigenous people with the elements of wilderness is a deceptive, non-heroic, and unfair massacre aided by the richness of Mother Earth. Although the land is frequently associated with caring, fertility, and life in the American rhetoric about the land, the sharp black glass and the flinty rocks of the territory imply enmity and danger on behalf of the natural environment. The stern and barbed land leaves the horses bleeding from their hooves and the boots of riders devastated, warning the wanderers to stay away from the land. Melted rocks, wrinkled up and molten core of the underground are illustrated as the entrance to the locality of hell where “little devils with their pitchforks had traversed that fiery vomit for to salvage back those souls that had by misadventure been spewed up from their damnation onto the outer shelves of the world” (138). The place also holds naturally occurring materials that are capable of destruction if combined. The judge’s knowledge of environmental materials and the ingredients of gunpowder from charcoal, nitrite, sulfur, and human urine resembles the creation of man from the compound of mud and the Holy Spirit but contradicts God’s intentions to create life on Earth. The essence of the “queer powder” (142) is not a clean environmental element, and not

God's breath is assisting the creation of man, but it is the byproduct of human metabolism containing toxins and related to the crude intentions of the agent using it.

The aim of Christian symbolism and Biblical references in the novel is to rewrite the myth of Manifest Destiny on the Promised Land according to the laws of wilderness. The judge is frequently reckoned as the messiah of the American southwest and the savior of bandits. Sitting on a rock in the middle of the desert by himself about the meridian of the day as he was expecting Glanton's company is an allusion to Christ being the rock himself and the leader of men crossing the desert (1 Corinthians 10:4) and even his name starts with the letter "J" to draw a parallel between him and Jesus. While Jesus was quenching the spiritual thirst of people in the wilderness, the judge's people feed on a half-eaten buck antelope captured by wolves suggesting the fulfillment of biological drives. Another parallel with the script is that Glanton's gang comprises twelve men and the judge after two members deserted the company. This is a reference to Christ and his apostles being on a mission to save humanity from their sins, while the scalp-hunters have an unholy ambition to erase as many rivals on the frontier as possible. *Blood Meridian* contains twenty-three chapters and an Epilogue to follow the structure of the Bible as a series of connected stories. The title of the book refers to the peaking of the southwestern violence and bloodshed during the territorial expansion of the United States, the heyday of unhallowed, ungodly, and non-heroic action in the historical epic in the middle of the nineteenth century. Meridian, or the Sun at its highest point during the day, on the one hand, is a pagan symbol of a great erect phallus exhibiting masculine power, the violent and dominant ideal of the West, and the representation of male authority under the patriarchal system of Christianity that legitimizes the methods of imperial proliferation.

The old hermit introduces and explains the presence and the origin of evil in the world and wildness in human beings, as the challenges man faces upon exploring his own consciousness:

> A man's at odds to know his mind cause his mind is aught he has to know it with. He can know his heart, but he dont want to. … Best not to look in there. It aint the heart of a creature that is bound in the way that God has set for it. You can find meanness in the least of creatures, but when God made man the devil was at his elbow. … And evil that can run itself a thousand years, no need to tend it. (20)

The old man discloses that the God-made world does not suit everyone, especially the transgressors who dismiss God's rules. The anchorite's stream of thoughts suggests that the Devil belongs to creation, as it has been present in the workings of the world since then. Beside the origin of evil intentions, the question of the free will of man emerges. Free will is not only

an instrument for the development of the self and the world but also has its dangers: a sequence of individual choices can lead to chaos.

The peaking point of individual deeds, choices, and decisions is revealed at the end of the narrative when the kid–called the man by then–and the judge reunite almost three decades after their mutual venture. The bear in a crinoline is a metaphorical image of the kid, a dangerous, yet impotent male figure. Despite the powerful masculine nature of the kid, he bears female traits, for instance, his face is compared to a male whore (328). Besides, the kid is not committed enough to war, and it disappoints the judge that he dishonors the nobility of armed conflict by altering the rules of historical judgment, as well as the fate of individuals. Although the kid traveled through the American west and was perpetually tempted to do acts of violence, in the end, he resists the judge's ethic of war (Frye, *Cambridge Companion* 8). For all his violent performances, the kid cannot compete with the judge in his wild nature, for '[t]here is room on the stage for one beast and one alone" (349), and the ablest and the most potent one is the judge himself. The wounded and soon dead bear predicts the kid's incapability to surpass the omnipotence of the judge and the falling stars that signaled the birth of the child, signify the death of the inapt man he has become.

The naked dancing judge in the final scene is the allegory of death that never sleeps and never dies (353). He is "some other sort of man" (343), not compared to anyone because he has vast knowledge about the environment, including the nature of man, and power over every creature he encounters. The recurring theme of dance and death combined stands for 'Dance Macabre', the dance of death in European tradition but it also alludes to the ancient sacrificial ceremonies or the blood-letting rituals in aboriginal cultures in America (the dance of the Comanches (82). The judge, who is the one "true dancer" (349), judges man's existence depending on their devotion to the rules of war, adaptation to historical judgment, and acceptance of their fate. He possesses the destiny of all the surrounding men by offering them material things for their souls and keeping them in his control with insignificant substances, like money, gold, or whiskey.

5 The Discourse of Wilderness and Wildness in the Southwestern Landscape

McCarthy uses the blend of vernacular, philosophical, and literary language in *Blood Meridian* that serves his intention to conceptualize the notion of wilderness and the wildness of people in the nineteenth-century southwestern landscape. The third-person narration not only facilitates the narrator's point of view about the events and the evolvement of the characters' course on

the frontier but, as free indirect discourse, McCarthy's opinion about the deficiencies of wilderness narratives is also suggested. The author criticizes the appraisal of the natural environment and the aesthetic description characterized by various western myths and ideologies connected to the concept of wilderness. The fallacies about the landscape, the non-authentic portrayal of historical events, ethnic and gender conflicts are undermined through McCarthy's genuine use of the wilderness discourse. The three main concerns about the stylistic elements of McCarthy's narrative are the use of archetypal characters, the denotations and the connotations of the concept of wilderness, and the static writing style (detailed environmental description) and dynamic speech style (persuasive and manipulative).

McCarthy applies archetypical characters (the kid, the judge, the imbecile, the old hermit, etc.) in *Blood Meridian* to represent general aspects of human nature that transcend time and place. The universal human motifs and experiences are connected to the deterministic philosophy about fate and the general presence of evil in man, which is fueled by the western perception of the natural environment as a space to conquer, control, and benefit from. Although there are some characters with a name throughout the plot, the lack of proper nouns enhances the tragic endeavor of the ill-fated fortune-seekers and bandits on their unholy course in the southwestern territory.

Blood Meridian can be read as the unconventional Bildungsroman of the character of the kid, whose development and maturation are influenced by the paradigms of the western masculine ideal, the western hero, the expanding frontier, and the fulfillment of manifest destiny. However, he is also exposed to failure considering the features of his literary archetype. Beside the negative psycho-social development and the significance of the astrophysical elements on the boy's life, his archaic character represents all history of humankind that has always been violent appraising gendered power and supreme authority over the weak for possession of material things (lands, territories, women, wealth, etc.). The child's character not only stands for human vice but he is also the manifestation of the order of Biblical creation: "the child the father of the man" (3). Although this statement is a quote by Wordsworth and refers to the childhood roots of adult sensibility, it also carries Biblical connotations. he child might denote Christ, who is identical to the Father—regarding the Holy Trinity—, while the man stands for humankind, God's special creatures. The ontological statement implies a further reading according to which the child may refer to the character of the kid, who becomes a man by the end of the novel through the misleading guidance of the judge, a father figure, who also symbolizes the ultimate evil. The development of the kid's character is the antithesis of Biblical creation. Another explanation for the philosophical testimony in question could be that the

judge, bearing childlike features, controls the creation of the not-so-innocent kid into an evil man similar to himself, and finally destroys him as he had absolute hegemonic power similar to God's omnipotence—capable of both creation and destruction.

The idiot, the imbecile wild man, is a misshapen creature whose ill-treatment portrays the indifference of the southwestern man toward the physically and mentally disabled. He is kept in a cage eating feces, which stands for the subjugation of the weak, using his disability for financial benefit. The owner of the idiot—his own brother—treats the boy inhumanly and determines his miserable fate. The imbecile kid is verbally and physically objectified; his keeper tells about him being shipped to him in a box for five weeks after their mother died. The careless dominance over the poor creature is further enhanced as the man shares with Glanton that the "thing" (246) had been sent to Arkansas to "mend" him by drugs and a "special preacher" (251) that did not help his innate mental shortcomings.

The only female character in *Blood Meridian* made distinct by a name, Sarah Borginnis, suggests care-taking dominance and moral hegemony, opposing the violent, authoritative, and material-oriented intentions of men. The woman has a non-binary character similar to a masculine female; her physical appearance resembles a strong man holding up the idiot in the water with her "great stout arms" (272) when bathing him. She challenges the rights and power position of the idiot's brother. Besides speaking up for the powerless and supporting the idiot by physically taking him by the hand and him clinging to her neck, the Borginnis woman performs gentle motherly care-taking by bathing, clothing, singing to him, and kissing the imbecile goodnight. She attributes cognition and agency to him, "He knows [the meaning of the burning cage]" and "He sees hisself in [the reflection of the water]" (272). In addition, Borginnis gives the imbecile an identity and empowerment, calling him by his name, James Robert Bell, perceiving and treating him as a human being in contrast with objectification as a "thing" by men. The burning of the cage (the symbol of enslavement) and the bathing in the water (standing for baptism) are acts of destruction of the burdens, allowing freedom and salvation to the imbecile man.

The relationship between the judge and the idiot is an ambivalent type of link between two grotesque and childlike men; one of them is powerful and the other is apparently powerless. As the judge saves the imbecile man from drowning in the river, "snatching it aloft by the heels like a great midwife and slapping it on the back to let the water out" resembles a "birth scene or a baptism or some ritual not yet inaugurated into any canon" (273). The judge symbolically baptizes the revived imbecile to strip him of the identity and the caring the Borginnis woman had cast upon him and to refashion him as his own assistant in the service of the evil. The judge

is a strange and perverted father figure to the idiot (they frequently appear naked together) and they are each other's inverse: the judge is an enormous, omniscient, and self-reliant man, while the idiot is small, dumb, and dependent on others. Another link between the two men is that they both perform artistic bodily movement occasionally, which predicts some subsequent conflict and bloodshed.

The concept of wilderness denotes a natural environment or territory that is untouched by human activity, while its connotations in historical and political terms in the US are the justification of the colonial, imperial ideologies, and power relations for the control of the land and its resources. McCarthy uses authentic historical language (e.g.: Indians, the imbecile, niggers, etc.) in *Blood Meridian* to prove Anglo-American colonial and imperial purposes and express hegemonic intentions behind the expressions. The notion of wilderness in white colonial terms suggests an open and unknown land, where the "wild" and the "savage" reside, and they bear only negative and demoniac attributes in the Christian eye of the Euro-American traveler. The kid's malicious words about the supportive cattle herders, who helped him to survive, adjust to what Captain White's company expects to hear: savage Mexicans and "niggers" robbed him while crossing the prairie. The white American is positioned as a worthy and noble race above the "niggers" of the plains, denoting all peoples of color. The kid immorally and unethically turns the goodwill of his ethnic company against the peaceful and kind men to gain an appreciated position in the self-organized army of white men. Also, he hopes for the promised material things and betrays the group of crossbreeds, "free niggers" and Indians (22), who are honest working people. No matter how kind and good people they are, in the Captain's colonialist notions, the brave men are the Tennesseans, who fought, bled, and died for the country. However, what the Captain's army stands for is neither glorious nor brave.

The violent imagery associated with the Indians surpasses the illustration of the American frontier regarding their carnage and brutality. Although the American rhetoric intended to justify the inhumane practices of the savages and their wild nature that required control, the discourse of *Blood Meridian* does not make a value judgment over the cruelties of one race or another; the book merely depicts the characteristics of enmity and war outrageously as they had been, along with the evil quality and deed of men regardless of their origin. Still, various groups of people have their own ways of intimidating their adversaries: the Americans use guns, the Mexicans apply blades and natural forces of destruction (having the dead eaten by livestock), while archery and scalping are particular practices to Indian tribes. Moreover, the Indians use their creative artistic skills to wake terror in their foes by decorating their bodies

with nightmare faces and using vivid colors even on their horses (crimson red as blood) to suggest bloodshed and massacre as tools of psychological warfare.

The representations of the wilderness of the prairie and the desert are the projections of the mental landscape of different peoples fighting for the land. The masculine character of the sun rising in the color of blood, like "the head of a great red phallus" (47) expresses the lust for male domination over the land. Such a view of the radiant celestial body is contradictory to the Romantic notions that attributed feminine traits to nature. However, in terms of culture, the masculine representations of the environment shape the hegemonic social and cultural positions of a group or a society over another. The sun has a creative potential over the land, as it casts shadows of environmental agents, drawing various and constantly changing sceneries of the countryside "like pencil lines across the sand" (47). In the evening landscape, the geometric constructions in the sky lead passengers, who know about astrology as the ancients did, and the electric strikes of lightning create an atmosphere of uneasiness in the wild region. The desert environment is "the high road to hell" (48), where the most prevalent feature of the land is death (50), as scattered bones, skeletons, and carcasses of human beings and animals indicate. The geology of the sublime land is not sand or stone, but fear blending with the absolute night, creating a "demon kingdom" (49).

A journey in the harsh circumstances of the environment is characteristic of the nineteenth-century American enterprise on the frontier. The most dangerous elements in the wilderness are environmental forces, diseases, wild animals, starvation, and indigenous people defending their territories. The hardships on the plain and the desert land are illustrated in *Blood Meridian* through the crossing of the borderland by Captain White and his forty-five filibusters facing the flat horizon of the west. The image of the "howling wilderness" (44) evokes the company of yammering coyotes digging up the dead for food following the group. On the cold plains of the foreign land, the wayfarers hide from God (46) and carry American-made Colt revolvers and rifles to defend themselves from jeopardy. To survive, they hunt what they find in the terrain's environment: wild asses, wild pigs, and antelope. The skinning and gutting process of animals is not merely a necessity but a source of joy from "hacking in a welter of gore" (46). Partly from the raw meat, they eat and water shortage and somewhat from the low standard of hygiene, the company is decimated by disease on the wild landscape. As corpses are buried in anonymous graves in the desert, hungry wolves with yellow eyes appear once again (47). Not only people are exposed to the annihilating power of wilderness. Nature also seems to hold back people from going further on to alien lands by ruining the wheels of their wagons. The dry ground and the sand "was grinding [the wheels] away" (47), shrinking them

to clatter and break up, not fitting the crude circumstances. The further movement toward the south on foot on the immense landscape of the *terra damnata* (64) is slow and protracted.

The Kentuckian war veteran, Grannyrat Chambers, participated in the major wars against the Mexicans (the bloody Mier expedition and the epic taking of Chihuahua) as a member of an irregular army during the 1840s and he witnessed the historical turning points of conflict between the Spaniards and the Anglo-American. Grannyrat talks about the people in the Mexican capital in derogatory terms, looking like skinned rats, fools incapable to fight, celebrating the enemy as heroes, and stealing everything they find, though controversially, he returned to Mexico for "some darkeyed love" (81-82), a metonymy standing for his presumably Mexican love interest. Not long after joining Glanton's gang—merely out of interest to escape the prison in Chihuahua—he deserts the scalp-hunters that shows his selfish goals. His fate remains unrevealed after the treason but his horse brought back by the Delawares suggests that they had punished Grannyrat for leaving and betraying the group.

Racism against black people and their enslavement is justified by the myth of racial differences in religious, philosophical, and pseudo-scientific theories. The criminalization of the Negro is augmented with the signifiers attributed to their race: dark vexed face, problematic career, dark blood, and dark soul (86; 89). The judge's argument about the fate of black people is supported by the Biblical example of the children of Ham, who are cursed to be subjected to the Israelites presumably for his sins. The black skin color of Ham is thence associated with the prejudice that black people are the descendants of the cursed. The Biblical references to vindicate white male supremacy over the sinful and therefore inferior black man is supported by ancient passages by Greek poets—namely Aristotle's phenotypic differentiation of inheritance—, and some anthropological ideas (90). The ideology of black slavery is also based on the differentiation of climate and geographical terms, which also approves the idea of the maintenance of slavery in southern states and the abolitionist attitude in northern ones before the Civil War. The colonial ideas of "otherness" of black people are presented by the judge to the Mexican sergeant through the figure of the black John Jackson, whose name and role in Glanton's gang as a scalp-hunter are identical to his white counterpart, the white Jackson, except the skin color that makes a huge difference between them. The duality of the two Jacksons creates tension, as the white one violates the person of the black one on purpose and for the entertainment of the company. The black Jackson sweating and his dark vein pulsing (90) indicate that rage is escalating in him for the constant racial harassment and malevolence toward him and his race.

Putting on two fires in one camp is the metaphor for the two Jacksons in Glanton's gang: they are identical in form, material, and function, but they have the potential to divide the company into two groups. Although there are no rules within the gang for racial exclusion—as they are all bound by violence—the drunken white man autocratically separates the camp to the white Texans and those who differ from them: the Delawares (Indians), John McGill (Mexican), and the newcomers (Toadvine and the kid). Even though the black Jackson seeks Glanton's proposal and solidarity by looking at him across the fire, the leader remains silent, leaving the decision to the black man. The black Jackson's answer to perpetual persecution is what everyone expects in the company: the severe action of beheading the white Jackson with a bowie knife. The fierce scenery of the white man's head with aghast eyes at the ex-priest's feet, his neck bubbling with blood as a boiling stew, and his body sitting in the same position with a cigarillo still smoking in his hands (113) is a grotesque illustration of the decapitation of the arrogant white male and the rage of a frustrated black man.

Similarly to the kid, Glanton seeks a way to avoid his fate by staring into the embers of the fire as if the answer was in the waning flames. The fire metaphor of embers paling and deepening (257) lends a human character to the fire, as it was a "bloodbeat of some living thing" (257). The leader of the gang is aware of his destiny and the changing circumstances around him: his people are gone, defected or dead (256) and his misfortune (deceived by a new contract with another Mexican governor and defeated by the Sonoran army) make him contemplate about his existence in the world. Glanton claims agency over his destiny through the medium of the sun, the ultimate source of fire existing until the end of times, rejecting his imminent annihilation. Since "each fire is all fires, the first fire and the last ever to be" (258), both creation and destruction are implied in the archaic element, and in between the flames, the life and the fate of man are located.

McCarthy learned Spanish to do research on historical events in the Southwest in 1849-50 (Woodward) and to represent Mexican culture, society, and agriculture, and to write about the landscape and people's activities authentically. Using Spanish words in the text (e.g.: presidio, terra damnata, hacienda, Casas Grandes River, Las Animas, etc.) and the multilingual southwestern region highlights the fact that the American nation and the symbolic land of the American West have never been ethnically homogenous. As the kid flees from Tennessee through Mississippi and Louisiana states down on the Mississippi River to New Orleans, then on the northern coast of the Mexican Bay to Galveston, Texas, the multiplicity of cultures and races of people are presented. On the Mississippi area, which indicates the trading frontier, the kid encounters all races and "all breeds" who speak tongues he never heard before, assuming

the French presence on the territory. The speech, which is like "the grunting of apes [by] men from lands so far and queer" (4), surmises people of African origin working on settlements based on farming and mining resources. Further from the sea, on the inner lands are sand roads and marchlands that have no fertile soil to cultivate, and intensive timber mining (for log houses, furniture, firewood, etc.) further deteriorates the natural ecological conditions on the site.

The detailed carnage of killing, hunting, torture, and death fulfill aesthetic purposes in McCarthy's prose and represents history pragmatically. The old Apache woman on the town square being shot by Glanton, with a "fistsized hole erupted out of the far side of [her] head in a great vomit of gore and she pitched over and lay slain in her blood without remedy" (104) is symbolic of the blood-soaked landscape in the late wilderness that had been deprived of its natural character and transformed into the place of wildness and vice of foreign people. The derogatory terms used for the description of the aged female body "weathered old woman the color of pipeclay. Dry old crone, half naked, her paps like wrinkled aubergines hanging from under the shawl she wore" (103) discloses the masculine viewpoint that prefers and appreciates the young, wild, and fertile nature both in women and the land. The woman is paralyzed physically, "[s]he caint walk" (103), and emotionally showing neither courage nor heart sink for her age and presumably by the happenings she has been through on the territory of extreme violence. The scalping of the female corpse is not only the violation of the social and cultural customs of the dead in Christian cultures, but the "dripping trophy" (104) taken is also the motif of betrayal of the Mexican cultural conventions by acting as an Indian.

Judge Holden has a persuasive, philosophic, unquestionable, and manipulative speech style. He debuts with his convincing and manipulative oratory skills in front of Reverend Green's congregation, accusing the preacher of deception of people in the name of God. The crowd attending the sermon turns against the reverend as they hear about the violation of an eleven-year-old girl and fornication with a goat (a symbolic union with Satan) betraying the Christian value system. The grotesque figure of the judge, who is almost seven feet tall and curiously bald and hairless, is persuasive due to his childlike features (serene, ruddy face, always-smiling lips, and small hands (7), that evoke sympathy and trust in people toward him—regardless of what absurd things he says without evidence. His power is expressed through his words and deeds, misleading the crowds and discrediting leaders in high social positions. The result of the judge's false accusations is the metaphorical collapse of the Reverend's tent as "a huge and wounded medusa" (8) slowly settling to the ground along with the institution of the church in the wild southwestern environment. Beside the manipulative reasoning against the

church, the judge incites people to sin by inviting them to the bar, the most significant place of the moral swamp in the West.

The judge is not only a super-masculine character in a giant childlike body but also an adherent to the racist ideology—concerning especially black people—and military corruption. Using his communication skills and physical contact with the Mexican sergeant, Aguilar, the judge persuades him to let the American partisans go with Colt's revolvers (produced for the US Army and illegally sold by gun dealers) for a paltry amount of money. The judge shows Aguilar the operation of the revolver to convince him that the group of mercenaries is worthy of its possession and to prove to him that the gang is a threat to those withholding their intentions. The corrupt Mexican sergeant is given a lecture on the black race by the huge hairless man, exemplifying racial inferiority through the person of the black Jackson, the only black member of the judge's company. The incitement against the Negro has multiple dimensions: to record the acts of history from an inclined, superior point of view, to agitate the black man, and to dissuade the Mexican sergeant from degrading himself in the eye of the American.

The judge's philosophy concerning war and the order of chaos is told in free indirect discourse that McCarthy frequently uses in his fiction to express his assumptions about the unvarying ontological queries addressed by humankind. Permanent conflict in the Westen Arcadia is extended as a universal trait of all human beings. The judge claims that war is enduring, permanent, and ubiquitous, as it has been without the dimensions of space and time before the existence of man. It is a concept that is inherited from generation to generation throughout history, carrying the roots of primal wildness. He calls war the "ultimate trade" (262), subordinating all other trades to it, and man is its ultimate practitioner. War is compared to a game that requires the factors of merit (something that is put at hazard to obtain meaning), skills and strength (innate features, the power of will, and stamina), chance and fate (occurrence without agency or free will). Just like a game, war allows a chance of victory or defeat, the justification of worthiness in pride, or the humiliation and annihilation of the body and the soul and their complete removal from existence.

As war is divination and the testing of one's will, the gendered and racial power relations of Southwestern warfare are determined by the supreme power of decision, chance, fate, justification, and authority. In other words, the destiny of different peoples is manifest in the character of the wilderness, where the power of racial and gender performances is tried within the will of a higher order, "forcing the unity of existence" (263). The neuter austerity of the terrain, where all phenomena are equal (261) and all entities are familiar, results on the one hand in alienation, while it unifies the living and the non-living creatures in the order(lessness)

of chaos. Chaos—even with the infinite possibilities of chances implied in its mechanism—brings an objective judgment opposing the moral law that "is an invention of mankind for the disenfranchisement of the powerful in favor of the weak" (263). Even if a chance is given to the weak—according to the judge—, the historical absolute subverts moral decision, for value-judgment cannot be right or wrong. Furthermore, the non-constrained order of the universe is determined by circling and revolving bodies (planets, coins, etc.) possessing power, authority, and agency over the dynamism of the world and history. Ultimately, the decision over life and death is decided at a "higher court" (264) and for a man, such divine power and authority can be experienced merely through the game of war.

6 Conclusion

In *Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy challenges the nineteenth-century myths about the frontier and the western hero, implying masculine hegemony and imperial ideology. The trope of "wilderness" and the distinctive notion of "wildness" support the author's ideas about the politically constructed mental image of the landscape that has permeated American history and the American national identity since the mid-1800s. The cultural, social, and historical representations of the southwestern environment are rewritten in McCarthy's postwestern narrative, just as the false ideas about the "savage" indigenous people and other ethnicities on the borderland territory. Violent images and religious metaphors set side-by-side support the claim that the intersection of Anglo-American, Spanish-Mexican, and Native American territories is a blend of multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual traditions that cause tension among different civilizations on the land. McCarthy's writing style contains elements of the Spanish language, Christian symbolism, detailed environmental description, and highly philosophical concerns about moral issues and ontological queries of humankind to reveal the character of human beings as part of the wilderness.

McCarthy's criticism and rewriting of the western genre are further developed in *All the Pretty Horses*, which focuses on the pastoral tradition and the desperate search for new frontiers on the borderland. The setting of the first volume of *The Border Trilogy* takes place in the mid-twentieth century—a century later than *Blood Meridian*—, but the nostalgia for the old ideologies and myths connected to the southwest are still definitive of the American character. The social, cultural, historical, and environmental representations of the Mexican rancher frontier unfold through the journey and the enterprise of the two teenage boys, John Grady Cole and his friend, Lacey Rawlins, chasing the masculine cowboy ideal, which is the core element

of the American pastoral. However, the characters’ endeavor in the natural environment, the settled territory, and the multicultural space of the frontier in North Mexico fails because of the changed economic, technological conditions, and political arena after the Second World War.

Chapter 2 The Rewriting of the Western Myth and the Pastoral Tradition in *All the Pretty Horses*

1 Introduction

The core elements of American literature and nature writing are the pastoral tradition and the creation and maintenance of the western myth of wilderness. Cormac McCarthy aims to redefine the conceptual framework of western writing, according to the paradigm shift introduced by new western historians in the 1980s, questioning the ideologies (the frontier, Manifest destiny, self-reliance, the American dream) that Romanticized nature and the heroism of the cowboy image. The American pastoral—a domesticated and practical, yet transcendental form of nature writing, where the protagonist encounters the hardships of the natural environment and finds divine revelations there—is demythicized as the deceptive ideas about the imaginary southwestern landscape are deconstructed and replaced by the wildness of the terrain. The borderland between the USA and Mexico is not a culturally, socially, politically, and naturally homogenous territory but a "middle landscape" at the merger of civilization and wilderness that allows an ecological approach.

In *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), the identity of the characters is shaped by the inappropriate and outdated nineteenth-century masculine cowboy model in the industrialized post-Second World War setting, and the collision of postwestern approaches (anthropocentric and ecocentric) creates serious moral dilemmas. The heritage of the late westward movement is the postfrontier that takes place on and over the sublime borderland and affects social, economic, and legal institutions, infrastructure, and cultural customs in the area. Various structures of Americanness are dismantled as McCarthy reinterprets western symbolism, the pastoral idyll, and the journey across the liminal space of the borderland. In addition, the perception of and the rhetoric about the environment are reshaped.

> They ate lunch under the trees at the edge of a small cienaga. The horses stood in the marshy grass and sucked quietly at the water. . . . and they spread the cloth on the ground and selected from among the quesadillas and tacos and bizcochos like picnickers, leaning back on their elbows in the shade with their boots crossed before them, chewing idly and observing the horses. (58)

The above-quoted passage from *All the Pretty Horses* depicts an idyllic image of the American Southwest with cowboys and horses living and idling peacefully in the natural environment, as

it was imagined in the nineteenth century, based on the literary pastoral tradition. However, this illusory harmony on the USA-Mexico borderland is not a genuine way of life but a pleasant pastime moment in the middle of the twentieth century. At the dawn of industrialization, consumerism, and capitalist endeavor, the longing for nature and the make-believe about the heroic past are mere escapism from the economic changes and the smothering urban environment. The cowboy idyll implies culinary joy and consumption of Mexican meals that assume a mutual, blended culture on formerly indigenous land.

Steven Frye refers to McCarthy's cowboy fiction as "a modern western replete with the conventions of nostalgic romance, with elegiac rhythms of language that gain strength from idyllic images of wild horses and the young men taming and riding them" (*Understanding* 100). McCarthy's western narrative rewrites the western myth about the landscape and the heroic cowboy, just as the pastoral tradition through the journey of his teenage characters across the American border to Mexico, reckoned as the postfrontier to revive imagined past ideals. The chapter discusses the identity-forming potential of the American pastoral tradition in line with western myths about the landscape and reveals the cultural, historical, and social representations of the multicultural southwestern environment. The literary devices of pastoral disharmony and illusion, along with the stylistic elements of the new western writing, contribute to the subversion of the genre.

2 Identity Construction and Character Analysis through the Pastoral and the Western Story-telling Traditions

The landscape of North Mexico has special significance in shaping the characters in the novel. By exposing them to the complex environment of the Southwest, McCarthy reinterprets the American pastoral tradition. A collective identity is constructed through the characters' connection to the past, ways of behavior, and the landscape (Baym 821). Former hegemonic stories of pioneering, white western conquest and heroic tales are rewritten in contemporary western narratives. Small-scale local stories overwrite the dominant epic narratives, preserving cultural diversity and the differences between Natives and Hispanos. As Nina Baym argues, the myth deprived of heroism is kept alive in a post-mythic culture through these new narratives (821). However, the characters of *All the Pretty Horses* attempt to conquer the imagined frontier on a settled territory beyond the closed American borderline to bring back the lost American rancher myth. Self-definition in the novel is built upon the belief in the idealized pastoral way of life that is rooted in nineteenth-century anthropocentric archetypes of heroism, adventure,

courage, and achievement (Baym 815). However, the postfrontier seems to lack the fulfillment of the western myth, while the border-crossing, self-reliant cowboy model is short of heroism. Moreover, the main character's enterprise is morally ambivalent. This chapter will explore the characters' identity formation through western myths and historically outdated ideals of nature and the rancher frontier. Also, it examines the fusion of the American masculine cowboy model with the pastoral tradition on the Mexican frontier. The analysis seeks to discover whether social and cultural factors or philosophical concerns of determinism and fate define relationships on the borderland.

Individual search for identity draws upon family traditions, while collective self-definition employs national patterns from the assumed heroic past. The protagonist, John Grady Cole, a sixteen-year-old boy, wants to follow the livestock-keeping tradition of his ancestors according to the Romantic notions of the cowboy way of life. Inherited and imagined ideas of rural life influence his identity, but his recently deceased grandfather and the old man's cultural heritage impact his future goals. Grady's separated parents exhibit a poor role model to him. His pessimistic friend, Lacey Rawlins, affects the boy's behavior and personality as well. Although Grady is at the beginning of his life, he feels like "a man [who has] come to the end of something" (6) and is a "supplicant to the darkness" (3), due partly to the lack of parental support and guidance, and partly to the agrarian depression amidst the intensive post-Second World War economic development in the US. For John Grady, the only viable future would be the nostalgically perceived pastoral lifestyle close to nature. Saddling his horse and riding out to the west is an escape from reality into an imagined world, and also a relief from contemporary material and social compulsions. On horseback, with the "sun coppering his face and the red wind blowing out of the west" (5-6), John Grady identifies with the Indians who used to live in harmony with the environment.

The large, extended family and historical heritage of his grandfather had defined young John Grady's life. The old man lived the western way of life full of hardships, surrounded by harsh environmental forces in the wilderness. He witnessed historical enmity between Native Americans, Spaniards, and Anglo-Americans. According to the socio-cultural institution of firstborn male succession in the previous century, Grady's grandfather inherited his ancestors' cattle ranch. The old man's aims to leave the mansion to the following generations as a legacy had failed, as he was the last male member of the Grady branch. In the patriarchal southwestern culture, the firstborn child's name and sex were important factors in succession. As John Grady's last name is Cole after his father, the boy is not a rightful heir to the family estate. This outdated mode of inheritance, the homestead recession in the 1950s, and the dissolution of the

family structure result in the dispossession of the teenage boy. Despite the old man's teachings, of never giving up things in life (13), John Grady seems not only deprived of his caring grandfather but loses track of his ancestors' path.

John Grady's careless mother, who chases an acting career, and his depressed, miserable, and war-torn father affect his life choices. The mother left the family to fulfill her dreams of becoming an actress—a delusional aspiration to Hollywood fame in American culture during the rise of western cinematography in the mid-twentieth century—going against the traditional family norms and gender roles in the Southwest. Seeing his mother with another man at a hotel in San Antonio, John Grady realizes that the woman has never really belonged to the family. The father, Wayne Cole, is a Second World War veteran, who has become an alcoholic gambler, losing all of his fortune and his army payback. He is a misfit in society, due mainly to post-traumatic symptoms. Through Wayne Cole's pathetic character, McCarthy demystifies the war hero and draws attention to the mental effects of war that are not fully understood. The father is so thin and frail, "lost in his clothes" (23) because he has quit medical treatment and has given up on life. His eyes are sunken "as if the world out there had been altered … As if he might never see it right again. Or worse did see it right at last" (23)—suggesting the deceitful ideas and evil intentions behind the war. His father warns John Grady that he is not the right role model to follow, leaving the desperate son without fatherly advice and guidance. Since both parents are rootless and unreliable—the mother lives in various places, mainly in southwestern cities, and the father lives in a hotel room leading a self-destructive way of life—John Grady has to rely on himself. Amongst such family circumstances, his identity becomes fragmented, and after losing his home, he starts living the homeless cowboy way of life. The teenager adjusts to his ancestors' failed ideas of ranching, heroism, and romance. He hopes to fulfill his desire by being in close connection with the environment and experiencing the past glory of rural life. Besides, he longs for freedom and is in search of a simple life away from the United States, where the fulfillment of the American Dream seems to be unattainable.

The father supports the boy's prospect of becoming a cowboy, giving him a brand-new saddle. However, the mother attempts to deter her son from the enterprise that had failed her male relatives in the past. As she is the only child of the old man and the successor of the ranch, she secretly sells it. She holds that John Grady has no future there and the site would bring no fortune anymore. The lawyer also dissuades the boy from his plans, emphasizing that life on a cattle ranch in west Texas is not a lucky enterprise anymore (17) because of the increased public support for manufacturing, consumption, and the urbanized way of life. Despite all contrary

reasons, the young man follows his childish dreams about cowboys, rich lands and prosperous ranches. His nostalgic illusions lead him to a misfortunate fate in a new frontier in Mexico.

The imitation of the cowboy lifestyle is the core element of John Grady's identity. The boy frequently pretends to be a cowboy, putting his hat over his eyes while sleeping, or rolling a cigarette and smoking it with "one boot jacked back against the wall behind him" (21). Commodities, like cowboy hats and boots, mean belonging to a community for Grady. He expresses his assumed identity by nodding gravely to men (22) wearing those items, and receives mutual appreciation in return. It seems like the cowboy style is merely an empty, commercialized mimicry of an imaginary identity. Meeting a young Mexican man on the American side of the border, who has never been to Mexico in his life (34), supports the idea that looking Mexican does not mean being Mexican. Therefore, looking like a cowboy does not implicate being one.

Besides the cowboy's solitude and stoicism, brotherhood and friendship are essential values in western adventure narratives. John Grady's friendship with Rawlins is initially based on the idealistic images of being in nature and talking about philosophical questions deriving from the pastoral tradition. Both of them deal with horses with great care. When they ride out to the plains on a chilly night, they watch the starry sky by the campfire and have conversations about an idealized prospective future. Later in the novel, after having seen the North Mexican prairies, working on one of the last haciendas, falling in love with a Mexican girl, and being taken by doubtful rangers into prison, John Grady asserts he is "the same man [Rawlins] crossed that river with. How [he] was is how [he is] and all [he] know[s] to do is stick" (158). Indeed, Grady has seen, experienced, and learned a lot in the distant land, but his loyalty to his childhood friend is unbroken. Yet, the brotherhood between the two American boys has altered from a glorified friendship to a true companionship earned by having gone through unexpected hardships. Although this bond seems real, like many other things in the world of *Pretty Horses*, the negative southwestern experiences and disappointment from the pastoral idyll change the boys' perspective of the world and each other.

An ominous rider following the two cowboy-to-be teenagers, supposedly called Jimmy Blevins, is an ambivalent figure who interferes with Grady's and Rawlins's pastoral enterprise. Although the kid—looking only thirteen but claiming to be sixteen—seems to be an awkward child, his words, his experience and his knowledge about the Old West wake doubt and ominous presentiments in the two runaways. The horse the Blevins kid rides, the hat he wears, and the Colt pistol he has are apparently not his belongings, but he hides the truth about their origin and the way he got them. He is obviously on the run to Mexico for an undisclosed reason that delays

information and twists the path for the two friends. The literary device of withholding information is McCarthy's hallmark which resembles Faulkner's narrative structures. The young boy accompanies Grady and Rawlins uninvited, pleading that he is an American (46). Blevins uses the collective American identity to convince the two boys to let him join, referring to their common heritage and shared attraction to the cowboy way of life. Eventually, "Americanness" in the present situation means fortune-seeking in Mexico, on the new frontier, so Grady and Rawlins cannot argue against such a forceful claim of camaraderie.

It is beyond doubt that Blevins's figure is the representation of the uneducated, illegitimate, and greedy fortune seeker, an antihero of nineteenth-century narratives. Blevins is a postwestern character, a combination of wise words, plenty of experience, but inconsequential deeds, clumsy appearance, and strange behavior that make up a corrupted version of the western hero. His bony legs showcase starvation, and his dirty, baggy clothes make him look like some sad and ill-used serf (79) who approaches people with bad intentions. Seeing this miserable kid, a Mexican man from a wax camp offers Grady to buy the boy or trade him for wax as if they were in some earlier century of the slave trade. Blevins's frequent feeling of shame and embarrassment is the reason for his imperfect and malformed (73) physical qualities and awkwardness. The dismissive reaction he often gets from people causes frustration and anger in the boy, leading to mental and physical discomfort. Rawlins is convinced since the first encounter with the kid that "[s]omethin bad is goin to happen" (79). On stealing back his horse from some Mexicans, Blevins becomes a target, prey to the corrupt Mexican authorities.

Although Blevins had a chance for a peaceful farmer life in line with the pastoral tradition, working for a German family, his restlessness and sense of justice drive him to retrieve his belongings taken by some rural thieves in Mexico leading to the fulfillment of his tragic destiny. Since Blevins has no documents to identify himself, and he is already considered a criminal, he becomes a victim of the unlawful captain's malice who easily convicts anyone for an uncommitted crime. One of the major themes of the novel is the fulfillment of fate, which is enacted through the captain condemning Blevins "fore he ever set eyes on" him (174). The boy appears to be predestined to die from fire as his male ancestors did. On the corrupt captain's orders, Blevins is led away into the desert to be murdered. "[L]ooking back once mute and terrified" (179), the kid becomes the archetype of the silent victim of the thousands killed in the remote landscape owing to the deficiencies of the Mexican legal system and the corruption of officials and authorities. The principles of law and moral values have been lost in Mexico, where tyranny rules and poor and presumably innocent people are arbitrarily detained, and fundamental human values, truth and justice are absent (Frye, *Cambridge Companion* 83).

The *hacienda*, the Mexican ranch with landed property where Grady and Rawlins intend to manifest their western ideals, has its hierarchy and various titles (*hacendado, caporal, gerente, caballero, vaquero*), which stand for the position of workers in the community. The boys aim to be accepted and get integrated into this kind of social order. They want to prove their abilities through the breaking of wild horses. The Mexicans at the *hacienda* run coyotes merely with ropes without a gun, which shows their bravery and amazes Grady and Rawlins. However, it turns out that Mexicans do not break horses—probably because they think that animals do not have souls. Grady fascinates the Mexicans by showing them the courageous American spirit. He breaks all the wild horses within a couple of days to become recognized and accepted in the ranching community. However, the status of the two Americans among the Mexicans will not be the same. Rawlins' suitability and adaptation to the ranch work and harsh living conditions make him a respected cowboy in the Mexican vaquero (cowboy) community. However, John Grady's ambitions for self-fulfillment and his special treatment by Don Héctor, due to his knowledge about horses, make him a lonely outsider on the ranch. Rawlins is welcomed and accepted as a friend among the vaqueros and well-integrated into the order of the hacienda, but they do not welcome Grady after a while for not keeping the rules that apply to them.

Entering the soul of horses while breaking them, John Grady realizes that he has mentally merged with the animals and the character of the horse has become a part of his identity, making up a "deeper collusion" (269) inside his psyche. The co-existence between the horse and the rider is a symbiotic link illustrated by their shadows passing in tandem as if they were one "single being" (306) in their inner selves. Grady shares his thoughts, feelings, and experiences about the world with the animals throughout his journey and they absorb the information, as they were the recorders of individual stories and anthropological histories. In fact, horses are thought to be the testimony of past, present, and future because their timeless existence is the recollection of events, people, and places throughout history. Their blood, their "common soul" preserves all the information about humanity and the environment perpetually and their recollection of the past is more durable than stones on an antique site (283) which cease with time, erasing the evidence of the failed order of the world carved on them. Horses are "always the right thing to think about" (208) for Grady, and they are the only creatures that comfort him. Grady's pleasant feelings among the animals come from his ability to control them and to do what he likes and what he does well. The excitement of the stallion upon recognizing Grady "whinn[ing] and toss[ing] its head and snort[ing] and push[ing] its long sleek nose against his chest" (227) is caused by their shared spirit. Grady had inhabited the soul of

the animals and the concept of the horse lives in Grady's mind. Returning from the prison, where he was controlled and manipulated, to the Mexican ranch, Grady feels like a broken stallion that has conformed to the rules of his keeper to avoid suffering. In doing so, he had given up on his freedom of choice as the horse had.

Frye argues that the discourse in *Pretty Horses* is governed by the desire to dominate (*Cambridge Companion* 17). Taming and ruling the wild environment is an American characteristic but Don Héctor Rocha, the hacendado of the Mexican ranch, and John Grady share the same colonizing masculine view about the rancher life: horses are God's creation aiding the work with cattle, which is the only proper occupation for a man to gain wealth (130). Such an anthropocentric concern gives self-confidence and masculine power to possessive men through authority and domination over environmental entities. When riding the stallion and being seen by others, Grady believes that the masculine nature of the horse becomes his macho power through domination, especially when Rocha's daughter, Alejandra, sees him.

John Grady's relationships with female characters are never fulfilled. First, his mother left him to seek a social life on her own (18), then his initial love interest, Mary Catherine Barnett, "friend-zoned" him for a richer guy (28-29). His parents' fate seems to be inherited and repeated when his relationship with the beautiful Mexican girl, Alejandra, goes into a dead-end because of the girl's grandaunt Senora Alfonsa's sensitivity to social and cultural differences and concerns about the destiny of people. Although the Senora denies that she disapproves of John Grady for his uneducated and impoverished background, she uses the boy's conflict with the authorities and his unfortunate fate as an argument against him. After all, the boy follows his father's words: "a worried man cant love" (249) and lays bare his feelings regardless of the consequences.

The intentions of Alejandra's family, which implies strict family customs in Mexico, emotionally extort and bind her. Not only conflicting attitudes to the environment, ranch life and horses, but social and cultural differences are demonstrated through Grady's and Alejandra's relationship. Senora Alfonsa has control over the girl's love life and relations, putting her under the pressure of her own misfortunate past and superstition. The Senora claims Alejandra would not be happy with the American John Grady for an ungrounded reason that the boy's fate is unlucky. After all, Alejandra knows that even if the Senora advises her to be her own person, she tries to make Alejandra *her* person (253). The Senora wants to change her own unfortunate fate through the girl's potential for a luckier life. The love affair between Alejandra and John Grady is also prohibited by Don Héctor, who stops loving his daughter because of the shame she has brought to the family. This family structure and value system

resemble the strict traditions of the American Southwest in the previous century. The arrest of Grady and Rawlins is the implicit consequence of ruining Alejandra's reputation. Although Alejandra is a strong and straightforward young woman, she has no power over the obsession of her relatives with past harms and over strict patriarchal social and cultural norms. Alejandra becomes confused and doubtful about men. Being torn apart by family struggles and the stormy love affair with the American boy, the only option for her is to return to the environment and the social order she belongs to—the world of males she has always known but never understood.

Both Alfonsa and John Grady have scars that, according to the Senora, remind them of the reality of the past, and the events that caused them cannot ever be forgotten (138)—though they "get better with time" (220). The visible signs of past incidents are integrated into the identity of their bearer, and they stand for loss rather than gain. The red suture marks are apparent evidence of Grady's adventure in Mexico and his misfortunate action in the prison. Each scar is a story that contributes to one's self-image and often reflects the individual's personality. Grady's face with the sutures is like a "dull red theatric mask indifferently repaired and faded back again" (219), resembling a "maimed and raging djinn enconjured there" (210). Those wounds, the outcome of the illegally arranged circumstances of prison life, reflect his tormented and distorted soul. . Anywhere he goes his scarred mask goes with him, carrying the story that shaped his life and self. Senora Alfonsa assumes that misfortune results from being in a misfortunate company, but she also holds that one can use deformity to gain strength. The disfigurement she suffered on her left arm in a shooting accident as a teenage girl determined her life. Unlike the acceptance of malformation in lower classes, deformity in the higher social position ruins a woman's prospects. The Senora's scars deprive her of the opportunity for an advantageous marriage. And yet, despite the communal disdain for physical deformity, the accident helped Alfonsa to discover her inner values and to recognize people who are like her and accept her condition. She claims that grief and sorrow can develop the greatest bonds (240). The Senora contemplates philosophically over fate and its connection to "disastrous love affairs" (231) for female members of the family to convince John Grady why he must avoid Alejandra. Alfonsa explains that the stubborn and improvident "female blood" (242) in the family, accompanied by men whose destiny could be seen from the beginning, is a tragic combination. Senora Alfonsa's assumption about fate—the combination of predetermination, the connectedness of circumstances, and random events that generate situations of choices and decisions which always have certain consequences—implies absolute dependence on factors of luck and fortune (238). Her thoughts are supported by the coin metaphor that emphasizes the infinity of chances concerning choices but also suggests the finality of opportunities to choose,

due to the link between various elements to one's destiny. Alfonsa holds Grady a liar, a traitor, and a criminal, and disdains him for letting "certain things happen . . . over which [he] had no control" (243). In her eyes, the boy is regarded as a walking disaster and the initiator of chaos if combined with Alejandra's obstinacy. As Alfonsa sees the opportunity of changing the female fate in the family through Alejandra, the girl must seek a "true" marriage outside of her society (242), preventing her from repeating the Senora's fate. In this question, Alfonsa is very much like her father was towards her because she puts Alejandra under pressure to leave her love behind, as Alfonsa's father did to her earlier.

3 Frontier Closed, Never Existed, or Imagined? Historical, Social, and Cultural Representations of the Southwestern Landscape

McCarthy seeks the answers to the literary and historical questions that arose in the second half of the twentieth century: the presence, the absence, and the significance of the frontier in national non-fictional nature writing and storytelling, as well as the effects they had on society and culture. The purpose of the new and postwestern writing was the representation of the authenticity of the landscape through the environmental, social, cultural, economic, legislative, and historical similarities and differences between the nineteenth-century American and the twentieth-century Mexican frontiers. According to the New Westerners, the concept of space was irrelevant to the western landscape. They claim that the frontier never existed, so it was never closed (Baym 815) because the west was not a process but a place, or many places, regions together (Baym 816). Compared to Nina Baym's stance on the frontier, Limerick did not deny the process of the westward movement, and its historical relevance is also present in McCarthy's cowboy story through allusions to nineteenth-century historical events and facts. Similarly to Thoreau's *Walden*, McCarthy emphasizes the disturbance of nature by human presence and the polluting effects of the urban way of life on the environment. Additionally, the author emphasizes the postpastoral features of contemporary western writing by examining the Southwest as a complex whole overarching the country boundaries and focusing on the representations of the landscape. In this subsection, the presumed similarities, and actual differences between the American and the Mexican frontiers, the historical and cultural representations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrial revolution and development, and ideological heterogeneity on the postfrontier (regarding historical perspectives, the land, gender, religion, legislation) will be scrutinized.

In *All the Pretty Horses*, Mexico is referred to as a country that "shaped itself out of the darkness" (61), which may have various historical references. In the eyes of Europeans, America had been isolated from the "civilized world" until its discovery and developed its own culture that was very "dark." On the ancient grounds of the Aztec Empire, several indigenous cultures practiced bloody rituals as part of their religious belief systems. From the time of the European discovery, which was followed by conquest, immediate bloodshed and perpetual began on these terrains. Such historical facts must have shaped the stereotypical concepts about Mexico as the land of violence and its inhabitants as criminals and dangerous *bastardos* to justify the American claims for the territory and superiority over "the savage" through a hegemonic ideology.

Mexico is represented through its architecture, infrastructure, financial value, and cuisine from the teenage cowboys' American perspective. Townhouses in the country are low and built from mud brick and have brush roofs (50) to adapt to the diverse temperature of the desert-like climate. There are dust roads with no vehicles running on them and instead of electricity, people use oil lamps in the dark, which give a specific character, a kind of "desolate stillness" (52) to the site. In a small pub, where Rawlins buys three rounds of "cactus juice," some cider tasting good to a cowboy (52-53), for only one dollar. This suggests that he is a rich man in Mexico, and he has power, superiority, and stability over the Mexican monetary value system through his American money. Besides demonstrating material wealth, going to a bar is another cliché in western fiction. Instead of canned Vienna sausages and crackers Grady and Rawlins have on American land, they taste Mexican food (beans, tortillas, goat meat, and tacos) at a local family who host them. Later, when they go further into the heart of the country, wax camp workers share their food with them, which suggests rural people's kindness and hospitality toward newcomers.

McCarthy presents Mexican people in the North Mexican rural areas through the description of the elements of their culture: belongings, appearance, artifacts, and customs. The first Mexican riders on the plain across the mountains the American boys encounter are rough and shabby people,

> dressed half in rags, their hats marbled with grease and sweat, their boots mended with raw cowhide. They rode old squareskirted saddles with the wood worn through the leather and they rolled cigarettes in strips of cornhusks and lit them with esclarajos of flint and steel and bits of fluff in an empty cartridge case. … and they smelled of smoke and tallow and sweat and they looked as wild and strange as the country they were in. (63)

The old and worn belongings show how horsemen who live in a nomadic way look like. Their appearance differs considerably from what the American teenage boys try to imitate as the cowboy way of life, for their imagination is based on old stories and conventional western cultural patterns. The black eyes of the Mexican are expressionless and therefore the boys cannot read any thought or intention from them. Another group of people, "caravans of migrant traders" (67) with women and children, are also ragged people in search of successful trade in the northern parts of Mexico. Their hopes and endeavors to make a living from their handcrafted natural products on the move are similar to the nineteenth-century American trend of the utilization of natural resources for making one's fortune during the westward movement. Yet the two ventures reveal different views and objectives: while Mexicans are migrating to trade and supply their families, the western fortune-seekers aimed to gain wealth and power through the acquisition of land through expansion. It is hard for the young cowboys to buy some water from the Mexicans because they have no coin "small enough" (67) to pay for it. The difference in the monetary value of the two groups represents not only the Mexicans' different social and economic status but expresses how differently they look at the value of natural resources and the benefits they gain from them.

The Mexican landscape with cottonwoods and grasslands laying "in a deep violet haze and … *vaqueros* driving cattle before them through a gauze of golden dust (95) gives an insight into the imagined countryside formed on American pastoral ideals. The sheepherders camping at the defense of an arroyo "as did the ancients of that country … watch[ing] with great solemnity" (89) recall the classical pastoral idyll. The north-western Mexican pastoral nostalgia evoked by the colorful, splendid, and exuberant scenery of the American Old West makes the young men dream about staying a hundred years (98) in the politically and socially constructed imagined past, which is a reference to the century-old illusion about man's connection with nature through agricultural production. Not only was the imperial dream about the west fragile, but the ecosystems of the western lands suffered from the consequences of farming. The old lava country on low volcanic ridges (88) offers fertile ground with rich soil because of volcanic activity thousands of years ago. However, the accelerated and uncontrolled agricultural utilization of the ground would rapidly deplete the land of its originally rich materials full of potential.

Intensive cattle-raising had not been an environmental problem in the US only but also in Mexico. As the growing number of livestock demanded more pastureland, herding led to deforestation and caused soil erosion to expand the grazing territory. Besides cattle-raising, intensive cotton or wax plantations have been troubling in the northwest of Mexico. Wax is

used as a moisture-protecting substance in desert climate conditions. It is extracted from the candelilla plant by land workers living in wax camps and is used to make canvas and other tools waterproof. The extraction of wax requires plenty of water which is scarce in the area. The heating of the vat where the water is boiled and mixed with candelilla pollutes the air with thick gray smoke. The candelilla plant is used for medical purposes and for feeding livestock but monocultural utilization of the soil can lead to the infertility of the land.

The Mexican cattle ranch suggests that raising livestock is an essential part of the economy and a form of the agrarian lifestyle specific to the North Mexican region. The difference between the American western pastoral ideal and Mexican rural life is the extent and the purpose of the utilization of the land and its resources. While in the US the democratic notions of agrarianism let any individual enter the ranch-owning enterprise, in Mexico, there is a hierarchy in agronomy and some rich dynasties rule it with considerable social and political influence. The division of land in the Mexican grassland is less controlled by the state, but its cultivation and management cause less harm to the environment than the technologically equipped American farming does. Nevertheless, the growing demand for the meat industry requires more cattle for export and more cattle require more grazing land, which results in more overgrazing and finally the destruction of the natural ecosystem.

The concept, the structure, and the operation of the Mexican land property, the hacienda, is similar to the nineteenth-century American farm conditions. The Hacienda de Nuestra Senora de la Purísima Concepcion is a huge land property of eleven thousand hectares that belongs to European (Spanish) immigrants who could take land on account of the 1824 Colonization Law. The act following the War of Independence from Spain resembles the American War of Independence from Britain and the colonization of potential farming land is like the westward movement in the US. The hacienda is a piece of Eden, a rich oasis with natural springs, clear streams, shallow lakes, and lagunas accommodating rare species of fish, birds, lizards, and other forms of life. It has hills and valleys surrounded by desert land (99), and the richness of one of the last rancher frontiers is attractive to the two American adventurers. The commodification of natural resources, animals, and land results from economic production and advance that is believed to bring wealth to individuals but causes harm to groups of people, not to mention environmental damage. Apart from social and cultural factors, the horse trade between the USA and Mexico until the beginning of the twentieth century facilitated the agrarian and economic advance of the States. This relationship between the two countries is presented by the trading of horses between Don Héctor's father and Uncle Billy Anson, Grady's grandfather's best friend. The mutual dependence on demand and supply between the two countries ceased after

the World Wars. On the one hand, Mexican ranchers could breed livestock from the already purchased native animals, and economic and political directions also changed. John Grady's employment at the hacienda is a renewed cross-cultural, agrarian partnership between the two sides of the borderland, this time dominated by the Mexican party.

The house of Grady's grandfather, built on formerly indigenous land, represents almost a century of American southwestern history. The originally one-room hovel was built in 1866, in the early years of the Reconstruction era, for raising cattle. Agriculture, especially breeding livestock, was the only possibility for making a living from the land. The ranch with the house was built in 1872 and it was secured from Indian and Mexican intruders with barbed wire a decade later. As the buffalo died out in the mid-1880s, Indians had no hunting opportunity and they not only attacked pioneer's lands for revenge but for survival as well, cutting the wire and splicing it back with horsehair (11). By the end of the century, the pioneer and indigenous conflicts have ceased after several bloody wars, where Natives had been decimated and the territory became disbanded by Indians. The house and the ranch served the family until 1949 when the grandfather's death and agricultural recession—owing to industrial growth and development—resulted in the selling of the ranch. The only profitable potential in the land was oil drilling and oil business in the mid-twentieth century—the new national craze after the nineteenth-century gold rush—, promising great fortune from the utilization of deeper layers of the ground.

Industrialization and urbanization, going hand in hand, started after the Civil War, radically changing the economy and the environment with the appearance of machines in nature. The greatest enterprise of the century and the most symbolic object of the westward movement was the train and the railway that connected the East with the West across the dreary Southwestern region. The impact of the expanding frontier was evident in environmental changes, but the disturbance of the natural environment was considered neither by historians, who celebrated the economic, legislative, and national benefits, nor by industrialists whose interest was connected to high profits. In *Pretty Horses*, John Grady perceives the disturbing presence of the steam locomotive through all the senses, affecting the peace of the evening environment on the periphery of the town:

> he heard the train. … He could feel it under his feet. It came boring out of the east like some ribald satellite of the coming sun howling and bellowing in the distance and the long light of the headlamp running through the tangled mesquite brakes and creating out of the night the endless fenceline down the dead straight right of way and sucking it

> back again wire and post mile on mile into the darkness after where the boilersmoke disbanded slowly along the faint new horizon and the sound came lagging. (3-4)

The train is bursting into the darkness of the night brightly, noisily, and disturbingly, fulfilling its almost a century-long duty to transport cargo and people toward the west. After the Second World War, when *Pretty Horses* takes place, the innovation of the former century had been underplayed by nuclear and space research at the dawn of the Cold War and the railroad was stuck on the transporter function level.

Rich oilfields were also attractive for investors since the beginning of the twentieth century. Oil-drilling rigs were spreading in the desert, transforming the barren land looking like a warzone (11). With the appearance of the machine and diesel engine, the widespread use of locomotives, airplanes, and automobiles, the demand for new frontiers—especially for oil fields—hustled the way for far away territories for energy sources. It can be stated that the systematic utilization of the land has been part of the American enterprise since the 1800s. This tendency did not seem to cease until the setting of the novel in 1949-1950. The growing oil industry involved urbanization on the land, which resulted in light pollution, the presence of artificial light in the night environment, and intense traffic on the highways connecting cities. Such phenomena are present in McCarthy's postwestern book when the two friends, John Grady and Rawlins try to revive the pastoral tradition away from the town, the noise of trucks from the highway and "lights of the town reflected off the desert" (10) disturb the expected idyll of the evening stillness.

Cars and trucks running on gasoline did not only take over the role of transportation and mobility from trains but also from horses. Young men riding automobiles in the 1950s demonstrated the change in lifestyle, and the vehicles became the new status symbol exceeding the power of horses from past centuries. A powerful engine not only means higher speed and a more impressive and dynamic symbol of manhood but also involves the utilization of fossil fuels and therefore more pollution. Outside of the safety milieu of the ranch, Grady is humiliated by being thrown at beer cans. A new type of man—equipped with the latest technological development—damages and destroys the environment. What the car leaves behind is the "boil of dust … lay[ing] … down the narrow straight as far as [Grady] could see roiling slowly in the starlight like something enormous uncoiling out of the earth" (127-128).

Beyond historical and literary revisionism and the reconsideration of the ideologically and socially constructed nature image, McCarthy's novel seems to support the postfrontier theory. This concept emphasizes the reinterpretation of historical notions from a regional viewpoint, involving the representations of the imagined place with its geographical,

agricultural, legislative, religious, and social structures. McCarthy's narrative focuses on specific Southwestern places in Texas and their intersection with the US-Mexican borderland and even beyond with its various cultures, demythicizing the story about the west as a cultural, political, social, and ideological space of American nationhood.

The early twentieth-century history of Mexico merges with the story of the Rocha family, specifically Senora Alfonsa's and her fiancé's, Gustavo Madero's brother, Francisco Madero, who led the revolution against the leader, Porfirio Diaz. The importance of the elderly woman's past in McCarthy's narrative is to demonstrate how initial idealism, optimism, liberal thinking, and implementing those ideas turned unsuccessful because of the politically fixated hierarchic social system in Mexico and the series of conspiracies against the revolutionaries. The author introduces how the European education of the young Madero sons amid revolutionary political ideas and the transformation of western societies had a great impact on Mexican political events at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Although modern European ideas in philosophy and sociology leaked into the different layers of society in western countries, they could not transform Mexican society. The Maderos ingenuously trusted the goodwill of humankind (239) and believed that social change was possible if they showed kindness and humaneness toward the people. They tried to solve nineteenth-century poverty and underdevelopment through hard work in the communities: they set up schools and provided medical treatment and food for the poor. The failure of the new social and political ideas in Mexico occurred as they were non-native and non-applicable among uneducated people, for whom even industrial technology was alien and the political bigotry of the elite seemed to be more powerful against them.

Don Héctor Rocha explains the socio-political situation in his country by stating that "One country is not another country. Mexico is not Europe" (148), referring to historical, social, and environmental factors that shaped the country's economy, legislation, social structure, and belief system. Besides, the hacendado emphasizes the fact that every country is different in cultural aspects, and the newly emerging ideologies of the Old Continent cannot apply to the New World with a similar outcome. For instance, the French idea of reason is impossible to naturalize in Mexico, according to Don Héctor, because it is far from traditional Spanish ideas brought from Europe centuries earlier, and even further from the Mexican mindset which comprises Spanish and indigenous elements blended with the unique character of the landscape.

Mexico is considered a highly religious country connected to the Old World (Spanish) traditions of Catholicism. Not only do the lower social classes keep presumably sacred plastic

statues and pictures of the Holy Family, but wealthy people, like Don Héctor, also keep religious relics in their homes. The hacendado has an old chapel in the house with an old, carved, and painted wooden altar and a life-sized carving of Christ (147). However, the place has not been used for mass for about forty years. Although the hacendado expresses how he likes to feel that God is present in the house (147), he appreciates the sacred objects in the building, and does not have actual faith in his soul. The darkened place of the chapel, used as a gaming room, is destined to be dissolved from its sanctity by a priest who comes occasionally and "says some words" (147) at the request of Senora Alfonsa, who is the adherent of European modernist philosophy. It is also ironic that a man of the Church, who is supposed to preach the word of God, can make material things "unsacred", which approves the fact that God does not choose priests and they do not possess sacred power, but they serve what people want to believe in. The chapel of the family represents materialized religion people follow, the rejection of religious belief and the faithlessness of the modern man, and the secularization and corruption of the clergy to serve people's needs instead of teaching them the tenets of Christianity and promoting faith.

In the United States, the combination of popular culture, media, religion, and faith signifies the secularization of the church, and tactile commodities replace faith. The Christian radio program, the "Jimmy Blevins Gospel Hour" in Texas is the cultural representation of the secularization of the Christian faith, and the commodification of preaching. The reverend communicates the word of God through the radio and his followers take part in blessings and healing by touching the radio device. His voice and the radio are instruments for him to be present everywhere and every time, preaching the gospel all over the world and even beyond—on Mars. This postmodern pastiche in the decade of capitalist development shows that the reverend is believed to be identical to Christ, and people expect him to resurrect dead people shipped to him on the railway (300-301). As the reverend's name, Jimmy Blevins, has become synonymous with the Redeemer, parents name their children worldwide Jimmy Blevins to secure the fortune of their children with a religious-sounding name. The Blevins kid was probably just one of many Jimmy Blevinses, and his real identity remains unknown. The postmodern sentiment toward religion is the criticism of the value system of the mid-twentieth century American society superstitiously believing in the magic of a swindler and the healing power of objects.

Not only did the character of the landscape and the taming of wilderness shape the American national spirit, but, as Turner had thought, American legislation was also "conditioned on the frontier" (24). Although the landscape of Mexico is much like the natural

environment in the southwestern US, the American legislation model cannot be compared to the Mexican one. However, regarding the conditions in remote desert areas exempted from the rule of law, the practices of the neighboring countries are similar. Despite the advance of property and civil rights protection laws, some elements of Mexican authorities act without legal consent as represented in McCarthy's western novel. Though modern legislation challenges moral questions and justice and is about implementing the law by seeking the truth, the captain threatens the boys that they can "make" the truth fit his expectation, otherwise, the "truth will be in other hands" (171). The flexibility of subjective judgment in the rural areas of Mexico differs from the American boy's notion of seeking the "one truth" (171) based on facts that happened. As capital punishment is legally not allowed in Mexico, ambiguous figures find solutions to implement retribution for their interest outside of the law. The economically ruined and deserted rural landscape, therefore, becomes a place of dread and terror, replacing the peaceful and harmonic pastoral image.

After the misfortunate adventure in Mexico, Rawlins states with resignation that the USA offers different opportunities for the new generation than earlier, but still, it is a "good country" (303). The young man represents the acceptance of change from the rural rancher's and farmer's life to the developing oil business and capitalist manufacturing. In contrast, John Grady is incapable of adapting to the altered economic and environmental circumstances and asserts that "it aint my country" (303). He cannot stand the vision of pump jacks, looking like "mechanical birds" (305) on oil fields that have displaced real birds on former Indian land. He has been uprooted from his ranch home, which was the only vision for the future for him, and was deprived of his American identity, family, and the pastoral heritage of his ancestors. Grady's returning to the States on Thanksgiving Day has significance, as this is traditionally the day of commemoration of the survival of immigrant settlers with the help of indigenous Americans. By 1950, there is nothing left to celebrate, as the Indian is gone from the territory and the horseman and the ranch have also vanished, leaving no home and opportunity for people to make a living from farming and agricultural production. Not only did the agricultural structure of the ranch collapse, but John Grady's grandfather's death and the retirement of the old Mexican servants who had worked the family for a lifetime, toll the bell for the symbolic western American landscape, ideology, and lifestyle.

4 Western Environmental Perception through the Literary Devices of the Pastoral

McCarthy aims to rewrite the old images and ideals of Americanness, which were extended from western US regions to the whole country, aided by the ecological perspective that dismantles former human-centered literary master narratives. Western symbolism, the horse metaphor of the rancher frontier, and southwestern philosophical concerns are the tools for the subversion of the American pastoral.

The narrative of *Pretty Horses* highlights how the connections between man and environmental elements are represented in contemporary western writing. Right at the beginning, the embalmed corpse of the deceased grandfather symbolizes the passing away of the western myth of cattle raising on a ranch, demythicizing the distinctively American character. The old man's yellowed mustache and his paper-thin eyelids are signs of how worn he had been from the passing of time. Some objects, like the funeral cloth, the dark glass, and the pale lilies, reveal that this is not sleeping (3) but exists in the irreversible and permanent state of a mortal man, and signals the end of the era of the old frontier myth. The candle flame and the image of the candle flame in the mirror (3) is a heterotopia, where the real image signifies the burning flame to mourn the grandfather, and its reflection on another surface is the projection of reality for the symbolic burial ceremony of the imagined way of life in the past.

The portraits of ancestors hanging on the walls, framed in glass, are symbolic objects signifying the evanescence of life and the permanence of the image that preserves, by means of art, people of a distant time. Objects in the grandfather's office are made from naturally occurring materials (oak, brass, silver, and glass), preserving the substances of the natural environment in a different form with a different function, shaped by human needs. The oil painting of horses depicts the animals in their wild condition as they were imagined, but not as they must have been. Those "picturebook horses" (16) are unlike any existing horses. The dual imagery of real agents and their representations prepare the reader for the reception of McCarthy's fiction about historical facts and politically generated illusory visions of make-believe.

Abuela's death on the late Grady ranch is symbolic of the end of the rancher frontier in the southwest by the middle of the twentieth century. The old Mexican servant's funeral ceremony is a habitual sequence of events, practices, and gestures: the funeral cortege appears, pallbearers are carrying Abuela's casket into the little Mexican cemetery accompanied by the priest, and a little boy in a white gown rings a bell, then

> they buried her and they prayed and they wept and they wailed and then they came back down out of the cemetery into the road helping each other along and weeping and got into the cars and . . . went back the way they'd come. (304)

The scene suggests that burials are frequent here, but the rituals are devoid of spiritual significance. The listed funeral objects serve as metonymies, emphasizing the material they are made of, and Mexican names are enumerated. These empty props of a religious ritual reveal the changing times and altering values within the Mexican funeral culture. By contrast, John Grady shows respect to the deceased Mexican woman in a way he learned from the elders in Mexico and indigenous people, by personifying her as "his abuela" (305), talking to her in Spanish, and performing movements of blessing with his hands. Through this ritual, he says farewell to the rancher cowboy ideal constructed by an earlier century and intends

> to slow the world that was rushing away and seemed to care nothing for the old or the young or rich or poor or dark or pale or he or she. Nothing for their struggles, nothing for their names. Nothing for the living or the dead (305).

A careless and emotionless world has come, where neither the human being nor the environment is of value. Everything has become a commodity, and everyone is a consumer. Western ideals have become outdated by new social, political, and cultural trends in the middle of the twentieth century.

We can distinguish a counternarrative of the pastoral in the novel. John Grady and his friend, Rawlins, carry out the imagined pastoral conduct in the natural environment. Close to their hometown, San Angelo, they lie on the road, where the heat comes off the blacktop (26) and listen to the coyotes yammering in the distance of the southern hills. As they are drifting away from the urban area, riding out along the fence-line and the high prairie, the perception of sounds is reversed: the tolling of the bell and the sounds from a distant town are distinctively non-natural voices echoing in the natural surroundings. The sinister sounds and John Grady's notification of Rawlins being late for his own funeral (30), suggest disharmony in the pastoral vision.

Occasionally, the illusion of the pastoral idyll is present, but those moments are temporary states. When the boys "lay in the dry chaff under the trees with their coats rolled up under their heads and their hats over their eyes while the horses grazed in the grass along the creekbed" (31) is a peaceful scenery. Relaxing in nature means closeness to the earth for the peace of the soul since classical times when the first urban areas appeared, and people sought refuge and pleasure in nature. Besides feeling tranquility, Rawlins sings songs, which is reminiscent of the chanting of poetry about or by shepherds in classical pastorals. However,

Rawlins only vocalizes a song, but he does not feel a connection to it. This further enhances the detachment of the modern man from bucolic poetry, and the imitation of a lifestyle and simulation of a specific set of behavior are postmodern characteristics in philosophical terms.

The nomadic way of life is part of the pastoral idyll, just like the observation of natural environmental agents. Not only sleeping beneath trees under the great starry sky far away from any settlement means closeness to nature, but the recognition of the horses grazing on green grass and flowers in bloom (259) are important elements of the countryside experience as well. The distance from any village or town in the night darkness is not a joyous sensation of the environment, but the blackness elicits agony in John Grady's heart. Rumination over his misfortunate adventure in Mexico is equivalent to "the pain of the world" (259). The feelings of loneliness and misery are compared to "some formless parasitic being seeking the warmth of human souls wherein to incubate" (259) and its limits are unknown.

The three boys, John Grady, Rawlins, and Blevins, cross the river naked on horseback in the moonlight, partly for practical reasons (to save their belongings from water) and to imitate Native American customs. They wear their cowboy hats, which further enhances the hybridity of western American and Indian cultural codes. Reaching the "alien shore" of Mexico, the three adventurers look like "a party of marauders" (46). They experience the settlers' struggle when arriving in an unknown land, and encounter hardships in the wilderness as it must have been during the westward expansion. In the young men's vision, Mexican land is the new frontier, though it is a demythicized postfrontier and the imaginary other space of the American southwest.

Dealing with horses is the essence of the western lifestyle because the animals serve man's interest in traveling, trade, entertainment, agriculture, and war. Grady's concept about good horses is formed on the images of "what they're supposed to look like" (101): the head, the jaw, and the tails. Horses are unique creatures among animals with their peculiar souls, but they are just "grey shapes in the grey morning" (104) on the Mexican ranch. Working with cattle and horses on the land is always about ownership and authority over the animal. Branding, earmarking, castrating, dehorning, and vaccinating are acts of depriving the animal of its natural character, leaving them horrified, and climbing on one another (100). Breaking a horse involves the subjugation of the animal to human beings to rule and ride it. The process is carried out by showing force, power, violence, psychological manipulation, and threat to keep the animal in terror and to cause it trauma, as it happened while "taming the wilderness" and indigenous people during the settler expansion from the east to the west. The animals lose their freedom and character as "the remorselessness of this rendering of their fluid and collective selves into

that condition of separate and helpless paralysis which seemed to be among them like a creeping plague" (107), leaving them pinned and helpless with the uncertainties of their being. The useless and dangerous wild spirit of the horse is turned into an obedient commodity as a result of the breaker's mesmerizing voice. The forceful inhabitation of a wild horse's mind is man's selfish act to play god (107) over the creatures it fears or cannot understand. This way, the formerly wild mustangs become metaphorically extinct by the end of the day, but if the practice of changing the natural order of living creatures goes on. They will be literally dead and gone in a short time.

The horse metaphor McCarthy applies in the novel unveils the "literary story-telling capacity" along with the "history-making capacity of the horse" (Raulff). Viewing nineteenth-century history, or literary works from that period, the narrative of the country merged with the narrative of the people, and the powerful symbol of the nation was not the eagle but the horse. It transported people to the West, supported the fight in wars for territories, then assisted in the cultivation of land, and aided the ranchers in managing livestock. The fortune-seeker, the eastern migrant, and immigrants from Europe needed the strength, stamina, and load capacity of the horse, and it has become a part of the imagined American spirit. In return, the man had taken the soul, inhabited the mind, and broken the body of the animal. "[T]he souls of horses mirror the souls of men more closely than men suppose and … horses also love war" (113)—remarks the old Mexican ranch worker to the young American cowboys. Do horses really love war or they are merely involved in man-fought wars without consent? The soul of the horse depends on the intention and personality of the rider, therefore the soul of the animal is the mirror image of man's inner self, but the two are incomparable. An animal is not intrinsically good or evil by participating in war; it is men who believe that "the cure for war is war" (113), but what sort of good is built from destruction? While horses have a common soul (113), which means if one creature is understood, the entire race is understood, but understanding one man does not involve the understanding of humankind. As human thoughts and intentions are inscrutable, it is merely an illusion of understanding people collectively.

The horse signifies unfolding romance, freedom, and wilderness, but it is also a symbol of suffering. Alejandra, riding the broken stallion bareback, is an allusion to the girl's unveiled sexual desire towards John Grady. However, the vision of the girl riding in the rain "shroud[ing] her figure away in that wild summer landscape" (135) brings doubt and discomfort to Grady. He contemplates whether his feelings and the situation are genuine. He sees a "real horse, real rider, real land and sky and yet a dream withal" (135). Although the girl is real and accessible

with all the senses, the distant and blurred picture of Alejandra, the creation of the mind, makes her existence an unreal and unreachable illusion to Grady.

The perception of the night environment wakes dark philosophical thoughts in Grady and Rawlins because pastoral was meant to bring a harmonious state, yet they feel unease from the howling of a wolf nearby and the darkness all around. Obscurity and the dim flickering of the stars in the distance expose the smallness of man compared to the great mechanism of the universe. Grady contemplates the wilderness around him and within him (61). He identifies himself as part of the wilderness, and the other way round: the cognitive process over wilderness shapes the character of the environment as well. Rawlins is concerned about the ceasing of perpetual and universal truths that would bring deeper darkness to the Earth than the night. Grady explains this assumption by the notions of the Christian faith, like if the sun will not rise one day (62) that would mean the coming of Judgment Day, the complete and ultimate darkness on Earth demolishing humankind forever.

The young cowboys address metaphysical concerns and ontological and epistemological questions resting on the philosophical nature of the pastoral. Grady and Rawlins talk about death and discuss the meaning of existence and the interdependence of heaven and hell according to their Christian notions about abstract ideas. Despite the Christian conceptual frame that they apply to existential and moral queries, the boys refuse the one-religion view and think that everybody can believe what they want (93) because it is not religion that determines one's character but faith. After all, the young men agree that divine providence supports people even in wars and ruination (94). Even if the dynamics of the world operate along with the duality and the unity of the material and the spiritual, the occurrence of their integrity is unpredictable and uncertain for mortal human beings.

Senora Alfonsa is the voice of sanity and moral behavior. Her Spanish aristocratic family heritage, French education, and English work experience make her the representative of old-world "antiquity and tradition" (135) and the adherent to modern ideas. Despite her self-definition as "not a particularly oldfashioned woman" (138), her appearance indicates the opposite: a strict and rigid schoolteacher in a gray uniform. She considers Alejandra her mirror image, her rebellious past self, therefore the Senora is aware of the girl's intentions with John Grady and she aims to protect Alejandra's reputation because she claims it is all that women have in Mexico (140). Once it is lost, a woman is never forgiven and is gossiped about, which may involve serious consequences in the patriarchal society. The elderly lady argues that even if she grew up in the world of men, she was not prepared for living in the world of men where women have no free will and no freedom of choice. The Senora further claims that the hacienda

is a small and close world (138), suggesting that the beautiful and magical environment is a safe space, but with a narrow worldview. The Mexican land property with all the livestock and workers is not the real world; it is just the projection of an idealistic concept of men's desire.

Emilio Pérez, the papazote (big hit) in the prison, is an evil man whose philosophy is that "[w]ithout money you can do nothing" (190). The graying man in his forties measures the intelligence of men depending on how stupid they think he is (195) and reckons them by how much money they are worth. While the former American literary and historical tradition depicted Mexicans through inaccurate and stereotypical representations, McCarthy illustrates different social and cultural issues the other way round, through the judgmental and stereotypical images of the Anglo from the Mexican perspective. Pérez has a contemptuous view of Americans whom he considers closed-minded for keeping servants on their estates (194) and, according to the Mexican, their picture of the world is incomplete (195). The inmate emphasizes that Americans rarely understand the real stake of being in prison and they are not tough enough to survive the circumstances there. In addition, he has xenophobic thoughts that people in the USA are like the Jews, who always have a rich relative (194) who pays the ransom for the convict's release. The philosophical contemplation in the prison about the main evil is a phenomenological concern about the various belief systems in Mexico and the United States, highlighting cultural differences. Pérez supposes that the Americans have non-practical ideas sometimes; Besides, they are superstitious and believe that there are good and bad things around them (197). The characterization of objects with human features assumes an anthropomorphic view of the mechanism of the world. Pérez holds the Anglo presumes, Mexicans are superstitious but they do not suspect their own godlessness (197). Pérez estimates some extent of evil in a few men, but he insists this feature is detached from the individual. As he says, evil is a distinct phenomenon that inhabits men sometimes and it "goes about on its own legs" (197). The papazote acknowledges that objects have qualities and evil is a genuine phenomenon in Mexico (197) but denies that non-human agencies and materials would be good or bad. He claims things and objects are not made special to a Mexican; they are merely necessary for serving men as money does. This view puts the man in the center and the surrounding material world is subjugated to it, not to mention the natural environment.

5 The Discourse of the Western Myth and the American Pastoral

Cormac McCarthy pays attention to details about the natural environment and the surroundings to set the context to formerly untold socio-cultural issues on the borderland and connects

environmental phenomena to mental categories of anthropomorphic perception and cognition. McCarthy's new western writing style includes cautionary environmental signs and atmospheric phenomena (colors, shapes, light-dark tones, the storm, weather) which correspond to happenings, human interactions, and emotions and express various states of mind that entail the sensual perception of the natural environment. The author often uses Spanish expressions in his narrative to emphasize the ethnic, cultural, cognitive, and linguistic diversity of the territory. The rhetoric of *Pretty Horses* touches upon the concerns of the new western writing style and the use of pastoral elements in the narrative, gendered perspectives in western fiction, and the aesthetics of death and killing.

The two boys' journey toward the South is full of hopes for cowboy life, promising "ten thousand worlds for the choosing" (31). The high plains and hills leading to Mexico are the postfrontier, the mirror-image, and the counter-site of the imagined and ideologically constructed west of the nineteenth-century US. The journey, across the open grassland and the salty Pecos River in Texas, is described along with windmills, wild daisies, and some cattle. Getting closer to the southern border, the wire fence from pole to pole is "like a bad suture across the grey grasslands" (39). The conflicts throughout American history have left the land wounded and people separated themselves with fences to draw the line of their territory and to defend their properties. This suture-like fence-line draws a distinct line between the two countries and cultures and defends those who are within, and excludes those who are outside of the barrier. Despite man-built obstacles, nature lies there continuously on the two sides of the border. In the far south, there are mountains of Mexico, the blue sierras (46)—covered with nopal cactus and creosote (50)—looking like the ghosts of mountains (43) creating a mysteriously sublime atmosphere. The natural environment comprises the clay-colored water of the Rio Grande River, the desert with dry scrublands (47) and cottonwood (58), and some swallows flying in the sky. These natural entities reach across the border without the boundaries that political and social issues constructed and cause as much hardship for travelers as crossing the state lines.

Cormac McCarthy asks the philosophical question "Where … paradise is at?" (61) through the voice of the narrator and his characters, to challenge the frontier concept about American land as a promised Eden where white settlers aimed to fulfill their dreams conforming to the ideology of Manifest Destiny. The author answers this theoretical query from an environmental-centered approach, overwriting the malfunctioning ideologically based anthropocentric notions. Besides, some further queries arise: what paradise is, who defines it, and whether American land was a paradise as the expansionist settlers imagined? In McCarthy's

interpretation, “You cant tell what’s in a country … till you’re down there in it” (61) because it requires an empirical and cognitive perception of the place, its inhabitants, their culture, and their integrity in the environment. The search for a paradise across the southern US border is due to the restless American character that is constantly seeking adventure. At the turning point of rapid industrialization and agrarian recession such an enterprise is, however, unreachable within the existing borders, so the cowboys must explore the other side of the southwestern landscape, reaching into the heart of Mexico.

McCarthy writes, “a man leaves much when he leaves his own country” (229) relating to the culture, identity, language, customs, and historical heritage a homeland renders to its citizens. The Mexican ranch workers in La Purísima hold that each people are born on a certain land where they are supposed to be, and not on another one with a purpose (229). It is because of the character of the land, the environment with its weather and seasons that form the social and cultural setting and it also forms the “inner fortunes of men” (229). This means that the determination by luck and destiny affects any individual who belongs to a certain community on a specific land and it is part of the culture. On this basis, the westward expansion that gained “new” land for Americans held the opportunity for the formation of a “newer” kind of American culture. As the environmental circumstances have been altered by the spread of intensive farming and ranching, and later on oil extraction, and urban pollution, the character of the land changed with them, offering a different culture with different fortunes. This culture did not satisfy those who preferred the earlier, idealized form of connection between land and culture, as the mid-twentieth century cowboy-to-be teenagers, John Grady and Rawlins do.

The diversity and variation of the environment, including the landscape, weather, colors, seasons, celestial bodies, are closely related to the plot of the novel and they reflect moods and feelings connected to those events. The prison building in Saltillo is as gray and still as the rainy day in the outside darkening, signaling that the “site of siege” (212) is a place where tragic and sorrowful enmity was generated among the inhabitants. The black pools of rain reflecting the red lamps of the town in the evening darkness (213) appear like blood, indicating John Grady’s guilt and reminding the reader of the bloody stabbing and the inevitable death in the community of young criminals and unfair conventions. As Grady returns to the area of the hacienda in La Purísima, his perception of the environment changes through his revised attitude toward the land. The atmosphere is perceived through different senses and the synaesthesia of the moon as a “single silver music note burning in the constant and lavish dark” (222) expresses the lonesome but pleasing vision and feeling of the young adventurer. The smells of earth, grain,

and horses in the evening air (222) evoke the pastoral sensation and pleasant memories of the place.

The storm is usually indicative that something bad is about to happen. The darkness of the day comes with a heavy storm that is symbolic of the desert land where evil occurrences are upcoming. The arrival of the storm is detailed as the sky darkened, and the terrain turned neuter gray; then it towered above, bringing cool wind and a flash of distant lightning was glowing mutely (68). Then the first thin crack of thunder brought spits of rain that finally burst into rain like some "phantom migration" flowing like a river or a train (71), enhancing the thunder. Blevins' horse, standing restless and scared in the downpour like "the ghost of a horse" (72) is another sinister sign for the boys on a journey toward the south. Later, at sundown, "a troubled light" and the "laminar bands of color to the west [are] bleeding out under the hammered clouds [casting a] violetcolored hooding of the earth" (140). While the earlier storm was a warning sign for the cowboys that they had stepped on dangerous land, this is a visually violent caution if any unaccepted action is done.

Besides the elements of the natural environment, the interior of the grandfather's house preserves older times and signs the passing of linear time through the ticking of the mantel clock (3), while the prairie outside indicates a different, cyclical measurement of time with the changing of seasons bringing the dark and cold autumn and the waking hopes of spring. The changing of seasons is described as "advanced in season" and the "long red sunset" (155) that shows the end of the summer is near. With the altering of seasons, the countryside is also reshaped in color and phenomena as different times of the year come and go. Beyond temporal measurement, natural forces, especially the wind, seem to be stronger than the preacher's words that get "lost in the wind" (5) at the old man's funeral. This resonates with Turner's observation that "the western portion of the South … showed tendencies to fall away from the faith of the fathers into internal improvement, legislation and nationalism" (28) in the course of expansion and development. Religious faith becomes useless and disregarded by the people of the Southwest because the natural environment has its transcendental atmosphere that creates a specific character to the surroundings.

Several agricultural expressions are conveyed in Spanish when the narrative is about the Mexican ranch or the horse trade (hacendado, caporal, gerente, caballero, vaquero). The specific type of vocabulary is connected to the land and the interactions carried out by the members of the Spanish-Mexican cultural community. Most conversations on the postfrontier also take place in Spanish, and it makes the narrative compatible with cultural and ethnic diversity. John Grady was raised by some Mexican servants, Luisa, her mother, Abuela, and

Arturo, in the old man's house. Being fostered by Hispanic people who have served the family since the previous century, John Grady became a bilingual speaker of English and Spanish—a skill that he utilizes throughout his border-crossing journeys —, and his identity is built upon multiethnic, multicultural, and multiclass standards.

When Grady breaks horses on the hacienda, he uses Spanish because this is the common language of that discourse community and the animals have been raised and will be kept in Spanish commands. Grady's thoughts about horses suggest a one-sided relationship; he wants to be a part of the animal's mind but refuses to be manipulated by the character of the horse. Although he rides the horse "as if he'd been born to it" (23) and cares a lot about the animals while breaking them, he refuses to be one. "I ain't a horse" (108) stresses Grady expressing his self-reliant individualism that cannot be controlled. Anyway, his thoughts are constantly occupied with himself being a cowboy, and dealing with horses, which are associated with the mounted cattleman in the southwestern cultural framework, have the greatest impact on his identity. Perpetual contemplation about the horses and the assumed open country (120) makes him believe he has found a new frontier across the southern US border. As a result, he determines himself as the "breaker of horses" who occupies the psychological realm of the strong and symbolic animals by keeping them in menace and under control. The repetitive, almost Biblical phrases recited in Spanish elevate Grady into a superior position, regulating and sustaining the stallion's reproductive and self-preserving instincts.

> Soy comandante de las yeguas, he would say, yo y yo solo. Sin la caridad de estas manos no tengas nada. Ni comida ni agua ni hijos. Soy yo que traigo las yeguas de las montanas, las yeguas jovenes, las yeguas salvajes y ardientes. (131)
>
> Transl. I am the commander of the mares, he would say, I and I alone. Without charity from my hands, you have nothing. Neither food nor water nor children. I am the one who brings the mares of the mountains, the young mares, the savage ones, and the mares that burn with passion. (Stevens 2)

Although John Grady's words and deeds stress that he is not identical to the equine species, his recurring dream of horses is an allegory of the American pastoral. In his vision, Grady sees a high plain with grass and wildflowers where he is running together with the horses. The desired aesthetic view brings an unreachable state of being free as a wild horse, but the mind can be set free during sleep. The vivid motion picture of the rich chestnut colors shining in the golden sun (163-164) and the playful and unrestrained movement of Grady among the animals create a resonance that becomes the music of the union of humans, animals, nature, and the whole environment. The union and resonance of various environmental creations and natural creatures

compose a world that “cannot be spoken but only praised” (164). This pastoral idyll makes the reader wonder: has this perfect harmony and peace ever been real or is this frail balance and peace of mind merely a “dreamscape” in the human unconscious? McCarthy answers that the idyllic environmental perception is just the projection of the mind.

The submission of horses has another dimension, whether they were born a mare or stallion, and the distinction between males and females is prevalent in social practice in Mexico. The feminine character of mares is used for reproduction that brings more benefits to their owners. Although the body of the female horse is used as a money mint, it is not much appreciated. However, the stallion which “bred mares almost daily for three weeks and sometimes twice daily” (130) receives great recognition among vaqueros for its masculinity and productivity, which brings new colts and big fortune to the hacendado. The stallion is reckoned as a highly beneficial animal and its dynamism is described as a machine set in motion by the rider’s Machiavellian whispering:

> inside the vaulting of the ribs between his knees the darkly meated heart pumped of who’s will and the blood pulsed and the bowels shifted in their massive blue convolutions of who’s will and the stout thighbones and knee and cannon and the tendons like flaxen hawsers that drew and flexed and drew and flexed at their articulations and of who’s will all sheathed and muffled in the flesh and the hooves that stove wells in the morning groundmist and the head turning side to side and the great slavering keyboard of his teeth and the hot globes of his eyes where the world burned. (131)

The organic mechanism and various objects with anthropocentric features regard the material perspective of the animal.

Not only the dominance over horses is expressed verbally in the narrative, but the characters vocalize masculine hegemony over women. Frye calls this attitude “primitive masculinity, and violent struggle” (*Cambridge Companion* 174). Rawlins has a steady opinion about females and he talks about Grady’s current unreachable love interest with disrespect: “I wouldnt let her get the best of me … She aint worth it. None of em are” (10). On another occasion, Rawlins compares a good-looking horse to a good-looking woman, pointing out his masculine attitude toward women: “They’re always more trouble than what they’re worth. What a man needs is just one that will get the job done” (91). Such a scornful attitude toward female human beings is also part of the traditional western rhetoric, as the West was the “playground” of the male adventurer who intended to tame the wilderness with all of its creatures—including women. Despite John Grady’s negative experiences about women and his

best friend's scornful opinion about girls, his perception of people and his cowboy enterprise is a softened version of the hard-line macho spirit. Further on, Alejandra is compared to her black Arabian horse in appearance, having a fine-boned face, long black hair resembling the horsetail, and broad shoulders, emphasizing her controllable nature and inferior social role in the male-based ranch community. She looks strong, behaves with dignity, and rides the horse erect, "more than well" (111), just like a horseman. Alejandra is close to the horses in the soul, being wild and free, therefore she emerges as John Grady's interest to be seduced and "tamed."

McCarthy addresses the oppression of women in the patriarchal social and political system in Mexico and illustrates it through the character of Senora Alfonsa, whose life had been ruined by male judgment and pride. Politics excluded female members from elections and society served as a machine for the "suppression of women" (232) leaving no opportunity of choice for them. Along with the political and social empowerment of men, social polarization and economic decline, and the inability to improve the conditions of lower social classes were attributed to the leading political figures. The failure of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) is viewed as the "rehearsal" for the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in Europe because of the Spaniard's "yearning for freedom, but only [their] own" and the "great love of truth and honor … but not its substance" (232). Although the Spanish live on two different lands and even on different continents, their social and cultural values, and their conceptual frame for political order and social structure are the same—including the exclusion of women from public issues.

Violence, blood, and the beauty of animate nature make up the strange aesthetics of the world in *Pretty Horses*. Deer are noble creatures among animals with their magnificent external features and their killing has multiple significance. John Grady shoots the smallest doe for a meal, but looking into the animal's eyes (warm, wet, and without fear) launches a series of associations and harrowing emotions. The doe's look suggests that she has been aware of her fate: she was born to be prey. The little body lying in blood refers not only to the sacrifice of the animal but reminds Grady of the Blevins kid who had been hunted down by the charro and the captain with no legal trial and conviction. The small victim also reminds Grady of Alejandra's sacrifice as she gave him up under the pressure of bribery and threats. Therefore, the doe is the symbol of majesty, but it also stands for death, victimization, sadness, and destiny. Furthermore, loneliness and alienation are connected to the hidden secret in the world's beauty (286); the world's pain is in diverging equity with the world's beauty, and the two are inseparable from each other and they are evenly changing. However, knowing beauty cannot be without sorrow, which creates an aesthetic duality of the bloodshed and truth represented through "the vision of a single flower" (286).

The death of animals and their bodies bear symbolic meaning. The slaughtering of a sheep at Grady's return to the Mexican ranch stands for losing Grady's innocence as he comes of age and his violation of God's commandment regarding homicide. The buzzards feeding on a dead colt "in the tainted grass eyeless and naked" (227) also bear figurative implications concerning Grady; the lifeless body of the infant horse is the end of the new life on the ranch that Grady supported with his work by breaking the stallions and with the insemination of mares. It may also stand for the ineffective cowboy enterprise on the Mexican frontier the boys thought would be an equine paradise grounded in American rural ideals.

The landscape is pictured as a composite of dark tones and the colors of violence and sinister happenings. The hawk, a bird of prey, is illustrated as a paper bird, and its shadow signals the real conflict and unnecessary bloodshed on the territory. The redness of the sky like "blood falling through water" (289) bears Biblical significance, indicating the sacrifice of Christ, who was baptized and cleansed from all sins in water. The blood-red sunset and the "bull rolling in the dust … in sacrificial torment" (306) is also an allusion to either the practice of hunting for the inbred bison in North America or the Spanish tradition of bullfight—both generating violence using the natural character and the instinctive behavior of the animal. The cordilleras darkening, the desert gold still shining, inking over the bajada (289) suggest that darkness is coming, and the darkening landscape is an allegory to the end of an era of the pastoral; closeness to nature is ultimately over with the machines and artificial objects on the land. As the last American horseman, John Grady is vanishing from the landscape riding into the darkness, the cowboy ideal remains a ghost of the western world, endlessly crossing the borderland.

6 Conclusion

The essential features of western writing and pastoral tradition support McCarthy's aims to rewrite history from an ecological perspective. The novel revises unfitting past-century concepts about the landscape deconstructs the western narrative, subverts the frontier myth, and demythicizes the masculine cowboy ideal to create an environmentally-centered perspective about the Southwestern landscape. The neo-western narrative creates the notion of the "postfrontier" in northern Mexico, where the old American ideals are projected by the two teenage cowboys, John Grady and Lacey Rawlins, and fail because of social, cultural, political, and ideological differences between Americans and Mexicans and owing to post-war economic and industrial changes. The outdated symbolic images of the West, which defined

Americanness in the nineteenth century, are dismantled. The discourse about the symbolic southwestern landscape focuses on environmental description and the desperate macho speech style dominating women and livestock and creates a specific atmosphere for the aesthetics of violence and decay.

The sinister dark tones in the novel not only signify the end of agricultural opportunities, and the proliferation of modern technology in the borderland but predict the decline of human morals and values at the dawn of the Cold War. The philosophical paradigm shift concerning the notion of the human exchanges reason with the deterministic philosophy and represents chaos. The emergence of postmodern and post-structuralist trends in literature and culture relies on material relations and through the connection of the human and non-human environmental elements, various narratives are created. The transformation of the southwestern landscape from agricultural production to industrial manufacturing and oil drilling results in the desolation of the borderland. At the same time, the changed environmental conditions set the ground for new material connections (through guns, drugs, and money) across the border and it becomes the playground of traumatized Vietnam War veterans and calls forth the posthuman. The emergence of the posthuman through material relations and connected topics are scrutinized in the following chapter in the context of *No Country for Old Men*.

Chapter 3 Facing the Posthuman: Ecological and Material Relations in *No Country for Old Men*

1 Introduction

No Country for Old Men is a western thriller about the moral, social, and ecological degradation in the actual and symbolic landscape of the American southwest. The novel examines the material relations and interactions between the environment and human beings, recording the emergence of the posthuman condition as the aftermath of the inhuman Second World War and the immoral Vietnam War. Material ecocriticism and ecological postmodernism address the idea of the reciprocal interplay between the human and environmental agents in the barren, isolated, and eerie desert on the borderland of the United States and Mexico. The posthumanist approach considers the dynamism of destructive powers in humankind, the erosion of moral values, as well as of reason, humanism, and anthropocentrism—the core concepts of the European Enlightenment—, and it replaces them with fate, chance, chaos, and the absence of morality. A major governing principle of the novel, argues Gabriella Vöő, is chaos. Settings teeming with life but devoid of human presence, human characters displaying rigidly deterministic or chaotic behavior, and plot movements in which established systems are overtaken by turbulence open a window to the dynamic and holistic order governing the universe (120). Thus, the novel's perspective switches from an anthropocentric view of the Southwestern geography, landscape, people, animals, and phenomena to an ecocentric one and positions all environmental entities on the same level. From such a viewpoint, agency shifts from the human to the nonhuman components of the ecosystem. All elements of the ecosystem, not only the human ones, are active and endowed with agency.

In this novel, the identity of the main characters (Ed Tom Bell, Anton Chigurh, Llewelyn Moss) is shaped by their relations to the environment and the web of material possessions (drugs, guns, and money) they have created. The interconnection of human personality types through material relations generates human moral dilemmas and posthuman existential crises. Material relations and changing positions on human ethics reorganize, or rather polarize, social, economic, and legal structures, cultural patterns, and human behavior, and undermine traditional human morality. Material elements have the potential to trigger new relations among various environmental phenomena and create entire narratives through the chain of relationships between human and non-human agencies. In this sense, the matter has

agency and is “creative” (Oppermann 28). Verbal interaction among the characters is not only the manifestation of obsession with material gain but also of the posthuman perspective, contrasting with human morals and values promoted by the Christian worldview.

Sheriff Bell’s ruminations about the emergence of the unprecedented magnitude of crime in the world are examples of the humanist vision. He interprets his experiences with violent crime in the context of the Christian worldview and attributes the web of hate, greed, or violence for its own sake to metaphysical and transcendental phenomena: the growing force of evil in the world:

> *I think if you were Satan and you were settin around tryin to think up somethin that would just bring the human race to its knees what you would probably come up with is narcotics.* (218)
>
> . . .
>
> *We’re bein bought with our own money. And it aint just the drugs. . . . There’s always been narcotics. But people dont just up and decide to dope theirselves for no reason. By the millions*. (303)

The older man holds that post-Second World War politics, the Vietnam War, and its psychological aftermath entailing substance abuse, drug, and gun trafficking, as well as money-mongering, have caused the decline of American society. In addition, Bell relates to human and non-human relations from a moral and religious angle, explaining the workings of the world from his own human—and humanist—point of view.

2. The Shaping of (Post)Human Identities through Material Relations

The main characters of *No Country* have an ambivalent relationship with the environment, which is at once the scene of their interactions with one another and the target of their destructive actions. Sheriff Bell is both an environmentalist and an anthropocentric figure; he interacts with the environment by being close to nature, and reading the surrounding matter’s narratives. His human-centered attitude aims to create meaningful humane interactions and restrain the infiltrating criminal enterprises on the borderland. Bell observes and makes meaning from various environmental agents to serve his community. The second main character, Llewelyn Moss, utilizes his material relations with the environment (reading tracks and hunting) for his own pleasure. Moss has a strong affiliation with money that bears a socially and economically constructed value, attracting him with the promise of well-being. Like Sheriff Bell, Moss also stays within the conceptual framework of the human.

In contrast, Anton Chigurh, their antagonist in the novel, places human and non-human elements of the environment on the same level. However, he represents the exploitative material view of the environment. His interactions with the region's criminals are based on material transactions. The materialist mindset of the borderland territory, the lack of beneficial potential in the desert land, the demand for drugs, and the lust for money in American society have triggered a new form of occupation, the Mexican dope dealer (26), who is the transporting agent across the administration line of the US and Mexico—between various cultural spaces and different social agents. However, Chigurh is not immoral but amoral. He lacks any attraction to material wealth and the pleasures it may bring. His motivations are unclear and enigmatic, and he operates as a force of nature. As such, he can be regarded as the embodiment of the posthuman.

Sheriff Ed Tom Bell is a man of morals and justice who feels responsible for every entity of the environment. Still, he calls into question the values of some individuals who blight the humane way of life through their criminal behavior. He has a strong sense of ethics, based on his former ideas and experiences, which seems inadequate in law enforcement's present conditions. The Sheriff assumes that the only reason he has not been in greater trouble in the middlemost area of the drug trade and is still alive is that neither criminals nor his colleagues in superior positions take him seriously (217). Nevertheless, he is an attentive and thorough officer; his observation skills and dedicated work are as efficient as those of the federal officers.

Harold Bloom argues that McCarthy's own political views are expressed through Ed Tom Bell's conservative character (134). He supports this statement with Bell's desperation behind his "pain of loss and fear of uncertainty" (168). Bell believes in the power of truth and considers it more lasting than the rock in the Bible. He claims that the truth will "*be here even when the rock is gone*" (123) because time decomposes its materiality but ideas and values are everlasting. Bell thinks that life is about always seeking the truth; otherwise, there would be no meaning in existence. In his opinion, truth is always understandable and straightforward, even for a child, and the Christian tenet of forgiveness (through regret, confession, and apology) is the only way to lead a proper way of life, setting the sinners free of guilt (249). Although he used to be a man of action, his contemplations about the parallels between past and present criminals and his relation to immoral and inhuman deeds seem to have changed his position on criminal investigation. Ed Tom Bell feels the need for the concerted action of authorities to repel the evilest, "new kind" of criminals (3). Still, he also wishes to distance himself from such posthuman creatures whom he calls the "*prophet[s] of destruction*" (4).

Bell, a man of faith, believes that the existence of Satan in opposition to God explains criminal activity in the southwestern US. The Sheriff reckons narcotics as a material deriving from Satan that "*bring[s] the human race to its knees*" (218), compelling people to evil deeds through substantial intrinsic demand, addiction, and cross-border transition. If the immoral and unlawful enterprise is the justification for the existence of Evil, then He is created and attested by an outlaw or, rather "over-the-law" deeds. Friedrich Nietzsche looked upon God as a creation of people through faith and belief. Similarly, Satan is a concept created by people. Therefore, their evil actions are the manifestation of Evil. As Nietzsche predicted, the "death of God would have vast and catastrophic consequences" (Williams xiii) because the metaphysical belief in the Creator would have died through the disappearance of the belief in truthfulness. Accordingly, the rise of Evil in *No Country* is the consequence of the recession of goodness, care, and responsibility for one another. Material supremacy and individual principles overrule the metaphysical structure of the world (Williams xiii), resulting in a posthuman world of disbelief, danger, and superficial, interest-centered relations.

Ed Tom Bell's identity is shaped by his relationship with his relatives in the past and those surrounding him in his daily life. He has family roots going back to the nineteenth century when his ancestors went from the southern state of Georgia to the west on wagons and horses. Bell honors not only the deceased relatives, but he is respectful, loving, and caring toward his wife, Loretta; indeed, he tenderly fears her anger. After over three decades of marriage, Bell thinks he is a lucky man because of the woman's goodness and kind-heartedness. Unlike Bell, who has seen the worst in the world, Loretta is a spiritual person. She tries to resolve Ed Tom's daily moral agonies with relevant passages from the Bible, relying on the persistent words of God (304). Being at home is the most harmonious place for Bell. He thrives in the loving atmosphere of the house that his wife creates with soft music, delicious supper, and caring words. Loretta has a vital role in keeping the family and the local community together as a self-conscious, purposeful, and faithful woman. The behavior of unpredictable criminals challenges Bell's conceptions of human morality and his anthropocentric worldview, but the connection with his wife reinforces his faith and integration in the surroundings. Unlike Moss, Bell respects his partner as a human being equal to him, and he consults the woman's opinion regularly.

Bell's occupation as a sheriff is a heritage from his grandfather, who also taught him human, moral, and social values, like always being fair and not speaking ill of anybody (90). He also considered being a sheriff the best job, caring for the safety of people and keeping in touch with them regularly. Yet, this position changed with the consumerist and materialist boom in the second half of the twentieth century. Despite economic, social, and cultural changes,

Sheriff Bell is responsible and thorough in his work, and he teaches his deputies the essential practices of an officer and to "fix what [they] can fix and … let the rest go" (283) because it is not worth the aggravation. Bell partly was a lawman to be in charge and listened to, and partly to save people from immoral and illegal action by pulling them "back in the boat" (295) and putting things right in his area. He works for the community, organizes social events occasionally, and feels duty for each of its members, including Moss and his wife as residents in his county: "The people of Terrell County hired me to look after em. That's my job. I get paid to be the first one hurt" (133). He also takes his horses for the investigation as a gesture of communal service and believes in justice, human values, and human relations. He fears but also respects the dead, believing that there is no luck in cursing them because "whatever they were the only thing they are now is dead" (73), unable to either help the living or commit another crime. For Bell, the dead are the bond among the living because the dead have claims on them (124) by creating community and respect through connection.

The Sheriff is constantly contending with his conscience and feels remorse for his decisions and choices. In his confessions to Uncle Ellis, Bell acknowledges that he also cares for his people to make up for his fault for running away from death, and leaving his squad behind during the Second World War. Although going to a battle is a "blood oath" (278), an unbreakable relationship among soldiers, Bell did not keep his word; therefore, he has been feeling like a cowardly traitor for years. Bell's anguish for "steal[ing his] own life" (278) articulates his shame for not getting punished for a deed he perceives as cowardly, and living the honored life that he thinks he does not deserve. Because of his lifelong moral dilemma, the designated old-time Sheriff considers himself a "man of this time" (279), the forerunner of the posthuman, who did not care about others' lives but put his interest in front of his eyes and who easily failed his promise.

The criminals Sheriff Bell has met throughout his lifelong occupation in criminal investigations significantly affect his life and self-definition. The one and only murderer he sent to the gas chamber left his mark on the rest of his life and career. The nineteen-year-old boy expressed his passion for killing with no sign of regret and admitted that he had no soul and would go to hell, which was an ominous warning for Bell. Though the Sheriff had no intention to visit a ruthless person in jail, his human and social values of duty, justice, and responsibility for his decisions and deeds, likewise his respect for the dead (either good or bad, killed by him or by others) spur him to do so. However, this case was "*nothin compared to what was comin down the pike*" (4), bringing along the morally ultimate posthuman type, criminals like Chigurh, who lack morals, ethics, and human values, incapable of remorse, and penitence.

Ed Tom Bell fought in the Second World War, but despite the cruelties of armed conflict, he kept to specific values like compassion and mercifulness. Thinking about law enforcement, Bell does not state that it would be more dangerous now than it used to be, but criminals' methods have changed as an aftermath of historical and political issues from the 1950s to the 1970s. As police officers solved problems and fist-fights with human power and authority in older times, today bad guys use weapons to respond to police action. People's attitude toward guns changed after the Vietnam War when military servicemen were trained to kill for political power demonstration in a quasi-Cold War setting in a faraway land. Sheriff Bell is not only a person of words but also of acts. However, his gun skills have been exceeded by the confidential use of weapons of war on behalf of Vietnam veterans, like Anton Chigurh or Llewelyn Moss. Emotionless and immoral slayers have also overgrown Bell in their intentions to kill for the sake of killing or money. Bell relates to the men in a pickup with Mexican plates trying to shoot him and kill him as "*very serious people*" (39) who are extremely dangerous and determined to eliminate the law without respect for officers, changing the power relations between law enforcement officers and criminals. The Sheriff's work is always unpredictable because "*you dont know what you're liable to find*" (39) when a man of law stops somebody. People's intentions (good, bad, or evil) are unclear, and one never knows what is to be found on the highway. Yet Sheriff Bell is positive that there cannot be that many of those heartless murderers for whom material things (money and drugs) are more valuable than life.

Towards the end of his career, Bell turns entirely to the non-material and metaphysical perception of life. He partly explains the decision to retire from law enforcement after thirty-six years. He wants to leave his profession because he regards the manifestations of evil as falling beyond the realm of the human. Posthuman evil is responsible for the flourishing of the drug business and the widespread drug consumption all over the States which has overgrown respectable and uncorrupted jurisdiction. Ruminating about old age, he feels the necessity to think about death and set things in order in his soul before facing and accounting for it in front of God. Bell reckons that the one mistake he was entitled to had been exploited in the war, and he had learned from that, keeping himself strictly to moral and human values in life trying to be a sheriff and a "man of an older time" (279). However, quitting means he is running away from responsibility once again to save his soul, as he ran away from the Germans and his duty to his people in the early 1940s to save his own life.

Bell trusts God's justice when the time comes, even if he cannot stop bad things from happening (269). Being defeated and unable to dispense justice against Chigurh—the ghost walking among people without being seen but always observing them and bringing death to

them—makes Bell sad and bitter. He is lost in the posthuman world, incapable of fulfilling his role model as a sheriff, a western hero who catches and punishes the bad guys. Social transformation—entailing a new type of human being—and the new world order built around material relations have defied Ed Tom Bell's old-fashioned notions about people, morals, and human relations that are no longer applicable to the contemporary world that has considerably changed, but Bell's ideas about it have not.

The way McCarthy designs Anton Chigurh's character justifies the use of the concept of the posthuman, a state of being anti-human and standing against the humanistic ideals of "man" (Braidotti 13). He seems to have no emotions and even looks insensitive to the bodily perception of cold or pain, giving the impression of being a reptile or a non-human robot. Chigurh's eyes are "[b]lue as lapis. At once glistening and totally opaque. Like wet stones" (56), emphasizing his emotionless and austere character. In his appearance, Chigurh is serene with dark hair, and there is something faintly exotic about him (111). A teenage witness of Chigurh's accident describes him as a man in his late thirties with medium height and build, having a dark complexion, wearing ostrich boots that make him "look … like anybody" (292) but not someone to mess with. Despite his rigidity, Chigurh stretches his physical boundaries in a manner of an amorphous material when escaping from handcuffs with some routine motion. He also shows signs of antisocial behavior at the very beginning when he strangles the deputy and then "lay breathing quietly" (6), showing no signs of excitement or exertion. He also murders another victim in cold blood on the side of a road, placing his hand on the man's head "like a faith healer" (7). In contrast with the divine mediator of curing with belief, Chigurh is the counterpart of faith and healing. He is a living anti-human and killing machine; he takes people's faith and believes in nothing.

Chigurh is the ultimate evil compared to the angel of death, or Lucifer, with "dead white light" (103) around him expressing his lethal presence, working directly for the Devil, if we apply Sheriff Bell's terms. His 'creative'—or rather 'destructive'—agency is easily set into motion as soon as he detects a disturbance or an obstacle in his way. The man with stiff manners is in a perceptive and collaborative relationship with the environment. By observing the smallest details of the place of his crime, Chigurh never makes a mistake. Knowing objects and places and getting an insight into his victim's deepest fears, he rules the environment and people with their inner paralysis and confusion through his seemingly logical but crooked reasoning. Chigurh's cruelty is made evident by shooting men in the face to see how life leaves their bodies. The reserved killer is "[w]atching the capillaries break up in [the victim's] eyes. The light receding. Watching his own image degrade in that squandered world" (122). Chigurh

monitors every moment of the intimate experience of death, something an average human being would be incapable of. Witnessing death in its ephemeral nature is an aesthetic and emotional pleasure and relief for him, and he seems to derive his life power from his victims, collecting their souls.

Although Chigurh always leaves the place of murder in a mess, he is meticulous about his clean appearance. He orders one victim to step away from the vehicle because he does not want to get blood on the car he is about to take (7). When his clothes and his body are stained with blood, he washes thoroughly. However, washing does not mean clearance from sins to Chigurh; he only takes care of the details, not revealing his identity through dirt, and avoids being found. He is surrounded by an odd smell of foreign cologne mixed with a medical tone that shows his compulsive cleanness (111). The shaving kit is as necessary for Chigurh as his pistol when leaving his temporary residence. In Carla Jean's grandmother's house, he uses the empty place to take a shower, shave and have a good sleep in the room of the young woman he just killed, but he is careful not to be seen by leaving the curtain pulled back, the hallway door open and the shotgun lying close to him (204).

Although Chigurh is the antithesis of mortal man, the danger of getting injured seriously changes his perspective on the world. He admits having a revelation about something that formerly he passed by: "I've moved on, in a way. Some things have fallen into place that were not there before. I thought they were, but they werent. The best way I can put it is that I've sort of caught up with myself" (173). It is not the closeness of death that changed his worldview. His notion of death is giving up on one's life by making a series of wrong choices and decisions. What he considers "wrong" is being driven by greed and aspiration after material possession. Chigurh knows that he has been used for other people's purposes and their financial interests as a hired hitman, and they have no respect for him. Chigurh's former military partner, Carson Wells, was sent to liquidate him. Yet in the end, the killer has the upper hand by disregarding the motivation—money—that his employers covet.

Although he is a hired hitman and probably a psychopath, Chigurh decides not to kill anyone he encounters but acts on whim. Still, his interaction with people–blowing up a car to draw everyone's attention from stealing medication from a pharmacy or asking the maid not to disturb him during his stay in the motel room–suggests the change in his formerly random choice of victims. Before murdering Carson Wells, Chigurh explains the reasons for his antisocial demeanor and vengeful actions to him. He opens up about being bullied in the past for his appearance, and confesses to killing the man in retribution. Because of verbal abuse and public shaming, Chigurh developed a defense mechanism, and he slew everyone who cast an

eye on him since that incident. At the turning point in his perspective about people, he aims to dispense justice to those who deserve it according to his principles, driven purely by material interests. The change of his perspective does not involve a more anthropocentric worldview, more humane morals, or becoming a better person, but seeking justice in his own way. Besides, Chigurh refers to his life as "simple" (177), without material ambitions.

Chigurh's attitude to the drug business is ambivalent: he is explicitly not interested in financial benefit but in eliminating unprincipled people. Yet, he helps the head of the drug trade, hoping to do significant business together in the future. Chigurh's deed (giving back the stolen dirty money to its criminal owner) communicates reliability and honesty in the world of crooked enterprise. His appearance in a suit and tie expresses his serious intentions and hopes to be welcomed into the world of organized crime. Chigurh's looks, words, and gestures tell about his emotionless personality, the lack of any human attitude that would affect his work, and reveal his willingness to assimilate to the expectations of the corrupt social order. He proves he can make rational and objective decisions, always keeping his principles in mind, making him a perfect cog in the mob's machinery. Aspiring to climb the social ladder makes Anton Chigurh less a high-ranking villain, "a monster for the ages" (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen), but an evil, corrupt, hollow man who has a hunger for power and control through sadistic killing and is driven by the demoralizing agency of the material.

Llewelyn Moss is an in-between character on the novel's moral scale, tempted by the powerful potential of material things—his deeds are especially moved by money and by the search for material well-being—but who still feels some inner obligation to socially constructed human values. He is a thirty-six-year-old veteran sniper living in dire conditions in a trailer home and feeling aimless in his life and useless to society. His connection to warfare materials (guns, duffel bag, and massive cars), his abnormal behavior (staying up at night, sleeping little, always being on a hunt and a lookout), and his absence of meaningful interaction with people around him (his rudeness and indifference towards his wife, their distance with his family and old friends) suggest that he might suffer from undiscovered and untreated post-traumatic stress disorder. Moss tries to gain meaning for his existence by taking a superior position and prevailing over the weak by hunting for animals and commanding his wife. His inferiority in the social hierarchy as a simple welder and the fear of the law makes him behave like a good citizen talking to public servants with respect, keeping the speed limit (19; 211) and leaving the machinegun (apparent crime evidence) behind on the desert crime scene (19). He is careful not to be captured for stealing drug-related money and illegal gun possession—the two most common reasons for corruption and confinement in the US Southwest. When in public, Moss

takes care of his behavior and buys clothes in Wal-Mart as an average American citizen, always using the most fitting camouflage in various environments.

Moss's identity is determined by his relation to objects and financial status instead of personal relationships. The lack of responsibility for his deeds, stating that "I like money, but I like stayin out of jail even better" (207), shows his small-mindedness. He defines people through possessions like money, clothes, and shoes. Moss feels the weight of being chased by angry dope dealers, but he can only think of "never see[ing] his truck" and "lots of things" again (29). He is obsessed with taking the money out from the case and riffling it to make sure they are real and still there, and he also sees his fate in the material that does not belong to him. In the motel room in Del Rio, he lies down in bed beside his gun (83), his only partner in trouble, his true lover giving him safety. Moss is an expert in guns and handles them with great care. At the same time, he is very mean about giving the stolen money away to others, the motel receptionist, the night clerk at the hotel, and various taxi drivers, for their service. He sleeps in cheap motels but spends a lot of money on his own interest: buys a new Ford pickup, pays in cash, and purchases a new gun for himself.

Sheriff Bell's words to Carla Jean, that money usually changes people, seem to be true for Moss. The newly criminalized man already feels like a "big time desperado" (224) and regrets not becoming an outlaw earlier (228). However, he is not as terrible a gangster as he believes he is, since his development in his "new career" is threatened by Chigurh who always follows him like a shadow. Moss states that social rules and obligations are too narrow and not meant for him. Yet, when he accompanies the runaway teenage girl, who seems to be very much like Moss's type, he makes an instant decision—in contrast with his current plans to reunite with his wife. Moss does not like to change his mind, so he always takes a stand "to get it right the first time" (235). The keys for two separate rooms in the motel, and his fatherly words to the girl, "I just want you to be careful … You got money. You dont need to be out here hitchhikin" (235) prove that he is serious about being faithful to Carly Jean. Although Moss means these words and shows signs of turning from his materialistic perspective to a more humane one, he had given money to the girl, unintentionally corrupting and involving her in the chaotic flow of his fate.

3 The Creation of Social, Cultural, and Material Relations in Ecosystems

The characteristics of the landscape and the material environment are richly detailed in *No Country*, emphasizing the creative and dynamic vibes of different geographical locations, sites,

various objects, artificial settlements, and atmospheric phenomena. The central question of the material environment is how its character integrates and expresses ecological perceptions by human agents and how those relations shape social, cultural, and legal characteristics of the borderland. The liminal space echoes the interconnectivity between nature and civilization; the connection between local agencies and places is extended to more global, faraway sites. There are references to the symbolic landscape of the US-Mexican border territories as a place of criminal activity out of God's sight. The growing material network results from political ideologies and armed conflict on faraway lands and the psycho-social aftermaths of war. The material foundations of social and cultural transformation (e.g., drug abuse, gun trafficking, etc.) entails the emergence of the posthuman condition.

The geographical and biological environment of the Texas desert—distant mountains, a volcanic slope, the crest of the ridge, rocks with pictographs—is described along with the inner dynamics of static environmental and atmospheric elements like a haze of shimmering dust and pollen (7-9), a flat country with red dirt, and creosote (36). The round cups "in the shelving rock where the ancients had ground their meal" (33) refer to indigenous people who used geographical objects for practical functions, for instance, making use of the seeds and plants they collected from nature. However, the (sub)tropical climate does not allow diverse plantations, and swamplands also do not serve fertile soil for agricultural production, so the need for organic food or making a living from land by farming is out of reach for people living in these southern areas. However, there are some herbs, candelilla, catclaw (11), blood weeds, wiregrass, and sacahuista (45) that grow under such harsh circumstances. The desert is an almost infertile land scoured with salt and ash (45) that God himself, living in silence in the area, feels ashamed of having created (45). This place where the only dynamic perceptible is the "hum of wind on the wires" (45) is of no use for humans. The flood plains of the south are unfit for human habitation, and the solitary place becomes the site of illegal business away from the eyes of authorities and the law.

The southern Texas territory is well-known to Moss, but escaping towards the Mexican border, he "didnt know what he'd find when he got [to the Rio Grande River]" (31). The unknown and unpredictable place might be dangerous, unlike his hometown area. Moss's memories are connected to a similar waiting in the silence at a strange and dreadful place: "He'd had this feeling before. In another country. He never thought he'd have it again" (30). That unfamiliar land is probably the analogy of the surroundings of the Vietnam jungle setting where soldiers were far away from American land, constantly chased by gunmen, unable to predict what would happen next.

Borderland cities bind two long-time hostile yet closely connected countries together. Mobility over the border takes extra money due to the implicated danger and established customs of businessland. The taxi fee between US and Mexican terrains has a non-legally defined cost of an "extra ten dollars to take [Moss] across the bridge to Ciudad Acuña" (85) that reveals the corruptive and illegal situation of the in-between site among trespassers. The crossing of the border is a lengthy procedure. Still, it is relatively easy for Moss to enter American land with no identification documents and obviously in bad condition wearing a hospital gown and a blood-stiffened overcoat. The interrogation by the border guard refers to his service in the US defense forces, his marital status, and his wealth (186-189). As the answers to the questions are seemingly from a casual, good citizen, a veteran who served his country, Moss makes use of the guards' goodwill and sympathy for his past military service in getting through the border.

Villainous action can transform the perception of places, as the Sonora police office has become a criminalized site where Chigurh had murdered the Deputy. The concept of the "site of justice'" has been exchanged with the notion of "crime scene" standing for the incapability of the local police, the sheriff's department, and other federal authorities to keep dangerous people under control. The yellow police tape remaining there for a long time reminds everyone of the crime and that the ongoing investigation has not ended yet. This suggests the failure of the law enforcement system, the deficiency of active communication, the efficiency, and the preparedness among the local police, crime scene investigators, FBI agents, and prosecutors, whose autopsy report is not only inappropriate and unprofessional but also useless for the solving of the case. The work of criminals is more precisely regulated. The crime scene they leave behind tells of their precaution, their swift leaving the place of sinister trouble, a "hell to pay" (45) for the confused law enforcement agents.

Participation in war and enlistment in the US army during twentieth-century conflicts affected the political, educational, and social spheres from the 1950s until the 1980s. Second World War veterans, like Ed Tom Bell, had been honored for their bravery and heroism. Still, some of them did not think that their contribution to the war and losing their people would have been heroic and honorable in a moral sense. Despite the governmental appreciation of servicemen and the veterans' involvement in the GI Bill (rewards and benefits, especially the enrollment in education for war veterans) since the 1940s, during the 1960s, American society gradually turned against them. Those who did their military duties for the country during the Vietnam War were looked down upon, creating social tensions and resentment among veterans.

As the two old lawmen, Bell and his uncle, Ellis, ruminate about Vietnam, they agree that patriotism should not be equal to sacrificing the lives of the youth of the nation for political purposes (267). They also agree with the statement from the historical perspective that the "country was hard on people … [and it would] kill you in a heartbeat and still people love it" (271), relating to the wilderness of the environment and the hostility of people with opposing interests on the land. Bell concludes, "*this country has got a strange kind of history and a damned bloody one too*" (284), indicating the fighting and bloodshed on American land since the beginning of history but mainly during the time of the westward expansion and the aftermath of the US-Mexican War. Family events from 1879 (the killing of Bell's relative, Uncle Mac, by some Natives) merge with the historical situation of Native American and settler-American hostility between the battle of Little Bighorn and the Wounded Knee massacre. Although Bell and Ellis still remember the old stories of their ancestors from those times, they would symbolically put the evidence from those times—Uncle Mac's old cinco peso (269) and old family pictures—into a museum, preserving the traits of history but closing that period.

The opposition between patriotism and the anti-Vietnam War protest movement accumulated from the 1960s, triggering the political opposition and polarization of conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats. The rivalry and non-agreement between the two ideologies at that time are presented through a discussion at a conference, where Ed Tom Bell and "*the wife of somebody or other*" (196)—referring to a woman whose husband is a leftist politician in power—argue about the governmental and juridical involvement in moral and ethic issues; The conservative Sheriff holds that all forms of crime must be punished by law, including the forgotten self-defensive, yet cruel acts of Native Americans against settlers for "*havin [their] wife and children killed and scalped and gutted like fish*" (195), the liberal woman emphasizes her utopian worldview about the future, where everybody will have equal rights, blurring the social boundaries among people. One side represents governmentally advertised and supported patriotism, human morality, the promotion of a peaceful life, and collective unity with the land in the south being "*Common as dirt*" (196), the other side serves the interest of individuals, like the choice of abortion or euthanasia, supporting the tenets of extremist feminists and the human rights movement, raising ethical queries about the creation and erasure of human life. The problems with polarized politics and ideologies are that both edges represent extreme cases and precedents that support enmity among citizens. They can also involve legalized murder (e.g., killing in war, death sentence, abortion, euthanasia, etc.) and the regulations often restrict individual freedom instead of liberating people from social and cultural boundaries. People who

share extreme ideas live in constructed bubbles of reality, which disable consensus, widening the conceptual gaps in society.

The result of polarized politics during the Vietnam War was a divided society where the cruelties of child killing and torture were credited to all veterans collectively, while pacifist hippies and radical rights defenders were deconstructing the ideology of nationalism and human morals and ethics. As Moss's broken father thinks about this phenomenon in American society, the hostility is not the fault of the people but the country, meaning the government and politics in general. The United States not only sent their people to a meaningless and inhuman war to prove the idea of breaking the communist advance with swaggering domino politics and losing the war, and it left the veterans with the shame, trauma, and social problems, and let tension and aggression accumulate among people. As the father puts it, "*Vietnam brought this country to its knees*" (294) because military servicemen "*cant go to war without God*" (295), relying merely on political propaganda. No wonder fighting and returning home among such circumstances resulted in the rapid spread of drug consumption as escapism, advancing the drug business all over the States.

Besides political factors, people's connection to society and the environment has gone through radical changes between the 1930s and 1970s in the United States. The political perspective of *No Country* incorporates this change. According to Ed Tom Bell, the degradation of morals in schools results from the shift from the human-centered to the human-rights-centered worldview, from communal well-being to individual interest, and the moral base of social coexistence is deepening the detachment from one another and the natural environment. The inadequacy to distinguish childish disobedience and negligence "*talkin in class and runnin in the hallways. Chewin gum. Copyin homework" from serious crimes as "Rape, arson, murder. Drugs. Suicide*" (195-196) committed by students, and the denial of the fundamental change of child behavior are social symptoms of the detachment of the new generation from the union of faith, morality, community, justice, and the harmonious existence in the (natural) environment.

War has always been the source of evil, releasing the demons of people on any agent in the way, and the world has probably not seen posthuman activity coming against man and the environment throughout the twentieth century. Though battles used to be fought for territories, ideologies, or other interests, the novelty of the late 1970s and early 1980s is the war triggered by the prosperous drug business on the Texas-Mexico border area. The novel's plot and setting illustrate that drug trafficking and illegal transactions have become uncontrollable, and the abandoned desert site of interaction has been extended into the main streets of towns. Using mason jars for dropping hand grenades from airplanes during the borderland dope wars

transforms household materials into destructive substances. Drug dealers use automatic weapons that destroy the whole cityscape, leaving "Dead bodies in the street. Citizens' businesses all shot up. People's cars … Tires and glass shot … holes in the sheet-metal with the little rings of bare steel around them" (134-35). Bell expects that the solution to save human lives and the urban environment might be an illegal deal between the ruling drug cartel and the Mexican Government in the long run (137-38). However, this business would never end because drugs and weapons are a tremendous money-making capitalist enterprise.

The illegal dope business affects not only war veterans who have become mentally incapable of re-integrating into the community—left alone with their demons by the government. It has penetrated every layer of society, from schools to law enforcement agencies. The twentieth-century indifference to the terror of war and the distortion of the human psyche resulted in a new kind of social connection: dependence on some material aid for escaping reality. Schoolkids also sell and buy dope (194). This addictive material among kids creates a new kind of community without personal interest and meaningful connection in the new generation. Some police officers on the southern US border have become corrupted by the money related to the drug business. Sheriff Bell, devoted to the service of people and the law, considers those officers who betray their profession and their country "*ten times worse than the criminal*" (216). Law enforcement corruption ridicules the objectives of law enforcement. Instead of defending American citizens who pay for the officers' service, they facilitate criminal activities that disdain and disrespect the law. Professional disloyalty is the consequence of personal immorality, the illegal drive for material gain, and individual benefit. The drug business will never be over on the southern US border because drugs are renewable materials, always involving new dealers attracted by financial motives. However, as Chigurh sees it, "[n]ot everyone is suited to this line of work" because the "prospect of outsized profits leads people to exaggerate their own capabilities. … They pretend to themselves that they are in control of events where perhaps they are not" (253). In Chigurh's opinion, people's subjective self-evaluation, deceitful imaginings about the illegal business, and low-principled aim to hit big immediately with little effort, drive them to a dead-end.

The law enforcement system of the southern region is closely connected to historical and tribal conflicts, as the Texas territory has been the intersection among Americans, Mexicans, and Native groups of people. Sheriffs in the old times, in the nineteenth century, refused to carry guns even in Comanche county (63-4) where the Natives had been likely to revolt against the white man's presence. The person of the sheriff was a warranty for order, as they were concerned for their people. Through personal relationships and respect for one

another, they could keep order without threat or violence by keeping various people under peaceful control through connection, a sense of community, and responsibility for others. Sheriff Bell often contemplates how, when and why things in law enforcement have changed compared to "good old times." He reckons that there are two reasons for that: one of them is the gaps in the system, and the other one is the shocking brazenness of criminals that we may arguably regard as posthuman. The Texas State Constitution does not specify the requirements for a sheriff-to-be, though they have "*the same authority as God*" (64), frequently deciding upon life and death. If the sheriff has to preserve "nonexistent laws" (64), how could he convince the people to keep the rules and expect them to behave like good citizens? The answer is that it "*takes very little to govern good people. ... And bad people cant be governed at all*" (64). Despite his dedication to seeking truth and justice as a sheriff, Bell feels that the circumstances require him "to commence dedicatin [him]self twice daily. It may come to three fore it's over" (169). In addition, the current position in law enforcement does not entitle one to pass value judgment between good and bad people and between right or wrong deeds, as Sheriff Bell thinks, but it involves reliance on the written law (298). Although Sheriff Bell understands the logic of arriving at a verdict according to the law in court, he cannot accept that the law sometimes lets the major criminals free and sentence others to death for committing small-scale crimes.

With the appearance of drug and gun trafficking, a new frontier emerged on the southern US border in the 1960s and 1970s. The aftermath of the Vietnam conflict and the depression era from the 1950s industrial boom, the loss of opportunity for cattle raising and the impossibility of farming in the borderland area, triggered social, cultural, and juridical changes. New federal law enforcement agencies, such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) or the Department of Public Safety (DPS), were established to fight back against illegal businesses and protect citizens from serious criminals. Despite the reputation of these specialized agencies and their high financial support, the local sheriff department, with Ed Tom Bell, had found all the important traces and information as the DEA agent, McIntyre pretended to have done during his quick trip on a helicopter to the investigation scene. McIntyre's fancy outlook, his clipboard for making notes, his sensitive nose for dead bodies, and his swanky expression "Dont worry … I know you didnt get it" (97) towards Bell demonstrate the arrogance and division between local and federal law enforcement units. Instead of cooperation, the two departments come up independently with the same results that are supposed to be shared, starting with the small pieces and putting together the picture from the puzzles to be effective. The outcome of the failed drug deal is that "half of the State of Texas was on its way

to Sanderson" (94), including great forces of investigation agencies and various police departments and involving the media. Drawing people's attention to drug and murder issues on the southern border is an excellent attraction because some local people (Deputy Haskins, Llewelyn Moss, and Bill Wyrick) have been involved. The media seeks sensation and tries to engage people to feel terrified and thrilled, selling them the news. The area becomes a place of disaster tourism, as it was in 1965 during the great flood, raising ethical questions concerning the honor of the victims and their families.

The weight and the method of crime have also changed compared to former times. The focus from the necessity for basic material needs has been changed to obsession with material possessions. Bell muses that in the past, the criminals used to be the same; everyone knew them usually for stealing cattle for a living. Recently, they are unknown strangers from distant edges of the country who are so evil that if they were all killed, "they'd have to build an annex on to hell" (79) to have enough space for them. Nowadays, mobility and individualism enable people to pursue material well-being regardless of geographical location. Criminals choose the southern borderland as the place of their business because this is in a liminal space on an intersecting geographical position, equally distant from the East and the West coasts, close to the thought to be safe US territory yet close to the desert where no one cares. Like the Vietnam War setting (75), the desert is a place at a distant point where dope dealers massacre one another while keeping their material interest (money) in front of their eyes. In the meantime, drug lords have a real benefit from drug trafficking without getting hurt physically.

In *No Country*, all male characters have a weapon—legally or illegally—because unlawful business and illegal affairs in the Texas area make it necessary. The law facilitates gun possession in the US, therefore anyone can easily purchase firearms in a simple sporting goods store, as Moss does (87). On another occasion, he bought a gun without identification out of a newspaper advertisement (209), pointing out the flourishing market of the illegal gun business. The question is whether the high crime rates in the country are due to the legal possession of firearms, or whether firearms are the only means to fight and restrain criminals. Although there is no accurate answer to the dilemma of free gun possession, McCarthy's position on this topic seems to be that it all depends on the human agent's moral standing. He exemplifies his standpoint via the rate and the frequency of the use of shotgun: Ed Tom Bell, a Second World War veteran, and a sheriff for decades, has not killed a single person throughout his life with a gun, while Chigurh and his kind took the life of a dozen people within a few weeks. Chigurh's pistol left on the scene of his car accident as evidence of murder is taken by the two teenage witnesses. They sell it—probably to become a weapon of murder once again at

another place. At this point, the criminality of the gun as an object emerges once again, as well as the involvement of the two boys in those crimes. The response to these queries is that the gun, as an object created for killing, requires a human agent with the intention of shooting. The role of the two boys is only the transition of the weapon from one criminal agent to another one but it questions their morality. Still, they are not part of the killings directly.

The capital penalty has long been a morally and ethically questionable form of law enforcement in the US. It has been argued that the death penalty reduces crime by punishing law-breakers and deterring people from committing a felony. Although it is practiced in Texas, it does not stop criminals from running the dope business and massacring dozens of people for material gain in the area. Sheriff Bell does not hide his agreement with the death penalty, but he thinks that the "*ones that really ought to be on death row will never make it*" (62) because they outsmart the authorities. Bell had given testimony against a young killer and witnessed his execution, but he does not want to experience a similar scene again for his conscience. The other reason for his disagreement with the death penalty is that some convicts feel no regret for their sins and believe that they can still have their material belongings "*savin it for when he come[s] back*" (63), ignoring the permanent state of death. The lack of consensus in formalities, for instance, what to wear for a legal execution, "*[some people] dressed in black ... Some of the men come just in their shirtsleeves*" (63), reveals that people are confused about their connection to the criminal and also to legalized murder. However, it is unusual that they "*just got up and filed out. Like out of church or somethin*" (63)—including those who have never been to an execution before. The communal perception of death is partly a socio-psychological and notably a cultural phenomenon by expressing common grief and respect for the dead. Moreover, the mutual experience of the imminence and permanence of death involves a standard respectful behavior of people due to their perception of collective evanescence and mortality.

4 The Narrative Agency of the "Storied Matter"

The representation of the narrative agency of ecological material is essential to McCarthy's nature writing. The metaphoric, moral, and psychological inquiries are also the core of his understanding of the human perception of the surroundings. The author's premonitory intentions of the posthuman turn are presented through language and the allusions to evil human purpose through expressions of the environmental agency. Various environmental entities are endowed with liveliness and, in a sense, voice; their "story" is expressed through their reaction

and relation to the human agents. Non-human agency shapes the environment and supports the morality of the human agent. This section will reveal the role that places and materials play in the events that shape the novel's plot, and determine the development of character. In sum: they have posthuman agency.

Right at the beginning of the novel, Chigurh enters the scene by killing two people, (a sheriff's deputy and a driver on the road. The latter was in the wrong place at the wrong time, which emphasizes the importance of these two dimensions—space and time—in the formation of agentive relations. The portrayal of the first killing is disturbingly detailed:

> The deputy was flailing wildly, and he'd begun to walk sideways over the floor in a circle … He was gurgling and bleeding from the mouth. He was strangling on his own blood … The nickelplated cuffs bit to the bone. The deputy's right carotid artery burst, and a jet of blood shot across the room, hit the wall and ran down it. The deputy's legs slowed and then stopped. He lay jerking. Then he stopped moving altogether. (5-6)

The intense visuality of the murder scene exhibits the horrific image of the homicide. It shows Chigurh's maleficence and viciousness through his actions against the deputy, who had taken him to the police station for resistance and opposition against the law. Chigurh does not feel the weight of his deed, and he merely reckons the deputy as a person who stood in his way and had to be eliminated. If the expression "cold-blooded murder" had an embodiment, it undoubtedly would be Chigurh's person.

Chigurgh's immorality and psychopathic strain are revealed in killing people like butchers kill animals: bringing quick and "humane" death to the victims, one after the other. The strange weapon Chigurh uses for killing is a "sort of thing … like one of them oxygen tanks for emphysema or whatever [with] a hose … and … one of them stunguns like they use at the slaughterhouse" (5). The operation of the weapon is presented by "The pneumatic hiss and click of the plunger sounded like a door closing [leaving] a round hole in [the victim's] forehead" and is exemplified on a random driver, Bill Wyrick, whose "blood bubbled and ran down into his eyes carrying with it his slowly uncoupling world visible to see" (7). Streaming blood and other signs of violence stain and stigmatize the land with the signs of evil human actions. Both the natural and the artificial environment become scenes of crime, and they conserve imprints of human activity and help to uncouple the evidence for sins.

Newspaper is a storied matter—also in a literal sense—as it tells about factual events that had happened. Sheriff Bell uses it as a source of predictions for the future. However, news written on the pages have already occurred. t. Instead of cultural or aesthetic content, the papers contain images of horror and violence, keeping the reader in permanent fear—in a similar

manner as McCarthy's often shocking narrative does—from the realities of life on the US-Mexican border. The news about a woman putting her "*baby in a trash compactor*" (40) represents the new world of the amoral condition of the posthuman and a new type of people, regardless of gender, who, by their inexplicable deeds, do not qualify as human Another piece of news about old people being placed at a couple, then robbed, tortured for pleasure, killed, and buried in the yard without notice, relates to the dissolved neighborhood communities and carelessness of people living in proximity toward one another. People seem to recognize problems only when they are involved in indecent exposure to "*a man run[ning] from the premises wearin only a dogcollar*" (124). The "*hollerin and diggin in the yard*" (124), on private property, is considered none of the public's business. Sheriff Bell believes that people are kept in fear and under control by reporting such incredible incidents, making newspapers and journalists collaborate with criminals for not writing "somethin about Jesus Christ" (246) and about the power of morals, goodness, and unity against corruption. The consequence of the fearsome and sensationalist news is that people either live in paranoia or stop reading the papers.

On the southwestern borderland, natural and artificial agents frequently express their creative potential through sounds, voices, colors, or shapes. Dark and light tones and colors bear significance in the agentive relationship of environmental phenomena. Where human and non-human phenomena emerge vertically, the moonlight casts a shadow all over the landscape. Shadow is a phenomenon that changes its position continually depending on the celestial movement and the amount of light transmitted to the surface of the Earth. In the literary sense, a shadow can be a dark and hidden place that refers to something sinister, or in Jungian terms, the characters' shadows are the projection of the dark tone of their souls. In addition, being in a shadow is becoming the motionless and invisible part of the environment and being out of sight at the same time. Moss's shadow is referred to as an unwanted company, a witness of his illegal deeds that keep his conscience constantly under control. On the failed drug deal site, the trucks track the desert with shut-off lights at night to avoid visibility, and their windows are also tinted dark (58), hiding and therefore casting a shadow on the gangsters sitting inside. The deep darkness of the canyon, and the dark water down there are sinister (32), just as the coldness of the desert night taking his breath (33) is a bad omen for the punishment for the violation of human morals and for breaking the law multiple times. Under the cold and bluish light of the moon the raw glare of the vapor lamp has "[s]omething stellar and alien in [its] light that [Moss had] come to feel comfortable with" (22). Cold, silver-blue tones in the darkness emit negative vibes, yet they are appropriate and comforting for him. The sunset in Del Rio turning the land "blue and cold" (89) is also a pleasant moment for him. Daylight and the sun are merely useful

for Moss to sense the passing of time and to track the area he intends to hunt. The "sun pooled in the low blue hills … [b]leeding slowly away" in line with "cool and shadowed twilight falling over the desert" (170) is the transmission of Chigurh's intentions and subsequent action. For Chigurh, cosmic and atmospheric phenomena anticipate and seem to support his murderous intentions. Before tracking down the hotel, where Moss stays in Mexico, with the transponder, he watches as the "sun pooled in the low blue hills … [b]leeding slowly away" in line with "cool and shadowed twilight falling over the desert" (170). The killer merges with the elements, deriving agency, support and power from the cycles of time and the strange beauty of the landscape.

The agents of the crime scene environment have a shared narrative because they were together at the same time when some illegal and unsuccessful drug-related business took place. The brick-sized parcels wrapped in plastic (13) are supposedly packs of drugs as the surrounding dead men, the rifles, and the spread of brown powder testify this. Besides money, the drug is the other material with a creative potential around which people shape their actions—planting, processing, spreading, selling, living from, and killing for this harmful substance. Money and drugs are endowed with improper value, leading people to posthuman, immoral, inhuman, and illegal behavior. "Dried blood black on the ground" (12) everywhere, the large dead dog, and trucks with holes in the sheet metal shot up by automatic weapons make up a static image one by one. Still, together they have a dynamic narrative preserved by surrounding materials. On the other hand, the environment preserves the scenes of crime, but natural forces (dust, the sun, flies) frequently demolish them, helping criminals. As Moss cleans his fingerprints, removing the obvious source of his identity from objects to hide his presence on the crime site, his impure intentions are revealed.

The motel room is a stereotypical place for hiding and doing some nasty business. It is close to the road where any kind of person travels and accommodates, and it is a far enough place for one to get rid of social norms. The motel room that Moss takes is occupied by those Mexicans who were shooting on the failed transaction scene—as their machine gun discloses it (103)—and were chasing Moss in the canyon at night. The bathroom door, "blown into shredded plywood hanging off the hinges and a thin stream of blood had started across the pink bathroom tiles" (104), an object, appears to be personified and devastated object as bleeding, but it is evident that criminals hiding behind the door had been killed. Moss's left-behind gun, "the dragmarks in the dust" (104), and the air duct from the bag tell Chigurh that Moss had left with the money, and he is probably unarmed. Moss's routine of hiding the money and Chigurh's

observation skills and excellent timing lead Moss back to the money that had formed material connections leading to his death.

Moss's left-behind trailer home contains tons of storied agencies that are the source of information about him and his relational web. "Clothes on the floor. The closet door open" (80) are telltale signs that people living there must have run away in a hurry. Chigurh drinks milk from the refrigerator, and its good quality makes it apparent to him that the owners of the trailer had been staying there within the past few days. The "perfectly good twenty-one-inch television on the table" (80) tells about Moss's possessiveness of fancy and high-priced commodities to impress his wife despite their low living conditions in the trailer park. However, the mail on the floor reveals not only the couple's private and public practices, but the phone bill shows their recent connections via phone in Odessa and Del Rio, the two places where Llewelyn and Carla Jean have gone. In the small town of Sanderson, where people are in a familiar relationship with one another, Chigurh can easily find Moss's workplace, a garage where he worked as a welder. When Sheriff Bell enters the trailer, he notices almost the same materials and draws similar consequences about the Moss couple as Chigurh had a short time before.

Carla Jean's grandmother's house is a telltale place to Chigurh, similar to the couple's trailer home. Even more information about the woman's identity and family background is revealed through objects. The "darkened house" (202) with only a "bare bulb" (203) lighting in the middle of the night signals quietness and the absence of the inhabitants. Entering the house with the usual method of punching out the cylinder of the door, Chigurh encounters storied agencies perceived by many senses, relating to the people living there. The old woman's room emitted "the sweet, musty odor of sickness and he thought for a moment she might even be lying there in the bed" (203) because her smell merged with the room by staying in bed because of her illness with cancer. The perception of the smell of sickness and his knowledge of pharmacy bottles prescribed for her malady also prove Chigurh's experience in medicine. Carla Jean's old room with her objects and belongings in the bureau drawers reveal the woman's young age (plastic hairbrush, a cheap fairground bracelet), as well as her family and personal relations (a photo album with school friends, family members, a dog, another house and some self-portraits). Weighing these objects, Chigurh, "like a medium who might thereby divine some fact concerning the owner" (204), tries to find out more about Moss's wife. The phone bill discloses once again the recently dialed numbers, namely Sheriff Bell's Terrell County office, implying that the lawman already knows about the two women's, and perhaps about Moss's, whereabouts.

Ed Tom Bell's uncle's house is the place where old times are preserved through the objects. The smells of Uncle Ellis's house from "old bacon-grease … woodsmoke from the stove and … a faint tang of urine. Like the smell of cats but it wasnt just cats" (263) indicate the neglected environment and the old man's bad condition, incapable of keeping hygiene in the house. Some objects in the kitchen, "the checked oilcloth. Bottles of medicine. Breadcrumbs. Quarterhorse magazines" (263-264), refer to his way of life alone, being old and sick, and show his interest in horses. In the following lines, it turns out that a stingy desert plant, a cholla spine, caused his one-eye blindness when he fell off his horse a long time ago. The wheelchair he is sitting in explains his inability to keep things clean and in order around him. The wheelchair also suggests a sad story in the man's life when he was shot during his service as Bell's grandfather's deputy. However, Ellis does not regret his physical condition because he reckons his bad luck as saving him from worse luck (267), meaning that he became paralyzed but at least did not die, and accepts his condition. Bell notices that "Some things don't change" (266), referring to the same arrangement of things in the house as it had been for decades, like the "crazed porcelain cups" (266), preserving a piece of history going back one hundred years, long before Bell was born. However, the signs of decay and changing times are present in the house's materials and environment; the television is thrown out for the cruelty of the news it channeled, and the old farmhouse has lost its function. The yard is weed-grown, the smokehouse is moldering from the weather, aluminum horse trailers are not used anymore, and household animals have also disappeared from the backyard (272). These absent and disappearing environmental materials conclude the philosophical thought that times are changing and people's personalities and habits change over time. Yet, the objects remain, serving with anthropological evidence of cultural history justifying the existence of old times.

Money has become the ruling material of the world, controlling power and authority through possession. Even Moss, who found 2.4 million dollars in the Texas desert, has a bad feeling connected to the money. He reckons that he cannot look upon the great sum of money as luck because it comes from an unknown but surely illegal source. According to the new materialist approach, every entity has a narrative agency, and money is not an exception. The context the money comes from—shot drug dealers in cars riddled with bullets—implies that the leather case with its rich content will be worth looking for endlessly for somebody, involving serious consequences. Money enables passage to places, including crossing the border, and it buys people's alliances and forms corruptive partnerships (taxi driver, night clerk at the hotel, the old sweeper in the park, etc.). Money attracts the younger generation, illustrated through the young boys crossing the bridge from Mexico to the US and accepting banknotes slicked

with blood for their coat and leaving the wounded and bleeding Moss behind, or the boys taking money from Chigurh at the car crash scene. Abstract concerns, such as goodwill and humanity, the basic values of human cultures, are exchanged for material things, especially for money.

For Anton Chigurh, a coin is a real and impartial instrument for deciding on life and death without being familiar with the background, deeds, or intentions of a person. The small piece of copper bears small financial worth but decides on the priceless value of life impartially. Chigurh has a conviction that material without human agency is more objective in judgment than the socially created judicial system, insisting, "You need to call it … I cant call it for you. It wouldnt be fair. It wouldnt even be right" (56). Chigurh changes from the morally and ethically influenced human judgment to the material decision casting the sentence on his victims with a piece of copper, intending to convince them about his truth, creating his own ideas about the mechanism of the world on which his random rules of justice depend. Chigurh believes in the agency notions of numbers and chances, and the attachment to the material world defines his perceptions. Thus, his views and acts are profound philosophical statements regarding the power of the smallest elements. As the well-known saying puts it, "the devil is in the details," which is relevant here, since the tiniest segment of the material environment can create or destroy the whole, holding each entity of the world equally important. All in all, Chigurh advocates the radical equality of all materials, reinforcing the assumption that he is a posthuman being.

Different types of cars bear anthropomorphic characteristics because they are the agents carrying out the intentions of human beings. The guttural tone of the truck's exhaust, the engine's revving sound, and the spotlight sweeping over the rocks (28) amplify the anger and vengeance of the driver who is in search of the stolen money. Though the vehicle is an object that is motionless without the human agent who operates the engine system to bring the car into action, the massive truck symbolizes power; its brand stands for the owner's social and financial status. The Sheriff's shot-up cruiser, looking like the "*Bonnie and Clyde car*" (40), has a symbolic meaning. The infamous couple, who were criminals against the law in the early 1930s due to their low social class and childhood poverty, gained popularity and heroism through their enigmatic and dramatic representations in popular culture. The officer's vehicle full of shot holes depicts the opposition of criminals with authorities for individual material purposes, disregarding social conventions, arrestment, or being shot and killed. The cruiser that is covered with "grey desert dust" and the 'load' of the truck with "the tiedowns … worked loose" (169) report about the driver's negligence and his disrespect for dead people. The eight bodies "wrapped in blue reinforced plastic sheeting and bound with tape" (169) cover the shot corpses

and hide their identities. The identical wrapping material indicates that it does not matter who the people are. They are just decomposing material in the same bundle, as they were some cargo to transport from one place to another. The depersonalization of the deceased and the personification of wrapped-up bodies as criminals make a dual ontological perception of life and death. Instead of using a van for transporting corpses, the open truck raises an ethical question on behalf of the Sheriff, as everyone can see what is being transported this way.

The type, size, and form of guns have equal importance as drugs and money in *No Country*. People choose a gun based on their purpose and their taste. While Bell prefers old firearms, like Colt or Winchester for their easy and reliable mechanics, Moss uses a rifle designed by himself. Chigurh prefers to use guns with a silencer because it does not draw people's attention to his silent crimes. A shotgun merely gives a "strange deep chugging sound. Like someone coughing into a barrel" (103), which is the perfect partner for a crime. The man at the Matacumbe Petroleum Group is shot by a small-caliber gun in Chigurh's hand, the same as "collectors use to take bird specimens" (199) to avoid a big hole and an exit wound on the victim and conserve the integument in the original form. The importance of this gun is to avoid "break[ing] the glass . . . [and] rain[ing it] on people in the street" (200) and to harm only the target. However, the shot leaves a "silhouette … outlined in the small gray pockmarks the lead had left in the glass" (200), telling about the position of the man at the moment of shooting.

Exotic clothes and shoes are attractive for the newly rich drug dealers and criminals because they are connected to the experience of material success and luxurious and unusual possession, and express their prestigious position as criminals. Boots made of "crocodile and ostrich and elephant" (85) are sold in southern towns exhibiting poachers' illegal massacre of protected and soon-to-be-extinct animals for a high price but in low quality in shop windows. These products imply and display the sinful and meaningless slaughter of animals. Criminals are often fond of such commodities, and wearing them signifies their social status and reinforces them as top predators among different species. Furthermore, Moss's cowboy-like clothes (jeans, shirt, boots, and a hat) he buys from the clothes shop when he returns to the US affirm his materialistic perspective of life. The new pair of lizard boots are made from a low-category reptile that symbolizes Moss's inferior status within the hierarchy of criminals. The appreciation of his appearance, "I aint been duded up like this since I got out of the army" (192), makes him feel like a man, recalling the peak moments of his life, not knowing that he has just been dressed for his death.

Chigurh's aid in chasing Moss with the money is a transponder, a tracking device consisting of a sending and a receiving unit communicating through satellite channels. This

object was also used in warfare as radar to define the distance of human or non-human phenomena approaching. The escalating or declining beeping signal of the receiving unit helps Chigurh measure the case's geographical range. The sending unit had been carefully hidden in "The middle of the packet … filled in with dollar bills with the centers cut out and the transponder unit nested there was about the size of a Zippo lighter" (108). This small gadget leads Chigurh across the border to Moss, and the device seems to stand in his service, like a pet, sitting in the passenger seat next to his owner (98).

Not only the transponder but the silencer on the pistol as well is Chigurh's partner in finding the case with money and the person who had taken it. When the device signals their closeness on the suggestive Devil's River Bridge near Del Rio, Chigurh's excitement is manifested via his act of shooting a random bird in its motion of flying away from the bridge, then "flar[ing] wildly in the lights, very white, turning and lifting away into the darkness" (99). Meaningless and brutal killing is typical of Chigurh's inhuman character. Any living beings coming in his way are the victims of his repression of physical expression of any emotion of excitement, fury, or revenge. The cool air around him shows the breeze of death his presence brings wherever he appears. Material objects are usually on his side, helping to swallow the noises of his shootings and killings, like "the rail hummed dully in the slipstream and ceased" (99) after the bullet pierces through the bird, opposing to natural agents (people, animals, and organic materials) that warn one another when Chigurh is nearby. On the other hand, the sound of the trail is also associated with the toll for the dead bird as a farewell.

The identity of the victims in the motel (two men and a young woman) is withheld until the Sheriff identifies the bodies on "steel machinist's tables on wheels" (240) in the morgue. At the beginning of the investigation, there are material references to the crime scene: yellow tape cordon around the motel and police cars with their lights on. The three people involved in the massacre are referred to through personal objects on the crime scene: a brand new Ford truck with a dealer tag still on it signifying Moss, a knapsack with some clothes and stuff referring to the hitchhiker girl, and a machinegun and a black Barracuda with a turbo engine denote the Mexican shooter. The two bodies "covered with plastic sheets" (240) at the clinic are Moss's and the girl's corpse, supposing some relation between them that Moss's wife will not like, besides the fact that her husband died (241)—says Sheriff Bell. The man's "head was turned to the side. One eye partly opened. He looked like a badman on a slab. They'd sponged the blood off of him, but there were holes in his face, and his teeth were shot out" (240). The wounds on the corpses and the frequency of drug-related highway crime remind the Sheriff's colleague of a "goddamn warzone" (240) shooting.

5 The Discourse of Posthumanism and Material Agency

The Christian conceptual framework shapes the discourse of *No Country*, just as the postmodern notions of ecological materialism, seek answers to both moral and ethical questions and metaphysical concerns about determinism, fate, chance, cause and effect, and the connection of mental qualities to material entities. The communicative design of the novel includes the exploration of human values, morals, and good and evil forces in terms of the Christian worldview contrasting material obsession and possession. In addition, explicit manifestations of the posthuman philosophy are revealed, and verbally abusive gender relations—resulting from posthuman alienation—are also discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Terrell County sheriff, Ed Tom Bell, refers to the phenomenon of financial and drug-related problems with the Biblical figure of Mammon, one of the tempting demons, enticing people with the promise of material wealth. Besides warfare's physical and mental destruction, the prince of Hell, descending from evil and symbolizing greed, is the other source of posthuman sins. In the new materialist sense, both drugs and money have an intrinsically evil and corrupting character that connects individuals in the community by creating an all-embracing web of material dependence that thoroughly transforms cultural, social, and personal behavior. The ostensive promises of Mammon replace the belief in God to lead and possess those who have been fueled by anger, bleakness, and disillusion from humanity. For Sheriff Bell, his figure is identical to the antagonist in the novel, Anton Chigurh, and his kind, representing mystery men like ghosts, always hiding yet present everywhere, surpassing law enforcement control. As the sheriff predicts, material possession will give power to those on the top of (drug) business, referring to wealth that will accumulate in some businessmen's hands to control the ones who had given them financial sources. This new type of enslavement is not people's decision, but a process carried out by politics, corruption, and criminalization of both people and the borderland environment. According to Bell, the operation of evil starts with minor changes in social behavior, like "*overlook[ing] bad manners*" and with the breakdown of business ethics on behalf of well-dressed and wealthy businessmen proficient in marketing and consumer needs, and it "*reaches into ever strata*" (304) of society regardless of borders.

In Sheriff Bell's opinion, the eyes that are the windows to the soul have various visions, and "*there is another view of the world … and other eyes to see it*" (4), differing from his own system of values. The eye metaphor gives an insight into a person's character and values, shaped by cultural and historical affairs, creating new perspectives about the world in the wrong way. The reason for Bell not wanting to see into the eyes of the evil is not that he is older and

closer to retirement or death but because he would "*put his soul at hazard*" (4), risking his only life and one soul along with his human and personal values. Facing evil does not mean the loss of his life that is closely connected to his profession (requiring courage and constant peace of the soul, being always ready to face a reckoning with his deeds), but belonging to the vile, feeding on human fear—perceived "*in a heartbeat*" (4) immediately. In Bell's Christian worldview, if he lost his soul, he would meet the evilest criminals in hell, and he wants to avoid being damned eternally with their kind.

Bell's dreams about his father riding a horse on a cold night carrying fire are allegories of the dead showing the path for the living. The first dream about meeting him in town, getting money from him, and losing it may refer to the lost heritage of being a cowboy as his father was. However, his choice to become a sheriff like his grandfather lands him in another symbolic American profession. The loss of material things can mean finding the true meaning of life for Bell, which is humanity, community, and moral justice. The second dream is more complex in its symbolism. Riding the horse on the ridges of mountains at night "*back in older times*" (309) expresses the belonging to nature as the descendants of European settlers and the hardships of environmental forces they faced. Beside historical memories, retrospection refers to the future perspectives on the distant past. As Ed Tom Bell's father was twenty years younger than the present Bell, the man wrapped in a blanket with his head down (309) might be his father but also can be Bell himself—both of them walking the path alone in the dark, trying to carry the fire of hope, truth, and humanity in the surrounding darkness of the material world. The man on horseback

> *was carryin fire in a horn the way people used to do and I could see the horn from the light inside of it. About the color of the moon. And in the dream I knew that he was goin on ahead and that he was fixin to make afire somewhere out there in all that dark and all that cold and I knew that whenever I got there he would be there.* (309)

The novel's final passage reminds the reader of an old and uncivilized way of life that had been dark but built on hope. Ed Tom Bell, who faces old age and his own decay, is trying to gain meaning by recalling historical relations to the environment and one another. The horn with the faint light inside helped people to light a fire at a new campsite day by day as a result of a nomadic way of life, implying the progress of the journey and the expansion of the frontier. Furthermore, the man with the lit horn is either the caretaking father figure who shows Bell the way to the afterlife or the symbol of the silent God who gathers his around the small flame.

Restlessness and seeking danger as a hunter menaces Moss's life constantly. He anticipates death as expressed in his inner monologue and refers to himself as a "trespasser

among the dead" (27) but not one of them yet—still living and escaping with the money, existing in the here and now dimension. The loud heartbeat signals that Moss is unlike Chigurh. He does not kill for the things he wants to possess, yet his intentions are unclear. Moss is aware that he was careless when his inner voice and curiosity forced him to return to the desert to carry water to the shot but still living Mexican drug dealer. However, he must confess that he was "[t]oo dumb to live" (29), taking too much of something that did not belong to him. Moss had become a part of the crime at the very moment when he glimpsed the shot-up cars—being a passive actor but an active spectator. The feeling of being in a jar (29) means that Moss is closed into a situation from where there is no way out. However, his obsession with material possession without courage is not enough to avoid the web of corruption and crime and to leave behind his former "aimless" life.

Beside Anton Chigurh's posthuman philosophical stance, the antagonist's antisociality is revealed in ordinary situations. In the Sheffield filling station, the proprietor shows manners and attention trying to engage in small talk with Chigurh as with an ordinary customer. However, Chigurh takes the proprietor's inquiry as nosy and offensive. He responds rudely: "what business is it of yours where I'm from, friendo?" (52). Although getting petrol and paying at the counter would typically last for a couple of minutes, Chigurh extends the interaction with an obscure and threatening dialogue. Chigurh denies the dimension of the present time, saying, "Now is not a time" and telling the man, "You dont know what you're talking about, do you?" (54), confusing him to strengthen his intellectually superior position over the man. He also attempts to humiliate the proprietor with intimate questions like when he goes to bed. Chigurh's goal is to convince the man that engaging in conversation and connecting with strangers might have consequences. Chigurh tries to persuade the proprietor, among all of his victims, that luck and particular encounters determine every segment of life, and relations established among human and non-human agents of the environment determine one's fate. Even Chigurh's unwanted connection with the proprietor is based on deception because he withholds what is at stake to call for heads or tails, probably because Chigurh takes a person's life no more valuable than an object, a coin.

Chigurh is pressing Carson Wells, whom he knows from Vietnam, to confess his sins and gain dignity before being murdered, revealing his inhuman operation during fourteen years of service. On the surface, Wells shows that he is the only one capable of confronting Chigurh, trying to buy him with money—"the wrong currency" (173). Wells is a cowardly swindler; meeting Chigurh, he is asked: "If you dont respect me what must you think of yourself?" and Wells responds cynically: "You think I'm afraid to die? … Just do it" (177). Wells is a man

who cannot and does not want to face his real self and weakness, and negates his deepest fears believing that the power and authority he possessed as a member of the military, just as his cruel shrewdness, will save him from death. At the moment of being shot in the face, "[Wells] closed his eyes and he turned his head, and he raised one hand to fend away what could not be fended away" (178). Well's defensive position exposes his fear and petty vanity and shows him to be incapable of facing what he had done in his life. It also displays his admission of being a vulnerable and mortal entity in the cycle of nature.

The interactions among the characters carry verbal and non-verbal cultural references through interpersonal experiences. The commissioner's words to Wells, "Good hunting, as we used to say. Once upon a time. In the long ago" (142), allude to their common actions in the past during the Vietnam War. As it turns out, Wells was involved in a homicide, looking at "The faces of men as they died on their knees before him. The body of a child dead in a roadside ravine in another country" (178) are implications to the presence or continuance of the Vietnam heritage through the posthuman character induced by governmental permission for the free killing of the "savage communist Vietnamese," letting human aggression and villainy loose on the defenseless. Another cultural marker is the difference in manners and cultural perceptions resulting from the age gap and different cultural codes between Sheriff Bell and Carla Jean. Upon visiting the young woman in Odessa, Bell takes off his hat to show respect for women. Still, Carla Jean misunderstands it because, for her, an officer coming personally and taking off his hat means that he brings word of a person's death. For the second encounter, the young woman stands at the door waiting with no expression, already knowing the words the Sheriff is about to say but desperately hoping for something better. When the Sheriff takes off his hat, "she leaned against the doorjamb and turned her face away" (246-247) as a sign of understanding what the taken-off hat means in that context.

Chigurh's encounter with Llewelyn Moss's wife, Carla Jean, is a metaphysical conversation. Chigurh's persuasive language skills and deterministic philosophy support the idea that choices and decisions lead people to their fate settled at the beginning of their lives. "There's a reason for everything" (256), says Chigurh, deconstructing the concepts of common sense and logic to support his presence in Carla Jean's room as a consequence of Moss's theft of the money earlier. Moss had put the woman's life at stake and betrayed her when he refused to give the money back to the hitman. Although Moss is out of the picture by this point in the narrative, Chigurh always keeps his word, even if it means taking an innocent woman's life. Chigurh refers to himself as a nonbeliever who "model[s] himself after God" (256), which controversially facilitates his villainous activity and echoes Nietzschean philosophy (Frye,

Cambridge Companion 8). In line with Carla Jean's grandmother's caution, Chigurh tells the young woman that her life was set forth when she married Moss, and it was over as soon as Chigurh was involved in their lives indirectly. Despite accusing Chigurh of playing God and being an instrument of decision over her life, Carly Jean seems to accept her destiny at the end of their conversation. In Steven Frye's opinion, Carla Jean's "death is not only necessary but also the means by which she understands the collective meaning of her life's innumerable choices" (*Cambridge Companion* 74). Therefore, the determinism of a person's life is evolved by choices and decisions, creating the illusion of free will, which outlines a relational web among unfamiliar people. Still, the time, place, and way of death are variable. These random relations and the certainty of fate define a specific order in chaos. Death is inseparable from life, but its timing depends on the order of events, decisions and consequences.

Characters in *No Country* seem to negate their own death and struggle with it at the moment when they are at the end of their lives (257). When Carla Jean insists that killing her is neither Moss's nor God's decision but Chigurh's own, the man takes a coin to decide, showing her that he does not settle justice. Chigurh claims that "I had no say in the matter. Every moment in your life is a turning and every one a choosing" (259). However, his presence in the house is a statement that contradicts his facetious argument. Giving a chance to luck is just a fake attempt at the justification of his intention to kill Carla Jean. Coming to the end of the long persuasive argument, Chigurh concludes that his way of life does not allow him to make an exception with Carla Jean because if he did, he would become vulnerable (259). He sees everyone as equal as God does when people account for their lives in front of Him. The coin toss brings bad luck, and determination over the woman's life is justified through her choice between heads and tails. Overall, Chigurh's belief in determination through material and personal relations, fate, reason, chance, and luck proves the imperfect order of chaos existing in the world.

Moss displays little respect for his young wife, Carla Jean, through his indifferent and often rude expressions toward the woman. He likes to feel his importance as a man, and on the occasion of an argument, he asks the wife, "What if I was to not come back? Is them your last words?" (24), manipulating the woman emotionally. The young wife, Carla Jean, is seen as the embodiment of Moss's physical desire kept in their trailer home with cheap entertainment: watching TV, drinking coke, and smoking cigarettes. Their relationship is imbalanced and consistently one-sided. Carla Jean cares and worries about Moss, who secures her life with material things, but the man resists all affection for her. Moss does not know his wife and says to her like a father, "You're free white and twenty-one, so I reckon you can do whatever you

want" (50), but Carla Jean is nineteen years old and she depends on her husband financially and emotionally. Moss relates to her in demeaning terms, giving her the illusion of mobility but actually, he orders her to move to her mother's house in Odessa. He later tells her to leave the house because staying there is dangerous. Although Moss wants to move the woman for her own safety, he does not provide the facilities for the journey, like taking her to the bus stop by a truck and giving her money for the ticket. He is also dishonest to his wife, purportedly to prevent her from trouble, but shows carelessness and irresponsibility toward the young woman. They go on their separate ways into trouble, and Moss leaves his young wife in doubt if he will return safely and without harming anyone. Temporary material and financial security blind him to the fact that his positive feelings about money are false aspirations. When Carla Jean shows no interest in talking to her outlaw husband, Moss reprimands her for not saying, "Hello darlin, how are you? Are you all right, Llewelyn?" (180), but Moss himself never expresses tender feelings for the woman. Carla Jean relates to money as a "false god" (182) to chase, but the only reality is the world of money for Moss.

Traditional gender roles have shaped Carla Jean's identity, trapping her in a subordinate relationship with her man. The young woman's romanticized low-standard teenage dream about meeting the man of her life at Walmart (her current workplace) who will set her out of her jail as an aimless dreamer, is based on fantasies about a heroic man who saves the woman from hardships and secures her life with material well-being and everlasting love. Leaving school to make money for the family at sixteen is a generous gesture towards her relatives. Still, it has brought Carla Jean to her fate: meeting and marrying the oppressive and mentally unstable Llewelyn Moss at a young age. She blindly trusts her husband who has controversially given her freedom through the bondage of marriage.

The young woman is responsible and affectionate to her grandmother who raised her and is now dying of cancer. Still, she confesses that it has always been hard to live with her, which could have been enough reason to leave her for Moss. She steadily denies the charges against her tough, smart, and beloved Llewelyn, and she rejects the possibility that he might be in great trouble without the chance to get out of it. She also refuses the assumption that they would have marriage problems, replying to the Sheriff: "We dont have problems. When we have problems we fix em" (127). Carla Jean also opposes the Sheriff's claim that the woman might not know Moss yet because the intrinsic feature of money usually changes people (128). The only problem she admits is "to know that if you have got somethin that means the world to you it's all that more likely it'll get took away" (134), meaning that she knows that people tend to lose what they love the most, and for her, it is her husband.

The marriage between Carla Jean and Moss is further challenged when the man takes up a teenage female hitchhiker, who resembles his wife's young version, with his newly purchased pickup. It was obviously not the wife' Carla Jean's person that Moss married three years ago, but the image of a naïve and helpless teenage girl who attracted him and needed a "real man" to control and set boundaries for her. Moss treats the fifteen-year-old girl as a father asking when she ate last (212) and telling her that hitchhiking is dangerous (211), in a similar manner as he usually treats Carla Jean. He asks the girl to drive his new car while taking a nap but orders her not to go over the speed limit, threatening to leave her behind. Moss is attractive to teenage girls because he gives the impression of a mysterious bad guy who knows what he does. Instead, he is just going with the flow, taking chances, and ending up becoming an insignificant criminal.

The encounter between Moss and the redhead hitchhiker girl evokes deterministic theories, and metaphysical, ontological, and existential thoughts in the man. Moss acknowledges that there is no starting over in life because everything said and done before relates to the present situation and has consequences for the future. He regards the journey on the road as a permanent change of location not to be found but he holds that the best way would be "just to show up there" (226) without the limits of the physical environment saving the hardships and obstacles that come in their way. Nevertheless, the things that happen are not by chance or fortune as the girl thinks about their meeting, but all relations in life are self-organizing dynamism of complex systems. Organic material, including the human body, is determined to cease with time, and McCarthy's characters seem to accept it, yet try to go against the law of existence.

6 Conclusion

The competitive post-Second World War political climate between the United States and the Soviet Union and the ideological proxy wars fought in the far East, the rise of industrial production, and rampant consumption led to material addiction and moral decline in American society. After the Vietnam War, the borderland territory became the primary drug and gun trafficking site, which created an existential crisis and moral dilemma, transforming various layers of society, culture, economics, and legislation. It also had an impact on philosophical concerns and literature, which led to the material and posthuman turn. In McCarthy's fiction, the agency of the material is both creative and destructive, and it develops connections and narratives among various environmental entities and characters. The posthuman philosophy is

closely connected to the material relations established in the environment among natural, human, and non-human creatures, and the characters' estrangement is manifested in their verbal and non-verbal interactions.

Sheriff Bell's moral dilemma and constant contemplation about lost human values, the vanishing sense of community, just as the austere and antisocial character of Anton Chigurh, along with the extended web built on material addictions and relations, foreshadow a declining trajectory in American culture and society. According to McCarthy's pessimistic narrative set on the symbolically barren borderland, the regressive tendency of human morals, laws, culture, and society will accumulate and lead to the destruction of the environment and the annihilation of humanity. The possible consequences of the twentieth-century material and posthuman turns and McCarthy's postapocalyptic visions, just as connecting social, environmental, and moral problems are dealt with in *The Road* and discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 Eco-Apocalyptic Visions of Space and Place in *The Road*

1 Introduction

In Cormac McCarthy's dystopian narrative, the destruction of the natural environment and the recess in urban places and rural habitats result in the dissolving of human societies, cultures, laws, morals and lead to anarchy in the emptied space of the apocalyptic world. A man and his son roam the ashen roads across the devastated landscape to escape cold weather, environmental threat, and human violence. The only means of survival for father and son is to keep going toward the south, which might provide warmth but nothing more.

> [The man] looked out over the wasted country. The road was empty. Below in the little valley the still gray serpentine of a river. Motionless and precise. Along the shore a burden of dead reeds. . . . Then they set out along the blacktop in the gun-metal light, shuffling through the ash, each the other's world entire. (6)

Frederick Jackson Turner's conception of the frontier elaborated in his 1893 lecture "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" contributed to the enduring myth of the frontier as a space where the American national character and identity were formed. The Turner Thesis, endorsed by three generations of Progressive historians between the early 1900s and the late 1960s, established an idealized image of the West in American popular culture as a place of freedom, self-reliance, and economic opportunity. In *The Road*, the frontier myth is reversed by the effects of an unspecified global catastrophe and the destruction of the entire biosphere. For the novel's characters, this entails retreating to the warmer south from the threatening nuclear winter, self-reliance and isolation from any kind of community because of violence and cannibalism. Keeping civilized norms and customs, human cultures, and values in this chaotic space is nearly an impossible challenge. Morals have become so flexible that value judgment, based on Christian dualistic ideas between good and evil deeds, is beyond probability.

The barren landscape and the emptied urban areas impact the (re)construction of the self, whereas the former social and personal identities of individuals are disintegrated and lost. The ideologies and myths that had defined Americanness since the nineteenth century—the Promised Land, Manifest Destiny, the self-made individual, the frontier myth, the belief in prosperity, the potential of the land, and the expanding frontier—are deconstructed. From such an "out-of-space" perspective a fragmented and dysfunctional environment emerges, where

neither the annihilated natural surroundings nor the urban areas are safe places. The apocalypse metaphor expresses a timeless and endless space that has replaced the vivid biological diversity and human creativity through the destruction of the entire environment, leaving behind the universal moral crisis of humanity. The postapocalyptic narrative emphasizes the void that the destruction of society and culture has created, which results in the degradation of language: disintegrated dialogues, arbitrary signification, and uncertain meanings.

Greg Garrard claims that the green movement's rhetorical strategies have been following the pattern of apocalyptic thinking and writing by appropriating the end of time while responding to and creating a crisis, which generates an ecocritical trope (85-86). McCarthy wrote *The Road* after the US became the target of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and faced several political threats. Worldwide nuclear militarization, a quasi-Cold War state among superpowers, and the possibility of further terrorist attacks kept American citizens in constant fear. Besides security alerts, the US was hit by recurring natural disasters: hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and bushfires that endanger masses of people. These were partly caused by human activity and partly because of the changing character of nature triggered by climate change. The theme of the apocalypse, "born out of crisis" (Garrard 86), warns about the impending menace. As McCarthy focuses on the outcome of devastation, the causes of the environmental destruction and the dissolution of communities remain hidden in the novel. Yet some passages suggest what could have happened and what might have caused environmental and human destruction: "The clocks stopped at 1:17. A long shear of light and then a series of low concussions. . . . the power was already gone. A dull rose glow in the windowglass" (52). These allusions can signify a major wave of electromagnetic radiation, caused by either a naturally occurring solar flare, or by an accidentally miscarried, or intentional nuclear explosion.

The novel has a bleak narrative interspersed with images of violence. In Harold Bloom's view, *The Road* is a re-viewing of his own previous works that offers a different perspective on "the road . . . which he has trodden himself" (184) as a writer. Its anthropocentric frame is interwoven with Christian tones about the struggle between good and evil, implying the dualistic concept of humanity and nature that deepens environmental problems (Garrard 88). The plot, perspective, and environment of *The Road* suggest the crisis in man's relationship with nature. Economic growth, swiftly changing technological inventions, the overexploitation of natural resources, the rapidly growing population, and the endless need for food and supplies resulted in the recess of the natural environment by the millennium. McCarthy's apocalyptic vision is not merely about a possible world order after the living planet will have been destroyed, but the condemnation of human activity and ill-treatment of nature. Nevertheless,

the dystopian narrative is no longer a warning sign to humanity but a mirror that reflects the likely consequences of carelessness toward each segment of the natural world.

2 Self-Construction in the Barren Place and the Structureless Space

Gerry Smyth's philosophical approaches to space help to disclose the main characters' identities through the representation of ecological spaces. Smyth uses the ideas of philosophers, literary critics, and historians, whose topographical metaphors describe human experience in the natural world. From the philosophical perspective, space has both physical and abstract properties, and it has common tropes with the expression of time connected to human perception.

As Smyth explains, the philosopher Gaston Bachelard argues that everybody has an intimate place they love, a home. He calls the method for the analysis of the human soul through spaces "poetic imagination." The human imagination of space runs counter to the geometrical intuitions to "govern the space of intimacy" (Smyth 4-5). The phenomenological analysis of the soul helps us understand emotions, meanings, and resonances of the human experience produced by the surrounding space. For the man, the protagonist of *The Road*, there is no actual place to love due to the new character of the world. Instead, he finds a space of love in his son, whom he feels comfortable with when they are close, and the child is safe. Applying Smyth's and Bachelard's theories about the connection between physical place and metaphorical space, the relationship between father and son is shaped in terms of environmental perception of an outer place and an inner space. The sense of community—resting on human ethics and morals—is altered by isolation and a misconceived sense of self-reliance. The perception of places through personal memories blurs reality.

Fatherhood is a key issue in McCarthy's apocalyptic narrative, and the man adheres to it despite the poor and miserable social and environmental circumstances. He reckons the boy as his "warrant" and "the word of God" (5) because the son is the reason for him to keep going, have faith, and stay alive. He identifies himself merely by the needs of the child, for he is "all that [stands] between him and death" (29). Since the child's birth, the man has been fully committed to him, feeling that they are "each the other's world entire" (6). The man has been aware that the child is his fate since the moment when he first saw "the small crown of the head. Streaked with blood and lank black hair . . . the scrawny red body so raw and naked" (59). The innocence of the child sanctifies the father's mission to save the remaining goodness in the world. The man's physical and mental sufferings and his burden of duty are overruled by the sacred mission to transfer "the last god" (174) to a safer place.

The man and his unnamed wife hold opposing views about life and death in a space devoid of humanity, morals, and goodwill, and they also differ in their commitment to the child. The couple used to talk about death and had long arguments about committing suicide together "with a flake of obsidian" (58) when panic and anarchy broke out, but none of them could say anything about that as the catastrophe occurred. The woman feels indifferent and a victim of the mechanics of happenings attributing the uncontrollable events to fate: "We're not survivors. We're the walking dead in a horror film. . . . I didnt bring myself to this. I was brought" (56). The woman believes that the man is incapable of protecting the family because of the extent of evil that is omnipotent and inevitable: "they will catch us and they will kill us. They will rape me. They'll rape [the boy]. They are going to rape us and kill us and eat us" (56). The woman's motherly instinct and commitment to the child are blocked by fear and apathy, so she concludes that her "heart was ripped out . . . the night he was born" (57). Despair and threat overwhelm her so much that the only thing she anticipates is death, her "new lover" (57), and hopes for "eternal nothingness" (57). Experiencing a dimensionless future and struggling beyond hope, the woman denies that they could have any perspective together as a family and escapes into self-destruction.

The boy's relation to his parents is ambivalent. He is affectionate towards his father, but he wishes to be with his departed mother from time to time. Occasionally, he misses the mother as an early caretaker and feels the absence of her physical closeness and security in the womb. The boy wants to be in that inner place, or in another space where she had gone, to save his father from the sufferings and hardships he comes across every day trying to save him. At one point, the man expresses his anxiety: "I'm scared" (259), which concerns either his death or the boy being left alone and threatened on the road. The child's mature response, "I am the one [who is scared and has to worry about everything]" (259) is a sign of the child's advanced awareness of the situation. The boy also wants to get rid of the images of evil deeds he faces regularly. Surprisingly, the boy never says that if all of them died, the three of them could be together in that afterlife space. He differentiates between a good space—one must be good to get there—where he would be with his loving Papa, and occasionally yearns for another space where her mother had gone to feel nothing. When the boy is in doubt, the man keeps telling him that the good guys "keep trying. They don't give up" (137).

The boy and his father have a very close relationship but live in two different worlds, two different realities. For the man, this world is hell compared to the harmonious, joyous, and warm one in his memories. For the boy, this harsh reality is the only one he has ever known. All of his concepts about places and people are defined by his experiences. Although the father

tells the boy about the once-existing world he used to live in, the boy cannot identify with the description of the rich and colorful environment and a wide range of perceptions of it (feelings, visions, voices, tastes, and scents). Even if their concepts about the world are different, they must rely on and trust each other because the world is narrowed to their interaction only. The man shows and teaches the boy how to repair the wheels of the cart or play card games. They also share some moments of careless happiness when they roll down the hill together on the cart to test its new wheels.

The man has long lost his identity, and his former self exists only in his memories. He thinks that after the disappearance of social, cultural, administrative, environmental, moral, and juridical systems and previously existing structures and patterns of life, it does not matter who anybody is (49). When asked whether he is a doctor—for knowing the parts of the skull thoroughly—, the man replies, "I'm not anything" (64). It would be inappropriate to call anybody by the notions and categories of the late world because, in a postapocalyptic environment, those structures are decomposed. The old billfold in the man's pocket has "wor[n] a cornershaped hole in his trousers" (51). Before leaving its content behind, he lists the items in it: "Some money, credit cards. His driver's license. A picture of his wife. He . . . sat holding the photograph. Then he laid it down in the road also and then he stood and they went on" (51). At the thought of his wife, the man's inner voice does not make any comment as it usually does in connection with the boy. Partly because he understands the woman's deed and partly because of his wrath for the woman for giving up on her own and the boy's life.

The man's dreams and imaginings have great importance in the narrative, surpassing life and death and the state of illusion and reality. He mistrusts luring and teasing dreams "rich in color" (21) because he believes this is how death conceals itself. He reckons that "the right dreams for a man in peril [are] dreams of peril and all else [is] the call of languor and of death" (18). Although he knows that "[f]rom daydreams on the road there [is] no waking" (18), during the short periods of sleep, he

> dreamt of walking in a flowering wood where birds flew before them he and the child and the sky was aching blue but he was learning how to wake himself from just such siren worlds. Lying there in the dark with the uncanny taste of a peach from some phantom orchard fading in his mouth. He thought if he lived long enough the world at last would all be lost. Like the dying world the newly blind inhabit, all of it slowly fading from memory. (18)

Pleasant dreams, feelings, and imaginings are a subliminal space, merely the deception of the mind. Dreams of worlds that never were or never will be (189) are delusive and offer the illusion

of happiness, but they lure us to give up on such a miserable life. Dreams belong to an imagined space, a universe of the once-had-been-but-long-gone images, scenes, and people. Once the real objects and subjects are gone, the memories are just imprecise depictions of them. Foucault calls these imaginings "a space of illusion that exposes every real space" and a heterotopic "space that is . . . another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (8). In line with this, the damaged and disastrous world of *The Road* and the man's daydreaming derive from and are related to one another. Illusions make up for the unpleasant and harsh reality of the person through the operations of the unconscious. When an individual's desires are not fulfilled, the person creates an illusory space through existing or imagined realities. The man is aware of the conditions of endless caution, agony, and despair which could lead to disbelief in distant memories. They would merge with dreams and illusions, and even there would be no way out of either the real space or the imagined one.

The witnesses of the old world live in a subliminal space of annihilation where "[n]obody wants to be . . . and nobody wants to leave" (169). Not only dreams but the philosophical discussion between the man and Ely–who is an old blind wanderer on the road–about the end of the world has a double meaning: getting ready for death and witnessing the world without humanity. Seeing the natural world and all entities fading into nothingness, the question arises: who would be the last man on earth, or what the last man would be at the end of the history of humanity? The man expects Ely to help him understand the operations of the current world believing that God would have mercy on them, and they would get rid of human sufferings. The name "Ely" has a biblical overtone, meaning something elevated, capable of miracles, and defending people. He is also referred to as a starved and threadbare Buddha (168), the man of wisdom and knowledge reincarnated in the person of a beggar.

There are several flashbacks to the man's past in the novel. His memories are a fragmented representation of the world that still carries some objects and traces of civilization, but it is impossible to return to. The man's memories are generally blurred, as they may have been merely dreams or imaginations. He considers that people tend to forget what they want to remember, and they remember what they want to forget (12), relating to the fading experiences from the past and their contrast with the hideous depravity of the present days. Occasionally, the father is unable to remember where he is (83) and define the dimensions of time and place. There are blackouts in his memories and also in the present happenings, which further enhance the unreliability of his existence. "He'd little idea where the cart was and he thought that he was getting stupid and that his head wasnt working right. Concentrate, he said. You have to think" (98). Because of fatigue, illness, and starvation, his mind becomes dysfunctional.

Although his mind, seeing phantoms he had not heard of for ages (116) betrays him sometimes, the boy's heartbeat, warmth, and movement of the thin ribs (116) help him find his way back to reality.

Retrospectively, past events, family connections, and childhood memories related to the landscape are pleasant and positive memories for the man, yet cautionary signs of environmental destruction are already present in them. The man remembers the lake close to his uncle's farm where they used to row out to gather firewood. The appearance of his rural uncle in his straw hat, black boots with a piece of straw, or a pipe in his mouth, using his strength to row in the boat, was defining for the rest of his life. In his imagination, the farm was an idyllic place of well-being and prosperity, yet a simple way of life, and it is a recurring image in the novel. Nevertheless, natural catastrophe, "a riprap of twisted stumps, gray and weathered, the windfall trees of hurricane years past," a "dead perch lolling belly up in the clear water" (13), and the yellow leaves are the warning signs that the environment has changed. The lake and the farm that served the necessities of local people became fragile by ill-treatment. The results of neglect and recklessness are present throughout McCarthy's postapocalyptic story: the water is cold, gray, and black and no fish live in it.

The man's childhood house is the center to go away from, into any direction, and to always return to. Every corner of his uncle's farmhouse is familiar and cozy to him—the safest place for a child, for a family. Some parts of the old frame house have been removed for firewood, but it still looked "[a]ll much as he'd remembered it": "[t]he same castiron coalgrate in the small fireplace. . . . He felt with his thumb in the painted wood of the mantle the pinholes from tacks that had held stockings forty years ago" (26). The man explains to the boy that "[t]his is where we used to have Christmas when I was a boy" (26), but for the child neither religious and cultural practices, nor the togetherness of the family mean much, and they invoke no emotion in him. Lacking a common cultural ground, "[t]he boy watched him. Watched shapes claiming him he could not see" (26). Similarly, the vision of the late yard, "[a] tangle of dead lilac. The shape of a hedge" (26) makes no sense to the boy, but it all revives in the mind of the man. His memories create heterotopias which make him see what is not visible in front of his eyes in reality. The father sees through the lens of his memories connected to rooms and objects, which are damaged, rotten, or decayed, like "the bones of a small animal dismembered and placed in a pile" in the living room, "[p]ossibly a cat" (26). Even the man's late bedroom, where he "dream[t] the dreams of a child's imaginings, worlds rich or fearful" (27) does not bring back the feeling of safety anymore because the circumstances of the present world had taken away all the illusions he had.

The cognitive structuring of space creates an anthropocentric worldview, which places human beings in the center of the environment, or a biocentric perspective, which considers all living entities of the environment equally important. *The Road* has both an anthropocentric and a biocentric agenda in terms of ethics and morals. As Greg Garrard puts it in *Ecocriticism* (2004), the central theme of apocalyptic works is the "titanic struggle between good and evil" (86). This archetypal conflict is represented in the novel between the "good guys," who respect each other and would not take other people's possessions or lives violently even if they were dying of starvation, and the "bad ones" who choose survival through murder and cannibalistic practices.

Hearing a barking dog and seeing a little boy, the child is obsessed to find them and integrate them into their company because he wishes for a community. The man and the boy are "good people" and they only take what they need for survival. Besides, they keep the scale of human morals and values in mind. They respect animals and refuse to descend into cannibalism as most people do in despair and by disrespect for one another. Though every segment of the surrounding environment suggests giving up, good people hold on to humane values. Furthermore, travelers have to be on the constant watch-out and always expect trouble (151) to avoid unexpected happenings. However, these "good people" seem to exist in the man's imagination only. They do not encounter any such people until after the man's death, when the boy comes across the family who take him in.

The child's inner struggle is due to the clash between the two different spaces of perception in his mind: his imaginings about children's company based on the stories the father tells him, and the reality of the surroundings he faces daily. Despite the hopelessness of safety, belonging, and community, the boy always hopes and anticipates that they will find a place and settle down together because he is tired of being eternally on the move. When he claims to have seen an unknown "little boy" (84) about his age "wrapped in an outsized wool coat with the sleeves turned back" (84), the father doubts the boy's words. He finds it unlikely that there might be another child on the road, and believes that this illusion must be the reflection of the boy's unconscious desire. Yet, the man does not deny the existence of another child. The boy expresses his worries about the little boy: "What if [he] doesnt have anybody to take care of him? . . . What if he doesnt have a papa?" (85). For the boy, his father is the embodiment of caretaking, sharing, love, and providence. Both the man and the boy secretly suppose that there must be a group of good people hiding somewhere, even from each other (184).

Dreary places, the lack of food and supplies, and lawless, anarchic conditions elicit evil human actions motivated by scarcity and the survival instinct. The company coming with a

diesel truck looks sinister, “shuffling through the ash casting their hooded heads from side to side. Some of them wearing canister masks. One in a biohazard suit. Stained and filthy. Slouching along with clubs in their hands, lengths of pipe. Coughing” (60). The father’s insight, experience, and intuition suggest something ominous in the “reptilian calculations in those cold and shifting eyes. The gray and rotting teeth. Claggy with human flesh” (75). The stranger’s menacing appearance and demeanor, and the way he is looking at the boy, reveal the intentions of all the nearby marauders. To the father’s clinching query of what they eat, the man responds: “Whatever we can find” (64), which positions him as a “bad guy” resembling an animal following its instincts.

The devastated landscape is not connected to any national or religious myths that bound people together and built a nation of different ethnicities. As everybody is short of things for survival–food, water, dry and warm clothes, shoes–, one must keep everything for themselves. Ironically, the apocalyptic environment is ideal for fulfilling the Transcendentalist idea of individualism and self-reliance which stated that one could fully realize and express one’s true self through inner divinity in complete solidarity and independence from others. Transcendentalists were in favor of ideal and utopian communities, having created one, Brook Farm, themselves. However, the father avoids utopian illusions and strives to be as reasonable as he can. There are some refugees on the road, like the lightning-struck man or Ely, whom the boy wants to help. Even if the man expresses his sorrow and solidarity with those people, he explains to the boy: “We cant share what we have or we’ll die too” (52). The man takes responsibility only for themselves. When he looks at the miserable half-dead or dead people, he thinks of his own desperate condition and puts his priority into sight: to keep the boy alive. The man avoids people because on the road, “there are no godspoke men” (32), meaning that in the forsaken world everybody takes what they need instinctively because this is the only way to stay alive.

3 Social and Cultural Representations of the Postapocalyptic City and Countryside

Michel Foucault claims that space is an analytical category for revealing historical problems and discussing socio-cultural phenomena. His concept of heterotopia helps to reveal the functions of heterotopic spaces in *The Road*. Heterotopic imagination in McCarthy’s novel involves historical association (Smyth 7) about the deconstruction of Americanness. In the narrative, the heterotopic space is the darkening wasteland without promises, illusions, or perspectives. The historically symbolic space of the nineteenth-century American frontier is

transformed into a fragmented world of disillusion, infertility, regression, and uprootedness. The main concerns surfacing in postapocalyptic place representations are the deconstruction of urban and rural places, challenging the ideologies of capitalism and consumerism, the reversal of the frontier myth, and homelessness as ultimate Americanness in the open space.

Waldron argues against the false binary ideas of city and country. She asserts that their interdependence is ecologically and environmentally based (xxxiii). Likewise, McCarthy demolishes all the boundaries between their dependence and importance. The gray shape (9) and the burnt outline of the city (159), and the "[b]arren, silent, godless" (4) country are deprived of their former liveliness, their unique roles in dwelling, production, and consumption. The city is not a distinct entity anymore; it is not buoyant and prospering. The vision of constantly fuming factory chimneys is gone; there is "[n]othing to see. No smoke" (8), yet there is dust and ash in the air, and even the daylight is ashen (5). There is "[n]o sign of life. Cars in the street caked with ash . . . A corpse in a doorway dried to leather. Grimacing at the day" (12). The city used to be the center of capitalist consumerism, full of posters and commercials advertising eternal beauty, flawlessness, and perfection. Describing scenes of horror while walking through the city is the disavowal of human vanity and the judgment of people's obsession with appearance and formalities in recent times. Although the man tries to hide the reality of the corpses from the boy's eyes, there is nothing to hide and protect the child from (236) because was born into this world and is familiar with its terrible sights.

Buell's notion of the environmental apocalypse as "the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (285) resonates with McCarthy's concepts of worldwide destruction. In the novel, it was presumably people who caused a catastrophe that tragically resulted not only in the fall of humankind but also in the annihilation of nature. D.H. Lawrence also had a radical attitude towards the high-density human presence in cities: "[man] is a mistake, he must go" (128), he writes in *Women in Love.* In contrast with Lawrence's position, neither McCarthy does not erase people from the Earth, although they would deserve it.

Greg Garrard's ideas about cities are very close to those of deep ecologists', emphasizing the intrinsic value of the environment. Cities in *The Road* are devastated by natural forces, flooding and fire to the waterline (261), killing most of the population and uprooting the rest of the survivors. The narrator describes appalling and repulsive scenarios from the city and the circumstances after the catastrophe:

> the roads were peopled with refugees shrouded up in their clothing. Wearing masks and goggles, sitting in their rags by the side of the road like ruined aviators. Their barrows

> heaped with shoddy. Towing wagons or carts. . . . Creedless shells of men tottering down the causeways like migrants in a feverland. (28)
>
> . . .
>
> People sitting on the sidewalk in the dawn half immolate and smoking in their clothes. Like failed sectarian suicides. Others would come to help them. Within a year there were fires on the ridges and deranged chanting. The screams of the murdered. By day the dead impaled on spikes along the road" (32-33).

Both natural and man-made environments are devastated by the aftermath of fire. People must wear protective masks and clothes to avoid breathing in and being in contact with the polluted and dusty air. They also have to abandon their homes because they were probably destroyed by fire or by an earthquake. Often people and their belongings are a part of the road because the macadam and black mastic had melted from the fires—lit up by lightning—that burnt and integrated them into the blacktop. Looking completely lost and hopeless, refugees can only take with them the most important things. People in the city lost connection with the natural environment. Even if they had started a new life, there would not have been a natural environmental base for them to reestablish society. The new principles are anarchy, chaos, and survival by any means—even cannibalism. The man hopes that one day, when the "bad guys" "ha[ve] consumed one another" (16), the "good" ones would join and establish a new colony.

Billboards, which used to advertise the latest fashion, the best buy offers, a diversity of goods, politicians on posters promising a better future, celebrities showing off with their luxurious lives and setting a low standard of morals for financial benefit, are painted white. In place of advertisements, which attracted people to buy, possess, and consume, hopeless messages to beloved ones, along with warning signs of danger and murder, are hand-painted on posters and carved into the boards. Some concepts of consumer society are imposed on looters and cannibals, who carry "anonymous tins of food in nylon nets like shoppers in the commissaries of hell" (181). Before the catastrophe, masses of livestock were massacred at slaughterhouses to feed hundreds of millions of people regardless of nutrition ethics. The meat was packed and arranged nicely and appetizingly in plastic wrapping. With the disappearance of animals, the instinct to survive remained, but consumerist behavior has not. Only eating habits have changed. Bags hold remnants of anything edible, including chunks of human flesh, even "a charred human infant headless and gutted" (198), which is the ultimate subordination of human morality to sheer survival.

McCarthy extends Michel Foucault's cemetery heterotopia—a demarcated sanctuary site for deceased and buried corpses in the proximity of the town—to the encompassing view of death and grief of all environmental entities all over the place:

> The mummied dead everywhere. The flesh cloven along the bones, the ligaments dried to tug and taut as wires. Shriveled and drawn like latterday bogfolk, their faces of boiled sheeting, the yellowed palings of their teeth. (24)

In *The Road*, the whole world is a cemetery: streets, private houses, barns, and woods are all the ground for decay. The bodies, the primary indicators of one's existence and the most essential trait for one's identity, are not buried anymore. The dignity of people's life and death has vanished in this world. Death is not as intimate and personal as it used to be, but masses of deceased bodies are lying around in towns or the woods. The man's remembrance of the relocation of a cemetery to build a highway on its site was similar to the vision of corpses everywhere during their journey. The rotten wooden boxes falling open upon exhumation and allowing insight into their contents (213-14) anticipate the postapocalyptic scene of death and devastation.

On their way out of the city, the man and his son come into a supermarket, a significant symbol of American capitalism and consumer society. However, it is abandoned, fruits are dried and wrinkled, aisles are full of trash, the shopping carts are rusty, and there are "[c]oins everywhere in the ash" (23). The stores had been raided years ago and there are no supplies, shoes, and appropriate clothes for the weather conditions. Only some fancy garments, like suitcoats (79), are left in the shops. This is an improbable picture of a place where commodities were in never-ending to supply to fulfill consumer desires. Nevertheless, at the end of the world, with the decay of all traces of organic life, a can of Coca-Cola persists stuck in one of the vending machines. The father takes it, "put his thumbnail under the aluminum clip on the top of the can and opened it. He leaned his nose to the slight fizz coming from the can and then handed it to the boy" (23). This simple, everyday motion of opening a can of coke seems ritualistic, as this might be one last trail of capitalist civilization.

Biodiversity had ceased in the southern habitat, and all types of plants are dead or waning. In place of "rich southern wood that once held mayapple and pipsissewa Ginseng", there are merely "raw dead limbs of the rhododendron twisted and knotted and black" (39-40). In the early years after the catastrophe, the man was listening to the "flocks of migratory birds overhead . . . Their half muted crankings miles above where they circled the earth . . . senselessly. He never heard them again" (53). After the birds disappear, the only thing that remains is empty "clay nests that swallows had built in the corners under the bridge" (51). As

Rachel Carson foresaw in 1962, the vanishing of birds' chirping and the insects' humming are catastrophic signs in the natural environment because those small creatures keep the balance of the biotic sphere. In *The Road*, nature is all dead: plants and "old crops dead and flattened" (21), animals have vanished, water and the air are polluted and devoid of life. The country is "looted, ransacked, ravaged" (129), "stripped and plundered" (181), leaving nothing to make use of. In place of rich lands, there is no sign of life. This new environment is not prosperous as it was before. Making a living from the land had been hard for farmers since industrialization and mass production hit in the middle of the twentieth century. The land is gullied, eroded, and barren now, covered with anonymous trash (177) that is better to be left unrevealed. The temperature is freezing because the sunrays cannot reach the surface of the Earth due to massive flue-dust and flue-ash in the air. Even the wind systems have changed to "bleak and temporal" (11). The reeds are dead, and the "weeds . . . fell to dust" (6). Trees are mutilated, "[c]harred and limbless . . . stretching away on every side" (8). People do not have the opportunity to find a safe shelter in nature, build a house from wood, grow plants, and breed animals. Overall, they have no chance to start over again. The new environment is a "raw hill" (14), "[d]esolate country" (17), where everything on late farmlands is "dead to the root" (21). Waters are polluted with ash and remains of perished creatures, so it is only potable when filtered thoroughly through some cloth (201). A nomadic way of life in such environmental circumstances cannot aspire to more than sheer survival. McCarthy's prose is an intertextual reference to T. S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land," in which death is a central theme (Bloom 186). "He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying"—writes Eliot, and his lines reverberate in the postapocalyptic barrenness of *The Road*.

Some man-made objects and artificial materials permanently exist in the environment, while organic entities have vanished. Coming across a dam that the boy is curious about is an enduring instance of using natural resources to produce energy, as it is "made out of concrete. It will probably be there for hundreds of years" (20). There is a less beneficial but similarly durable thing that will probably remain on the surface of the planet for ages: trash, especially plastic waste. Organic substances have disappeared, but non-degrading plastic items—trash bags, bottles, tableware, and wrappings—are still there in the environment. Trash dumps are generally placed outside of towns, but there are human remains among the waste, as the "charred meat and bones" (150) suggest. It does not matter where things were disposed and stored earlier, or where deceased bodies were buried—they are to be found in each segment of the present environment.

The destroyed city and some desolate houses on the outskirts of the town mean danger to the wandering survivors. The grand house the man and the boy pass by is a huge building constructed probably in the eighteenth or the nineteenth century in a courtly style and served as the residence of wealthy slaveholders. It is tall and built from handmade brick, but the paint is peeling off from the Doric columns from the outside. However, its windows are strangely intact. Inside there are great hall rooms, high walls and grand spaces, a broad staircase, a large walnut buffet, Morris paper on the walls, and a fireplace with raw brick. Inside the spacious rooms, some traces remind visitors that this old aristocratic-style building is not the residence of prosperous people. "The doors and the drawers were gone" (107) probably to burn in the fireplace and the kitchen "[t]rash [is] piled everywhere. A ruststained sink. Smell of mold and excrement" (108). These are details indicating that it had been used as a dump and a toilet. The most troubling thing is a "great heap of clothing. Clothes and shoes. Belts. Coats. Blankets and old sleeping bags" (107) in the corner of a room. These are reminiscent of the foyer of the gas chambers with piles of people's belongings in Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War. However, there is no soul around in the building. The people whose belongings were taken and piled up are kept under a locked hatch. Down below from the vault, the reality of a horrific nightmare opens up:

> Huddled against the back wall were naked people, male and female, all trying to hide, shielding their faces with their hands. On the mattress lay a man with his legs gone to the hip and the stumps of them blackened and burnt. The smell was hideous. (110)

The grand house evokes a period in American history where centuries ago chattel slaves were kept to "bear . . . food and drink on silver trays" (106), doing involuntary service to their owners. This building is a place of enslavement once again, but scroungers keep the chained people stored in a perverse pantry to quell their hunger. The dark, damp, and cold pantry under the ground is full of the living dead ambushed on the road and taken into the grand slaughterhouse by force. This scenery shows that attractive buildings that were meant to protect people from environmental extremities and illegal invaders had become the place of malevolent activity.

Wandering on the southwestern fields of the US, the man and the boy come across the relics of earlier historical times, monumental buildings that are elements of the western archive. The building is vast and rich inside, its architecture, furniture protected by sheeting. Objects imply the admiration of culture and arts: brick buildings, imported chandeliers, English china, piano, and the empty place of paintings. The expressions that are used to describe the house, like *loggia* or *portico*, and conserved food in jars–green beans, red pepper, tomatoes, corn, potatoes, okra–allude to Spanish-Mexican inhabitants of the building. The white quartz and

gray flint arrowheads in the land and coins with Spanish letters (203-204) recall the hostility between Native Americans and Mexicans fighting for the land during the Apache-Mexican wars between the 1830s and 1850s. The land looks as if it had been cultivated because the soil is soft from turning and rain, and the house is almost untouched—probably because the building is out of sight and few people have reached this part of the country alive. The man and the boy are so amused by the presence of this untouched and majestic place that they "wander . . . through the rooms like skeptical housebuyers" (206).

American country buildings are usually depicted as tall clapboard houses with a barn beside them. This farmhouse image, however, is not an idyllic one in McCarthy's novel. The barn is a container of rats and hanging bodies "dried and dusty" (17) instead of household animals and crops. The only sign of the rural way of life in an old mill town is a straw figure set out a long time ago to "announce some holiday" (199), and the rest of the things are scattered by the roadside. The country and the land are not the larders of the nation any more but symbols of poverty and death. Although there is little promise in the country because it neither offers much for the cultivation of the land nor for survival, it is still the place where the two wanderers find things preserved for their minimal living conditions: blankets from a house that covered a corpse (81), a plastic tarp, a sweatshirt (83), a sack of cornmeal from a pantry (full of dried rat tards) to make cakes from (84). This picture is the opposite of the symbolic landscape of the nineteenth century that promised fertile soil, animals for hunting, and all kinds of natural resources.

The image of the orchard is quite different from the Edenic concept of the garden full of juicy and ripe fruits; the ordered rows of trees are "gnarled and black," and their limbs have fallen to the ground (90). This strange orchard exhibits "[s]hapes of dried blood in the stubble grass and gray coils of viscera where the slain had been field-dressed and hauled away. The wall beyond held a frieze of human heads, all faced alike, dried and caved with their taut grins and shrunken eyes" (90). There is nothing here that the man has not seen before. Even so, there is something ominous in the grimaces on those tattooed faces and heads flayed from the skin. They display that even dangerous people—perhaps belonging to a gang of former prisoners—had been slain. If gang members or criminals could not defend themselves, who else would have been safe on the road? Nonetheless, there is a real apple orchard next to the barn that is an apocalyptic version of the Edenic state of nature. It offers some "[h]ard, brown and shriveled" (121) apples for the man and the boy after they have been starving for days. Eating an apple and drinking sweet water is a little piece of the Promised Land for the two travelers because such ordinary stocks are scarce to find. The father and son represent a way of life that causes

no harm to nature and other people with good intentions, as it had been set in Paradise. They have poor but nutritious meals and always take as much as they need and they can carry (150).

Like the late cowboys in the southwest, the evil men threaten the travelers on the road during the day and keep going hunting at night despite the cold and snow. They are well-equipped with a wheeled vehicle, some with rubber tires that leave tracks in the snow, and have boots because their footprints are also visible. There are probably more gangs of bad guys raking the roads for travelers on whom their survival depends. One group is with the diesel truck, and another is marching abreast with red scarves around their necks. They are an

> army in tennis shoes, tramping. Carrying three-foot lengths of pipe with leather wrappings. Lanyards at the wrist. Some of the pipes were threaded through with lengths of chain fitted at their ends with every manner of bludgeon. They clanked past, marching with a swaying gait like wind-up toys. Bearded, their breath smoking through their masks. . . . The phalanx following carried spears or lances tasseled with ribbons, the long blades hammered out of trucksprings in some crude forge up-country. . . . They passed two hundred feet away, the ground shuddering lightly. Tramping. Behind them came wagons drawn by slaves in harness and piled with goods of war and after that the women, perhaps a dozen in number, some of them pregnant, and lastly a supplementary consort of catamites illclothed against the cold and fitted in dogcollars and yoked each to each. (91-92)

There are many grotesque images in *The Road,* but this scene is very odd from many perspectives; the bizarre army consists of various castes, from soldiers to slaves, evoking ancient images of hordes marching to war. However, they are not going to battle but are on a quest for people to enslave them and secure their survival. It is peculiar that on the land of the free, yet on the land of the former slave trade and slave labor, where the constitution secures human and civil rights after centuries of oppressive colonial practices, slavery is present again. Nevertheless, gender can be crucial concerning selection because women are an outstanding cast in the marching group, and some of them are pregnant. They are probably kept to breed and serve the army with babies used as comestibles.

The railroad system was a symbol of Americanness in the nineteenth century because it connected distant places and people. Foucault considers the train as a particular site among a set of relations, as it is "something through which one goes [and] of which one can go from one point to another, and then it is also something that goes by" (3). The multiple functions of the train and the railway system made its heterogeneous space unique for American imperial aims. The railroad bridge connects two locations and conquers nature by overcoming its extreme

geographical characteristics. It connects distant elevations, or frequently runs across a riverbed. The diesel-electric locomotive, hidden and stopped in the woods, rusty and paint scaling off of it (180), symbolizes the derailed calculations of the nineteenth-century westward expansion. The train in *The Road*, which had run out of fuel and is unable to continue its journey, may represent the casus belli of the raising conflict and embargo on oil between the US and the Middle East. While natural resources had served the American industry and nation to be glorified in the past century, the oil crises in the 1970s pointed to the weakness of both the lofty American spirit and the fragility of nature when overused senselessly. While American land had been exploited and lavished, the East became in control of all the world's remaining oil resources. This shift in economic power resulted in economic effects in America and also in world economics. Energy scarcity, inflation and deflation, rise in the cost of transportation opened the way to the interest in alternative energy sources, such as renewable energy, nuclear power and the use of domestic fossil fuels. Although alternative energy usage could have solved the lack of non-renewable natural resources, the sense of Americanness connected to oil, symbolizing wealth, power, and mobility through the massive and powerful cars running on oil-guttling V8 engines, maintains the excess in oil utilization. The nostalgia for the old ideal of nationhood and the implicit ideology to take control over the East and its resources involved the aggressive non-renewable energy politics and the initiation of wars in the Middle East in the 2000s.

The idea of being and dwelling in nature, wandering in the woods and mountains, and camping are primary American pastime activities in the US because they evoke the traditional settler experience of closeness and connection to nature. It was the Transcendentalist writer Henry David Thoreau who first in the American literary tradition described the forest as a majestic and divine place. In contrast to his nature writing, McCarthy does not merely describe the aesthetics of the environment. However, his work has more profound meanings and a voice of critique concerning the representations of nature and people and their interactions. Whereas the dwelling of the father and son in the devastated environment throughout their journey is a central image in *The Road*, it is not as pleasant and voluntary as it used to be. Camping involves exposure to natural forces of rain, snow, cold, storms, and dangerous travelers on the road whose intentions are unknown. Temporary dwellings in nature and individual mobility are available for the migrants of the postapocalypse, but security is absent from their southward journey. Yet the man provides the basics for the boy to feel at home. Although they are not in a physical building together, their belongings—blankets, plastic tarp, the boy's toys, and storybooks—and their experience of belonging together make them feel at home.

The underground bunker that the man and the boy come across hides a "tiny paradise" (150). The small room that is "walled with concrete block," and the floor is laid with "kitchen tile" (138) reminds of a bungalow. It seems well-equipped either for a biological attack or a nuclear war disaster, both being significant reasons for fear since the Cold War and 9/11. There is plenty of canned food, bedding, clean clothes, dishes, lights, clean water, a stove, and even a small restroom adjoining the place. Canned and tinned products have been frequently present in American cultural representation since the industrialization after the Second World War, as they preserve fresh fruits and vegetables grown in the countryside for a long time. The production of tinned food secures the living of country people and feeds people in urban areas. They are easily transportable and storable, and supply the needs of the rushing world. People who had built the bunker wanted to secure a comfortable way of life for themselves in case a catastrophe occurred. The man and the boy find everything for a sustainable life, even some treats, like chocolate, coffee, or board games for fun. A bottle of whiskey is in stock in a paper bag "in which [it] had been purchased" (152 The man and the child are given a standard way of life—sleeping in bed, eating regularly, keeping personal hygiene, and wearing clean and warm clothes—for a short while, but similarly to the peculiarity of the waterfall, the wealthy bunker is an attraction to other travelers whose intentions might not be as good as theirs, so they must keep moving.

Going up the hill and setting up a camp, the father and his son "could see out over the darkening country to the south, standing there in the wind, wrapped in their blankets, watching for any sign of a fire or a lamp. There was nothing" (9). In contrast to the imagined pastoral idyll of cowboys and farmers looking up at the moonlit and starry sky as they are sitting by the campfire, the hopeless pilgrims of *The Road* do not have any panorama of beauty in the wasted space. The man and his son's quest for a new, warmer place in the south is not as promising as the early settlers' visions were about the Promised Land. "At the top of the hill they stood in the cold and the wind . . . The man put his hand on [the boy's] shoulder and nodded toward the open country below them," but there was "[n]othing to see" (8) Although the prospect of a land of plenty or a city upon a hill promised prosperity and happiness to previous generations, the distressing view of total desolation does not hold anything for the future ones. If there is a future in store for human beings at all.

4 Damaged Places and Imaginary Spaces as Postapocalyptic Literary Devices

Although the narrative of *The Road* prioritizes Christian values through the caring relationship between father and son, there are some traces in the novel of Friedrich Nietzsche's biocentric perspective concerning nature. In *The Gay Science* (1882), Nietzsche argues against the anthropocentric idea that nature is noble, beautiful, and wise. He does not attribute such aesthetic or moral values to the environment. In his poetic aphorism "The Realistic Painter" Nietzsche poses the question: "Would nature fit an image made by man?" The answer he proposes is sobering: "The smallest piece of world is infinite!" (Williams 22). In correspondence with Nietzsche's thought, McCarthy rewrites the myths about the symbolic American landscape and its connotations of nobility, morals, and aesthetics, and he also debunks US imperial conceptions of nature and land.

Going on a journey and being on the road have been significant techniques in storytelling since the first settlers migrated from the East coast to the western frontier of the United States in the nineteenth century. Mark Twain and Jack London wrote books on journeys through different American landscapes and territories, and they examined the encounter of people with nature and other ethnic and cultural communities. Wandering the road, the pilgrims met hardships and either natural or human threats because constant motion stands for "being in relation with all the other sites" (Foucault 3). Waldron insists that mobility creates a connection between persons and places in cities and rural areas, but she doubts that a particular environment would be deterministic regarding their dwelling (xxv). McCarthy's narrative implies that the survivors' mobility results from constrained uprootedness from settlement and former politically and ideologically distinct regions are forged into one homogenous, annihilated space, regardless of national borders. The author emphasizes that an environmental catastrophe would change the way of life, including the tradition of adventurous traveling, but it should not involve degradation and demoralization; father and son adapt to the new circumstances of the surroundings, but their posthuman condition does not define or alter their former human and moral values.

McCarthy applies metaphors and symbols to emphasize the aesthetics of the annihilation of the natural environment, while the Christian conceptual framework is significant for endowing environmental entities with moral judgment. Constructing spatial and temporal metaphors and allegories result from cognitive processes, such as imagination, dreaming, and the perception of heterotopic images blurring with the ambiguous notions of reality.

Beside naturalistic and realistic portrayal, McCarthy uses literary devices reminding of William Faulkner's writing style. When the man climbs up on the hood of a tractor to see what is inside its cab, he lights a piece of paper and drops it down into the darkness. As he gets a glimpse of dead human bodies, the "small wad of burning paper drew down to a wisp of flame and then died out leaving a faint pattern for just a moment in the incandescence like the shape of a flower, a molten rose" (49). There is no sign of life down there, the flame of life and hope is put out, yet McCarthy glorifies this moment with a flower pattern that seems out of place there, but it can stand for the expression of mourning. The aesthetics of *The Road* is ambiguous: there is beauty in evanescence and decay, yet sadness and grief in happy moments. The man reckons grace and beauty akin to pain and relates to the emergence of both from grief and ashes (54). Falling trees, the symbols of life, mean the fall of nature. "All the trees in the world are going to fall sooner or later" (35), says the father to his son. Many reasons could cause this phenomenon: earthquakes, eluviations, or soil erosion by rainwater coming down from the mountains–, and ash all cause soil infertility, thus the uprooting of plants and trees. The falling of trees is a metaphor for people dying one by one. Some burning thin black trees on the mountain resemble "heathen candles" (48) that are metaphorically lit to mourn the world. A single gray snowflake falling from the sky into the boy's hand is "like the last host of Christendom" (16). In this sacred but sorrowful moment, the boy becomes a part of a divine miracle for a moment. The snowflake is gray because it comes from above through the dusty atmosphere and it signals that being "snow white" morally is not possible in this world, not even for a child born into an annihilated and estranged world.

There is hardly ever a sign of color in the gray and black environment. The synesthesia of "blackness to hurt your ears with listening" (15) illustrates the loss of sensation and perception in a non-definable and eternal space and refers to the damaging effects of darkness and the mental state of constant fear. Perfect blackness (234) has no depth or dimension (67) and the nights are as dark and imponderable as seeing with eyes shut (68). The place where they walk at night is like a dark, endless maze without walls and coldness compels them to feel those nights even longer. The starless darkness with the moon beyond the ashen sky shapes an endless and dimensionless space in the woods. The chary dawn and the cold, obscure and colorless world (116) encompassed by the carbon fog (117) are the representations of an unfriendly and lifeless world. The "noon sky black as the cellars of hell" (177) illustrates the dark day as the deepest pits of hell—lightless and cruel. If the two travelers were not the main characters of *The Road,* the moment of "watching the light draw down over the world to the west" (124) could have been an idyllic moment. However, the sunset here means the coming

of another cold night to survive outdoors and it does not promise the coming of a new day. The boy's "candle colored skin" (129) results from malnutrition and the absence of sunrays responsible for a healthy complexion and osteogenesis in childhood. The boy's skin color is similar to the color of a candle, meaning that he is close to the end if they cannot find food. The man mourns beauty and goodness as he is looking at his sleeping son "sob[bing] uncontrollably" (129) because he believes that death would come upon them after all. Another reading of the boy as a candle is that the boy's body is a piece of candle, and his soul is the flame burning in the darkness of the world.

The only different and non-dark tones that appear now and then are the light and warm colors of fire that have various interpretations. The pale light of the sun that "circles the earth like a grieving mother with a lamp" (32) emphasizes the revolving motion of the sun as it was the act of commiseration by a celestial agent personified as a mourning female agent. The small flame of the campfire the father puts up to heat their poor meal, get some warmth, and have some light to see each other, is a metaphor for the love and care between the two. The fire sometimes has a deep orange tone which stands for the burning and the destruction of the remaining forests high in the mountains (30). Blood-red color is a warning of imminent death. Nevertheless, carrying the fire (83) is a positive image for the boy and the man who try to live a simple, loving, and caring life, and nothing bad could happen to them because they are good people even if not much good has remained in the world. Fire is associated with love and warmth but also means human morals, life, light, knowledge, and memories, something elevating in the apocalyptic world.

The notion of time plays as a distinguished a role in the novel as place and space do. There is only one exact temporal expression, the stopping of the clocks at 1:17 when something fatal happened to the world, but we get no precise date, not even the year. According to the religious tone in McCarthy's writings, this number could be an allusion to a passage from the Bible: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last" (Book of Revelation 1:17). This is an enigmatic verse stating that God will reveal himself to men and they all will die from his vision because he has all the power to create and destroy his creatures. He was the beginning of everything, and he will be the end, too. Another passage from McCarthy's book supports this Biblical reference: "The frailty of everything revealed at last. Old and troubling issues resolved into nothingness and night. The last instance of a thing takes the class with it. Turns out the light and is gone" (28). Societies, cultures, nature, and places are annihilated; only the dark and eternal space remains where time is irrelevant and senseless. The rest of the time expressions

are blurred and uncertain, like “Late in the year. He hardly knew the month” (29). Maybe it “was October but he wasnt sure” (4). When the days were becoming shorter, it was darkening quickly, and it became colder. It “could be November. It could be later” (89). Dawn takes a long time to come, and days are so short that they cannot be called days since it is almost impossible to tell the time of the day (155). Darkness is not only a sign of hopeless wandering but also signals the shortest days in the year, which implies that it could be December. The expression of time is often philosophical and connected to place and human existence, for instance “[b]orrowed time and borrowed world and borrowed eyes with which to sorrow it” (130). When there is nothing to be done because all the things in the world have perished, there is no need and possibility to have a temporal measurement. “There is no later” (54) because later, or someday, is here. There are no plans for a particular time because its dimension had ceased.

The interaction between father and son is not restricted to ordinary routines, but they share some elevating and divine moments. Bathing the child is the symbolic act of purification from sins in the Christian tradition. The innocent child is not just getting rid of the filth that encrusted him during the journey, but the water washes away the sins and bad things it reminded him of. Timing is also symbolic because they find the bunker and live like they were in Paradise for some time, when the days are the shortest, probably around Thanksgiving or Christmas time. The boy is reckoned as a “new” Messiah with his purity, goodness, and kindheartedness, which are revealed when he starts to say a prayer to the people who had prepared the bunker:

> Dear people, thank you for all this food and stuff. We know that you saved it for yourself and if you were here we wouldnt eat it no matter how hungry we were and we’re sorry that you didnt get to eat it and we hope that you’re safe in heaven with God. (146)

The boy expresses his gratitude for the supplements and the goodwill and respect for the people and their belongings. He also hopes that the good people who thought about the future are in the eternal space of joy and happiness by God’s side. Thanksgiving is an American tradition to declare thankfulness to the heavenly Father for his providence and supply to survive.

Biblical symbolism and allusions are specific to McCarthy’s narrative and are frequent in the novel. The burning of serpents in the man’s dream has ambiguous meanings. Generally, snakes signal danger and warn people to be watchful. On the other hand, the snake is the symbol of regeneration, renewal, and healing, similar to the ancient myth of the Phoenix, dying and being reborn in flames. As the snakes are burnt and their voices cannot be heard, their slow and painful death may stand for the fate of both the man and the whole natural world. The serpents’ figures are similes to the long journey on the curved road that slowly consumes the man’s body

and soul. However, in the Christian tradition, the serpents are the means of salvation, yet leaving the main character in a sublime space between illusion and doubt about the boy's prospects.

Ely, the old and sick man, paraphrases Nietzsche's thought: "There is no God and we are his prophets" (170). The first interpretation of the old man's words is that people would not survive the aftermath of the apocalypse and would not exist if God did not exist at the coming of the cataclysm. The other meaning of Ely's statement is that hopeless and devastated survivors are the proof that God is absent from the world because people had lost belief and faith in him, seeing the devastation without salvation. In his opinion, the less said on the road is the better, therefore what he says is ambiguous and not reliable information. Ely methodically confuses travelers on the road with his philosophy of the apocalypse, and creates distrust in people. Even his name, Ely, suggests "a lie" because he assimilates into the uncertainties and chaos of ongoing times and measures the recent phenomena of the world in relation to the old one. His reason for going forward is not to pursue human morals but simply being hungry. He is a postmodern character, neither a good person nor a bad one, and he just lives for the sake of living. The old man's figure is as grotesque as one of Kafka's creatures; he is "spider thin" (174) and has long, yellow claws (164), his searching for his way with a cane like moles, not seeing. He also smells terrible even by the low living standards of the new world (161) where personal hygiene is a luxury and only some people keep the basic rituals of cleanliness. Even the man considers him an animal, telling the boy that they cannot keep him (164), meaning that the old blind man cannot join them on the journey. He looks like a "pile of rags fallen off a cart" (162) signaling that he is worn by life in both worlds, and his old army rucksack alludes to him being a veteran of some war. As he describes himself, he has always been on the road (168). Ely represents the beggar archetype, or an underprivileged and dispossessed serviceman, living an aimless, wandering way of life.

In the surroundings of perpetual terror, one must monitor threats from every direction, thus the man keeps a "constant watch behind him in the mirror" (24). A motorcycle mirror fastened to the cart helps the two pilgrims see if someone is following them. The mirror is not only useful for watching the path behind, but it also reflects insight into one's appearance and mind; it is especially useful to have an "inner mirror"–to see other people's perspectives through our perception–in the apocalyptic environment where danger is omnipresent. Foucault claims, the mirror is both a utopia and a heterotopia because of its unique characteristics reflecting the reality on a virtual surface that is not actually there. He argues, the mirror is

> a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I

> am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent. . . . But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality . . . From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there . . . [and] reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia . . . it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (4)

Relating Foucault's theory about the utopian and heterotopic features of the mirror to McCarthy's apocalyptic dystopia, we may state that the mirror represents a subliminal space between imagination and reality. The man has an image in his memories of his former self. But as soon as he glimpses his figure, an alien-looking creature (129) alongside the boy, he almost raises the pistol. The character of those faces and their appearance, especially his own, are not familiar to him and he does not recognize themselves in the glass first. The boy warns his father "It's us, Papa" (132). They look filthy and vicious, just like those bad people they try to avoid. This confused vision returns when the man cuts the boy's hair, then his own, and shaves his beard. When all the tangled hair is gone, they look skinny and weary, much more different from before the haircut and the man seems even more different from the figure of himself that he remembers.

The imminence of the father's death penetrates the narrative. The man reckons every day a lie but death (238), and considers his future unimaginable (273). Eventually, he often falls into the "sleep of death" (202) and then wakes in a grave (213), which suggests the surrounding dead environment and his resting place at the same time. The man personifies death coming to "steal [his] eyes. To seal [his] mouth with dirt" (261), indicating that his eyes are closing forever soon and the ashes bury him under the ground never to give a sound again. Yet, the proximity of death wakes strange hopes in the man as well. Looking at the boy, he sees light around him and this glorified and divine phenomenon assures him the long-suffering was worthwhile. The man can imagine himself to be the prophet of the new Messiah. His last words to the boy, "Goodness will find the little boy. It always has. It will again" (280-81) assure the child that he will not be left alone in the dark. The image of an orphan with his suitcase, waiting for the bus (275) has a sorrowful, yet optimistic interpretation: the boy is going to accompany the right people, then the child's mourning and waiting will be the beginning of a new journey with the "good guys." On the other hand, the passing of the world can be the beginning of a new era, even if the environment is devastated and the rebirth of nature seems hopeless: "Perhaps in the

world’s destruction it would be possible at last to see how it was made” (274). McCarthy leaves the possibility open for the renewal of nature and the environment, with or without the human race.

5 The Discourse of the Postapocalypse

McCarthy uses exceptionally dark, renunciative, depressive, and stunning language throughout the book not only to express his worries about the worldwide effects of local environmental pollution and destruction but to reprehend people for lacking respect toward nature and one another. The author’s shockingly naturalistic fiction intends to raise awareness of a possible environmental catastrophe and present the probably poor conditions of living. The narrative is mainly retrospective at the beginning, referring to the loss of values in nature, the environment, and humanity. Later in the novel, McCarthy focuses on future hopes that may never come. The demolition of boundaries among past-present-future perspectives and the blurring of good and evil intentions expose the uncertainties of the chaotic world of the apocalypse.

The perception of the fragmented postapocalyptic world shapes the rhetoric of the novel which disintegrates ontological and epistemological notions about human existence in the natural environment. The philosophical ruminations about life and death, survival, and humanity facilitate the re-creation of the world according to the new environmental circumstances and serve as a theoretical domain for the re-evaluation of humanity. A postapocalyptic environmental description is crucial to the perception of the consequences of current ecological problems. The collapse of the material world involves the loss of abstraction through language. The journey in allegorical spaces, like the cave, the road, or Mars, has symbolic function in meaning-making about the annihilated and disintegrated setting.

The father and son have a distinctive system of communication. They have little conversation, perhaps because they must be watchful all the time or their journey is uneventful. Both of them try to keep their fears to themselves regarding the man’s progressive illness and the perpetual presence of evil occurrences. The father usually gives advice, directs, or commands the boy, while he often asks his father questions. Upon receiving answers, the child confirms the information with a simple “okay.” The boy sometimes asks questions about the late world and the past, but it is hard for the man to explain things because “the world that for him was not even a memory” (53-54) is hard to illustrate through words. Indeed, “[t]here is no past” (54) because the categories of place and time are not relevant anymore. The reconstruction of the world that the man had known and is lost by now is a difficult endeavor. The father feels

that he "could not enkindle in the heart of the child what was ashes in his own" (154), referring to the dissipation of everything he had loved.

The man tells the boy "[o]ld stories of courage and justice as he remember[s] them" (41). Metafiction gives a specific tone to the rhetoric because of the imagination it invokes in both the boy and the father. The stories require imagination and are connected to the procession of reality, dreams, thoughts, and fears. While old stories are mainly fictional–usually teaching lessons about good people, courage and virtue, and frequently end happily, those fables are not grounded in reality any more. The boundary between cognition and dreams is blurred and the imaginary stories foreshadow inevitable happenings. Although the man and the boy are physically and emotionally close to each other, and the man knows the stories about the boy (268), he does not let his father get an insight into his dreams and thoughts. Their perceptions and concepts about the world are quite different.

The boy's character is always associated with sanity, naivety, philanthropy and curiosity. In contrast, the father's figure expresses doubt, wisdom, caution, and safety. Coming across a gas station and going to the office, the father picks up the phone and dials the number of his father's house. The boy watches him and asks: "What are you doing?" (7). The man seems still to believe that somebody would answer the phone, or it may be an old habit, when seeing a phone, to think of calling those relatives who are far away. The old telephone directory, in which the man looks up his family members, testifies that there had been a systematically structured world before chaos. The alphabetical sign system has no use in the changed social and environmental conditions because communication channels have been lost and people have been uprooted from their earlier locations.

The boy sometimes asks simple but deep ontologically relevant questions regarding death: "Are we going to die?" (10) and "What would you do if I died?" (11) The father reveals his knowledge about the inevitability of death once someone was born. He also says that if he dies, the boy must carry on having a chance for a supposedly better future because a parent must believe that there is a perspective for a child and the next generation even if the entire world has passed beyond hope and recovery. However, if the boy died, the father could not go on without the sacred mission of transferring knowledge, human values, and love to his child. There would be no meaning in life for him anymore. The father says: "If you died I would want to die too. . . . So I could be with you" (11). He believes in an imagined internal and intimate space after the death of their bodies. Some material concerns related to death, like "How long . . . people can go without food?" (101) emerge in their conversation, when they are completely out of food and have not eaten anything for days. The father responds positively but the boy

becomes suspicious that the man might lie to him about dying because they have seen many people on the road who died from starvation.

Similarly to Nietzsche's skepticism about divine providence, the man frequently addresses and reckons with God and bluntly questions His goodness and commitment to people upon letting horrible things happen to humanity. However, the man does not doubt God's existence and authority over people as Nietzsche did. As the philosopher declares that "God is dead" (138), it means that "the belief in . . . God has become unbelievable" (228). The man expresses his fury)—"Are you there? . . . Have you a neck by which to throttle you? Have you a heart? Damn you eternally have you a soul?" (12), making God accountable for the hardships they have gone through as if God was a human being a negligent father figure. Putting Nietzsche's ontological position and the ideas of McCarthy's characters of God side by side, the question arises: Could people destroy God by denial, unfaithfulness, and disbelief, or will He still be omnipresent and omnipotent after all of his believers are gone? McCarthy gives possible answers from a transcendental and rational perspective to vindicate God's verdict in the postapocalyptic world. Despite the man's reprehension of God, he states, that the world and the environment, he had created, are perfect and if he was God, he would have made them no different (219). This supports an earth-centered approach by the man instead of an anthropocentric perspective.

The climax of the novel is the moral struggle of the man who orders the boy to kill himself with the revolver if the bad guys find him. The tone of the man's speech style changes from gentle fatherly story-telling and slow-paced communication to abrupt and commanding language because he feels the urge and pressure to act against his will. They have kept a gun with them since the beginning of their journey, but there is only one bullet left in it. When the man feels in his pounding heart that "This is the moment" (112) he says in a cold, reasonable tone:

> Dont be afraid, he said. If they find you you are going to have to do it. Do you understand? Shh. No crying. Do you hear me? You know how to do it. You put it in your mouth and point it up. Do it quick and hard. Do you understand? Stop crying. Do you understand? (113)

The man is in a hurry and is very impatient. It is an absurd situation that a parent explains to and commands a child to commit suicide. Looking at the boy and seeing "terror" (113) in his desperate and helpless face, the man decides once again that he cannot give up and leave the boy alone. His contemplation is a dismayed battle between his rational inner voice and his emotions:

> Can you do it? When the time comes? When the time comes there will be no time. Now is the time. Curse God and die. What if it doesnt fire? It has to fire. What if it doesnt fire? Could you crush that beloved skull with a rock? Is there such a being within you of which you know nothing? Can there be? Hold him in your arms. Just so. The soul is quick. Pull him toward you. Kiss him. Quickly. (114)

The father's inner monologue emphasizes that the hardest choice he must make in life is certainly right there in front of him. He has no more time to think, so he comes up with some alternatives for homicide if the pistol would not work. However, he has doubts concerning the murder of his own innocent child, who is his leader and savior in those dark times. Within the same moment, he dismisses these demonic visions from his mind and lets the frail and fading moment of holding his son close and keeping him in his heart as soon as he can do it.

The child's anxiety and despair at the sight of destruction, derelict buildings and death are often unveiled non-verbally in his facial gestures and physical movements. As soon as his father is about to enter a door or a bad man appears, he puts "his fists clutched at his chest and he [is] bobbing up and down with fear" (135), and occasionally he is "doing his little dance of terror" (111). As they must be quiet not to attract people on the road, this is the boy's silent way of expressing unease and fear. Fright and panic may induce someone to become mute and the person communicates negative feelings through uncontrolled physical movements.

The description of nature is unique in McCarthy's postapocalyptic work for using various literary devices which enhance the anthropomorphic way of perception and, paradoxically, a biocentric perspective of the environment. He describes every segment of the surroundings in detail from the "dull sun moving unseen" (14), through the sound of the wind– the only sound heard in nature–, to the long, dark and cold nights "to crack the stones. To take your life" (14). The night is personified as death because it can kill and destroy. In the sky, there is an "ashen overcast" that once seemed to deplete but as winter is coming, the pale sun casts "the faintest shadows over the snow" (102) which means sunlight can hardly reach the surface of the Earth, thus a freezing winter is ahead. "The faintly lit hatchway" in the yard gives an apocalyptic conceit of a "grave yawning at judgment day in some old apocalyptic painting" (155). The vision of the opening of the mouth of bored graves to swallow the dead is a personification and an aesthetic depiction of how nature takes human beings beneath the ground to incorporate their bodies into its annihilating corpus.

McCarthy's environmental rhetoric invokes various senses: vision, hearing, smelling, and feeling. Coldness, lightning, thunder, cannonading, cracking and booming (47) accompany the big storm and hail. The man struck by lightning is "as burntlooking as the country" (49) and

melted into the tar of the road. This scene depicts the assimilation of people with nature and their mutual decay. "[T]hat sour smell" (47) of corpses, the smell of death. Some traces of smells are still present, for instance, the "lingering odor of cows" (120) in the barn, though they have been extinct for years, or the sweet smell of the water from an intact cistern (122). There are hardly any voices in the novel, but if there are some, they frequently signal something unpleasant or upcoming danger. The "hideous shrieks" (115) of people being mutilated and killed are discordant and disturbing sounds in the dead silence. McCarthy frequently uses synesthesia to express the characters' perception of the environment connected to various senses. He describes silence as breathless (98), which is in parallel with the space of dead silence where not even a breath is heard, referring to the father's worsening physical condition by breathing in the ashen air. There are only a few moments when pleasant sounds are heard, like when the boy plays music on the flute the man carved for him. The boy is lost in concentration to produce "formless music for the age to come. Or perhaps the last music on earth called up from out of the ashes of its ruin" (77). The tuneless music is the sound of the new era that comes on Earth, or if they cannot find a place in the south where the conditions for survival are sufficient, then this is the last tune the Earth hears. Playing music is not only a way of creative production that fills the space, but it helps the boy to overcome his traumas.

The description of the coast and the sea takes away the boy's hopes and expectations; the vision of the gray beach is far from the imagined blue ocean and as the wind blows away the ash, the tide washes away the tracks in the sand. Although a salty wind blows in the air, it has no sea smell. The "alien sea" (215) is vast and cold and gray with ash, and it twirls only fish bones and trash on the beach that is also cold, desolate, and birdless (215)—opposed to the boy's anticipation. Some half-sunken and broken boats and ships are slowly decaying while floating around the world without a destination on their "aimless voyaging" (229) on the water. The papers and manuals in Spanish suggest the closeness to the Mexican bay or the Caribbean Sea, and the ancient ship lasting for over three hundred years recalls the arrival of Columbus and the first settlers in American land. Some luxury products (coffee, tea, olive oil) onboard also indicate the times of trading with European, Mediterranean, and Eastern countries as they were swerving from the traditional silk road routes.

The language system that represented and signified various cultural norms and codes before the destruction of the world is slowly fading into oblivion.

> Colors. The names of birds. Things to eat. Finally the names of things one believed to be true. More fragile than he would have thought. How much was gone already? The

> sacred idiom shorn of its referents and so of its reality. Drawing down like something trying to preserve heat. In time to wink out forever. (88-89)

Not only do objects, plants, and animals disappear together with their names, but abstract things like colors, or the beauty of language expressing emotions, assumptions, and intentions. If language shrinks, the expression of thought and knowledge will disappear into either primitive expressions or nothingness. The vanishing of idioms, for example, the man saying to his son that "I'll be in the neighbourhood" (95) meaning he will not be far, is apparent. The boy has no sense of the neighborhood because he has never settled in a community in his life, nor does he know the figurative sense of notions. Another idiom, "As the crow flies" (156) is used by the father but it does not mean much to the boy. The child only knows from books that the crow was a bird, but he is unable to imagine the world because most of the things he encounters are practical and easy expressions. However, he is curious about birds that can fly in the sky in a straight line to reach their destination. Free from the restrictions of geographical locations and without the curves of the road, birds can fly up high to see the sun (158) but people are bound to the ground. The boy has little insight into the mechanics of the late world, but his thoughts about reaching the sky are reminiscent of Icarus and the ancient myths about flying. Perhaps the curious nature of human beings stems from their envy of the unique abilities of other species.

The abstract discussion about Mars makes the boy curious whether the imaginary other space offers a frontier in terms of the environment and social connections. The man, however, explains that there is no air there, the planet is too cold, and it is too far from the Earth, not even birds can reach it. There have been several attempts since the nineteenth century to find a planet where environmental conditions are likely to the environment of the Earth, in case it would be destroyed. Up until now, Mars missions and the impossible aims for its colonization have proven that life is impossible outside of the Green Planet. As probably all electronic and digital devices and vehicles had been destroyed, it is questionable whether space travel would be attainable in the future world of the novel. And if it could be feasible in some way, the query arises: to whom would space travel be available, and would it lead the rest of humanity to success in another space? The answer is—according to the stance of current space research—that the Earth is a special planet for humankind to live on and we must reverse and possibly stop the damage done to it. It is a fact that NASA, collaboratively with MIT, had found some Earth-like planets in recent years but researching new spaces could last for decades—not to mention the period of the inhabitation experiments—and until then the Earth's population would devastate the planet, leaving no place to departure from. Mankind has proved that human

nature brings careless utilization and colonization of any prosperous places for the possession of money and power, and no corner of the universe would be an exception from this practice.

The Road has a framed structure with the boy leading the man in a candle-lit, but dark cave in his dream. This allegory summarizes the hardships of their journey, as they were walking together in an unknown, dark, and cold place with no aim. However, the boy, who is symbolically carrying the fire of hope and love, takes the father to a place from where there is no return (280). The sequential paragraphs in the book are non-coherent and of various lengths. This uneven and unstructured text construction can be connected to the happenings on the road, to the man's memories, to the narrator's stream of thoughts, the protracted and lingering journey, or to the partition of the road itself. The man's thoughts and deeds always connect to his memories from his childhood, family and wife. Present problems are usually rational and practical because he has to adapt to the new circumstances to sustain his son's life. But his vision for the future is without prospects.

The road is a symbol of the connection between city and country and, metaphorically, it facilitates the transfer between human culture and the natural environment, between civilization and wilderness. McCarthy deprives the symbol of the road of its social and cultural aspects and changes the interconnecting function of the road into a dividing line for communities and a place where no one travels. Thus, the always dangerous and unpredictable road becomes an abandoned place where "[n]o roadagents, no marauders" (16) bring peril, but bad people. Some evil companies, like the one with a diesel truck, keep going on the blacktop, demonstrating power and danger. They camp on the road because that is the place where they can go with the truck to hunt people. As they go forward from one place to another, the tar is still warm at one spot with "ashes and bones . . . looked to have been boiled" (70), "the skin piled together with rocks over them. A pool of guts" (71). The blurred metonymies probably refer to the cannibalistic customs of many people as the consequence of starvation resulting from the severe conditions of the apocalypse. Although the tradition of the journey into the wilderness in American culture is significant, being on the road is a dangerous enterprise that can be easily fatal in a postapocalyptic world.

6 Conclusion

The detailed description of the barren environment in Cormac McCarthy's postapocalyptic narrative emphasizes the vision of material annihilation in the physical place that entails the vanishing of signs, symbols, practices, and boundaries in the conceptual space as the aftermath

of a possible future cataclysm. The reversal of the American frontier myth emerges through the recess of the biosphere—both human and natural habitats—, the dissolving of human communities and ideologies, the decline of human values and morals, the disintegration of individual cognition and experience, and the fragmentation of reality, language, and meanings.

Conclusion

Ecocritical theory regards environmental embeddedness as a key issue within the genre of the western. As an interdisciplinary field of study, it refers to more than the aesthetic evaluation of nature in fictional works. It examines the representation of real places in the environment—natural and man-made—through abstract spaces in literature, culture, society, philosophy, religion, legislation, history, economics, politics, ideologies, practices, and rituals. Literary ecology, a method for the study of literary works from an ecological and environmental perspective, argues for the understanding of biotic relationships, ontological challenges, and meaning-making through the recognition of place as human beings see and understand it. Karen E. Waldron claims that literary texts always reflect the relationship and interaction among places, humans, and environments, including "nature and culture, the biotic and the body, the entire matter of the world, in some form that can be read through representations of place" (Waldron ix).

This dissertation examined the significance and the narrative-creating potential of the southwestern American landscape in the shaping of human and environmental relations, identities, cultures, and societies in Cormac McCarthy's four novels: *Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West, All the Pretty Horses, No Country for Old Men,* and *The Road*. I set out to prove that the perspective of McCarthy's fiction is not anthropocentric but biocentric. Such a viewpoint emphasizes the equal status of all entities in the context of place—the environment, which includes human, non-human, organic, inorganic, dynamic, and static elements. The four narratives follow a declining trajectory of American history from the mistreated mid-nineteenth-century abundance and advance to the deprivation and recession the twenty-first century may bring. William Cronon's concept of the "middle ground" is, however, not only the axis between eastern American (Euro-American) civilization and western American wilderness, or the intersection of the US and Mexico. Rather, it is a region that embraces the dimensions of historical, cultural, and social spaces, which unfold through story-telling about the interconnections and relationships among various environmental agents of the American Southwest.

McCarthy rewrites the western myth which considered the nineteenth-century West as a place of progress, economic growth, expansion, and opportunities. He throws doubt upon the Turner thesis that regarded the "Great West" as the cradle of American nationhood. McCarthy's fiction demystifies the western hero, dismantles, depoliticizes, decentralizes the myths about

the frontier, and reinterprets prevalent perceptions of the frontier landscape through literary tropes of the wilderness, the pastoral, the posthuman, and the postapocalyptic. The metaphors, images, symbols, and rhetorical elements of the western are applied in the narrative to redefine the genre by dismantling its established characteristics. The key elements of the classical western are reassembled to recreate the postwestern, which involves an ecological perspective investigating current issues in the relationship between the natural environment and human beings.

The southwestern environment bears an identity-shaping potential that drives the characters to follow the legacy of nineteenth-century western myths. It is not just the social position, the economic status, and the intercultural milieu that shape the characters, but ecological conditions are crucial in the formation of their identities. The relation- and narrative-forming qualities of the southwestern American landscape actively contribute to the framing of McCarthy's heroes. Lydia R. Cooper emphasizes the significance of the western hero's relationship with the natural world in developing his character. The characters' features are as liminal as the southwestern landscape. The aesthetic qualities of the landscape, which were praised in the previous century, do not fall into the neat categories of the sublime, the beautiful or the unsightly or the ugly. So do the moral qualities of the characters resist the duality of good and evil. Cooper believes that the central conflict among characters in western narratives derives from the contrast between "the lone gunman versus the collective, which is represented by 'lawmen,' 'ranchers,' 'bandits,' or 'Indians'—the underlying similarity being the presentation of the lone hero or antihero versus the group" (156). McCarthy features figures representing both individual and collective traits and creates archetypal characters, which bear universal human types: the kid, the father, the child, and the imbecile. McCarthy's non-heroic characters express noble ideas, as well as cowardliness because of an earlier traumatic experience, like John Grady Cole, his father, Wayne Cole, Sheriff Ed Tom Bell, Llewelyn Moss, and "the man" in *The Road*. Some deeply flawed characters are adherents to omnipotence, deterministic philosophy, and impersonate posthuman, such as Judge Holden, Captain White, John Joel Glanton, the captain, Anton Chigurh, or the "bad guys" of the postapocalypse.

Nineteenth-century ideologies and American conceptualizations of the landscape shape social and cultural interaction and exchange, ethnic relations, and historical perspectives in McCarthy's novels analyzed in the dissertation. Although Michael Allen praises New Western History writing for the uncovering of "the forgotten history of common American folk" (201), he criticizes it for eliminating and, in fact, completely going against former Turnerian notions.

McCarthy strikes a balance between the ideas of the Old West and the New West. He represents the southwestern history, culture, and society by focusing on their connections to the landscape. The revision of former concepts about the frontier enables social, cultural, and historical representations from an ecological perspective. Ecocriticism's notions of the postwest and the postfrontier signify not only the American southwestern landscape but all the places and spaces, such as the old west, the southwest, North Mexico, planet Mars, the emptied space of the apocalyptic world which have been meaningful in defining the American characteristics of power, glory, and greatness. The ideology of Manifest Destiny and the connected philosophy of American exceptionalism promoted Euro-American supremacy, hegemony, and the racist ideology over other nations and ethnicities. It served the imperial aims to conquer the continent by weapons—in a long series of wars against other ethnicities—, the power of legislation (Land Ordinances, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and several other Acts of Congress regulating access to land and resources) and technology, including the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. As it is revealed from McCarthy's fiction, the natural environment is not meant for the romanticized elevation of hard work and agricultural production on fertile land, or the taming of the wilderness. The southwestern area, which is a terrain of wilderness, was the playground of fortune-seekers, warriors, bandits, and marauders in the nineteenth century, and has been serving as the arena of the oil business, as well as gun- and drug-trafficking in the aftermath of the Cold War period.

Cormac McCarthy rewrites the grand narratives about the American West by paying attention to the interaction of human beings in and with the environment—human and non-human, organic and material—, setting his fictional works into the blended historical, cultural, and social context of the US-Mexico borderland. He applies various figures of speech and literary devices—conceptual metaphors and metonymies—in the novels to support the abstract phenomena of human imagination and perception of the southwestern environment. The Judeo-Christian conceptual framework emerges in all the four novels and creates the moral basis for implicit value judgment, and the critique of the posthuman condition. McCarthy's western symbolism creates archaic, blended, and ambiguous meanings, while allegories unravel historical and psychological queries connected to the landscape.

The intersection of different nations (Native American, Spanish-Mexican and Anglo-American), peoples (indigenous people, immigrants, and migrants), cultures (European and aboriginal), religion (pagan rituals and Christian tradition), laws (state-regulated and self-appointed justice), philosophies (ontological and epistemological queries about knowledge, human nature, determinism, and fate), as well as moralities, is the middle ground between

civilization and barbarism. Greg Garrard's use of ecological literary tropes (wilderness, American pastoral, postapocalypse) and Rosi Braidotti's philosophical and cultural notions of the posthuman stress the importance of place in creating various worldviews and conceptual frames in one particular landscape. According to posthumanist philosophy, existence and meaning derive from material relations. The concept of wilderness applies a gendered perspective on the environment and facilitates the investigation of the different notions of wildness. The American pastoral is a distinctive form of pastoral that provides a frame for exploring the meanings of nature, wilderness, and nation (Gifford 160) and advertises the rewriting of the western and the frontier myths from an ecocritical perspective. The trope of the postapocalypse explores the distinction of the categories and dimensions of place and space in terms of environmental perception, human cognition, and imagination.

The discourse of the borderland reveals the power relations among the inhabitants of the territory expressed through language use, dialogues, as well as the perception of and reactions to the environment. The blended language articulates the "middle ground," or the intersection of cultures and people on the borderland. Code-switching between the English and Spanish languages indicates the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region. Owing to the gendered ideas connected to the environment, the verbal expressions of hegemony and masculinity through white male-centered language, and the western patriarchal social order are dominant, while ethnicities, women, animals, and the weak are subjugated and disempowered and referred to as the "other." The narrative is laced with persuasive rhetoric and a vernacular speech style at the same time. Philosophical ruminations about the dynamism of the universe and human nature are lengthy and revolve around the ontological queries of life and death, the concepts of fate, chance, and luck, or the parallels of war and game.

A reading of Cormac McCarthy's four novels from an ecological and biocentric perspective is relevant due to literary and historical paradigm shifts in the 1970s and 1980s and new environment-centered angles nowadays. Such changes emphasize the perception of, as well as the association and interaction between, the natural and material environments, human and non-human agents on the same scale, rather than upholding a hierarchical anthropocentric one. McCarthy's southwestern vision, his writing style and his application of the western genre are appropriate for the reinterpretation of the landscape and the relationships among people in a geographically distinct region and the rewriting of fictional and non-fictional grand narratives about the natural environment. His literary output of over two decades, between 1985 and 2006 takes issue with nineteenth-century American ideologies about the wilderness. The four novels discussed in this dissertation re-interpret the southwestern landscape within the context of the

industrialized and technologically developed arena of the post-World War II period and the Cold War era when social, cultural, political, and economic relations to the place are re-established. McCarthy highlights the ambiguous imperial aims of the hegemonic Anglo-American and Spanish-Mexican conquerors toward the land, balancing them with the self-defensive but violent responses and practices of indigenous peoples, attributing a stronger sense of morality and ethics to the latter. The novelty and significance of McCarthy's writings are the equal focus on all environmental entities that exist in the actual place of the American Southwest. His sweeping vision connects nations, ethnicities, cultures, and ideas, with the geography and the animate and inanimate nature of the region. Within this tangled web of interdependence, humans have only limited agency which manifests itself more often than not as extreme violence. Even so, Cormac McCarthy's genuine portrayal of the complexity of life in all its forms on the southwestern borderland reflects a deep understanding of the intricacies of being, one which transcends the narrow scope of "the human."

Works Cited

Allen, Michael. "The 'New' Western History Stillborn." *The Historian*, vol. 57, no. 1, 1994, pp. 201–08. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24449243. Accessed 26 Aug. 2019.

Baym, Nina. "Old West, New West, Postwest, Real West." *American Literary History*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2006, pp. 814–28. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/4123623. Accessed 05 May 2019.

——. *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927*. University of Illinois P, 2011.

Bloom, Harold. "Harold Bloom on Cormac McCarthy, True Heir to Melville and Faulkner." *Literary Hub*, 15 Oct. 2019, https://lithub.com/harold-bloom-on-cormac-mccarthy-true-heir-to-melville-and-faulkner/. Accessed 16 Nov. 2022.

Bollobás, Enikő. *Az amerikai irodalom rövid története*. Osiris Kiadó, 2015.

Braidotti, Rosi. "Posthuman Critical Theory." *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures*, edited by Debashish Banerji and Makarand R. Paranjape, Springer India, 2016. pp. 13-32.

——. *The Posthuman*. Polity P, 2013.

Braidotti, Rosi, and Maria Hlavajova, editors. *Posthuman Glossary*. Bloomsbury, 2018.

Buell, Lawrence. "American Pastoral Ideology Reappraised." *American Literary History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1989, pp. 1–29. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/489969. Accessed 18 Oct. 2022.

——. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture*. Harvard UP, 1995.

——. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Blackwell, 2005.

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. Routledge, 2004.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Penguin, 1962.

Castoriadis, Cornelius and Kathleen Blamey. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. MIT P, 1998.

Chamberlain, Samuel E. *My Confession: Recollections of a Rogue*. Edited by William H. Goetzmann. Texas State Historical Association, 1996. *Google Books*. Accessed 20 Apr. 2014.

Comyn, Joshua. "'What's He a Judge of?': The Effacement of Agency and an Ethics of Reading in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*." *The Cormac McCarthy Journal*,

vol. 13, no. 1, 2015, pp. 54–71, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/cormmccaj.13.1.0054#metadata_info_tab_contenco. Accessed 4 June 2021.

Cooper, Lydia R. *Masculinities in Literature of the American West.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

——. *The Routledge Companion to Masculinity in American Literature and Culture*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

Cronon, William. "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative." *The Journal of American History*, vol. 78, no. 4, 1992, pp. 1347–76. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/2079346. Accessed 5 Nov. 2022.

——. "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner." *The Western Historical Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1987, pp. 157–76. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/969581. Accessed 5 Nov. 2022.

——. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1996, pp. 7–28. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3985059. Accessed 10 Feb. 2019.

DeLillo, Don. *White Noise*. Viking P, 1985.

Eliot, Thomas. S. "The Waste Land." Boni & Liverite 1922.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove P, 1952.

Ferrando, Francesca. "Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms—Differences and Relations." *Existenz*, vol. 8, no. 2, Fall 2013, pp. 26-32. https://www.existenz.us/. Accessed 13 Mar. 2019.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. 1925. Wordsworth Classics, 2001.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." 1967. Translated by Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1984, pp. 22–27. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/464648. Accessed 16 Jan. 2019.

Frye, Steven, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American West*. Cambridge UP, 2016.

——. *Understanding Cormac McCarthy*. U of South Carolina P, 2009.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. Routledge, 2004.

——. *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*. Oxford UP, 2014.

Gifford, Terry. "Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral and Post-Pastoral." *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment*, edited by Louise Hutchings Westling, Cambridge UP, 2014, pp. 1–16.

——. “The Environmental Humanities and the Pastoral Tradition.” *Ecocriticism, Ecology, and the Cultures of Antiquity*, edited by Christopher Schliephake, et. al, Lexington Books, 2016. pp. 159–173.

——. *Pastoral*. Routledge, 1999.

Glotfelty, Cheryll and Harold Fromm. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. The U of Georgia P, 1996.

Guillemin, Georg. *The Pastoral Vision of Cormac McCarthy*. Texas A&M UP, 2004, *Google Books*. Accessed 28 May 2014.

Hage, Erik. *Cormac McCarthy a Literary Companion*. McFarland, 2010.

Holloway, David. *The Late Modernism of Cormac McCarthy*. Greenwood P, 2002.

Hambazaza, Terje Saar. “Reinventing the American West: Cormac McCarthy’s *All the Pretty Horses*.” *Academia.edu*, 2007. Accessed 14 Apr. 2015.

Hegyi, Pál. *Az amerikai fenségesről: A puritanizmustól a metamodernig*. ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2021.

Hermansson, Joakim. “Okay: *The Road* and The Good Guys’ Adulthood Code.” *The Cormac McCarthy Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2021, pp. 46–66, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/cormmccaj.19.1.0046?refreqid=excelsior%3A4dd42a38925498d27f55b64d24efc1ca. Accessed 04 June 2021.

Kirby, Vicki, editor. *What If Culture Was Nature All Along?* Edinburgh UP, 2017. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g050d1. Accessed 01 Oct. 2022.

Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, Jens. “‘A Monster for the Ages’: Anton Chigurh and the Image of Evil.” *16:9 filmtidsskrift*. 4 Oct. 2017, http://www.16-9.dk/2017/10/a-monster-for-the-ages/. Accessed 08 Sept. 2020.

Knight, Kelvin T. “Placeless Places: Resolving the Paradox of Foucault's Heterotopia.” *Textual Practice*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2016, pp. 141–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236x.2016.1156151. Accessed 01 Oct. 2022.

Kollin, Susan. “Genre and the Geographies of Violence: Cormac McCarthy and the Contemporary Western.” *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2001, pp. 557–88. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1208996. Accessed 14 Apr. 2015.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*. Footprint Books, 2011.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford UP, 2005.

Lewis, Michael. *American Wilderness.* Oxford UP, 2007.

Licón, Gerardo. "Pachucos: Not Just Mexican-American Males or Juvenile Delinquents." *KCET.* 8 Feb. 2017, https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/the-history-of-pachuco-culture. Accessed 03 Oct. 2019.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson: *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West.* W.W. Norton, 1987.

MacCurdy, Carol. "*The Road*: Cormac McCarthy's Unmaking of the American Journey." *CrossSections. Vol. 2: Selected Papers in Literature and Culture from the 9th HUSSE Conference*, Edited by Andrew C. Rouse, Gertrud Szamosi, and Gabriella Vöő. Institute of English Studies, Pécs UP, 2010. pp. 347–51.

Maddox, Lucy. *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1999.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. Oxford UP, 1964.

Matthiessen, F, O. *The American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Art of Emerson and Whitman*. New York: Oxford UP, 1941.

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Border Trilogy: All the Pretty Horses*. 1993. Picador, 2002.

–––. *Blood Meridian Or the Evening Redness in the West*. Random House, 1985.

–––. *No Country for Old Men*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

–––. *The Road*. Vintage, 2006.

Milner, Clyde A. *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West*. Oxford UP, 1996.

Mitchell, Lee Clark. *Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film*. U of Chicago P, 1996.

Mitchell, William J. T. *Landscape and Power*. 2nd ed., U of Chicago P, 2002.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. W. *The Gay Science*. 1882. Edited by Bernard Williams and translated by Josefine Nauckhoff, poems translated by Adrian del Caro, Cambridge UP, 2001.

Oppermann, Serpil and Serenella Iovino. *Material Ecocriticism*. Indiana UP, 2014.

–––. "Material Ecocriticism: Materiality, Agency, and Models of Narrativity." *Ecozona,* vol. 3, no. 1, 2012, pp. 75–91.

Outka, Paul. "Posthuman/Postnatural—Ecocriticism and the Sublime in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Teresa Shewry and Ken Hiltner, Routledge, 2011, pp. 31–48.

Pease, Donald. "Re-Thinking 'American Studies after US Exceptionalism'". *American Literary History*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2009, pp. 19–27. *JSTOR,* https://www.jstor.org/stable/20492284. Accessed 27 Sept. 2022.

Raulff, Ulrich. “The Horse: Beloved Metaphor of Your Favorite 19th-Century Novelists.” *Literary Hub.* 12 Feb. 2018, https://lithub.com/the-horse-beloved-metaphor-of-your-favorite-19th-century-novelists/. Accessed 24 Sept. 2019.

Sári, B. László. *Mi Jön a Posztmodernre?: Változatok a Posztmodern Utáni Amerikai Fikciós Prózára*. Balassi Kiadó, 2021.

Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. U of Oklahoma P, 2006.

––. *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*. U of Oklahoma P, 1998.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth.* Harvard UP, 1978.

Smyth, Gerry. *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*. Palgrave, 2001.

Snyder, Phillip A. and Delys W. Snyder. “Modernism, Postmodernism, and Language: McCarthy’s Style.” *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*, edited by Steven Frye, Cambridge UP, 2013, pp. 27–38.

Stevens, Brent. “A Translation of the Spanish Passages in *All the Pretty Horses*,” http://cormacmccarthy.cookingwithmarty.com/wp-content/uploads/ATPHTrans.pdf. Accessed 20 July 2020.

Tally, Robert T. *Teaching Space, Place, and Literature*. Routledge, 2018.

Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries (Public Planet Books)*. Duke UP, 2004.

The Bible. Douay-Rheims American ed., 1899. Bible Gateway, www.biblegateway.com. Accessed 13 Jan. 2017.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. Ticknor and Fields, 1854.

Tompkins, Jane P. *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. Oxford UP, 1992.

Turner, Frederick Jackson: *The Frontier in American History*. 1920. *The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Frontier in American History, by Frederick Jackson Turner*, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm#Page_1. Accessed 7 Dec. 2022.

Virágos, Zsolt. *The Modernists and Others—The American Literary Culture in the Age of the Modernist Revolution*. Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Debrecen, 2008.

Vöő, Gabriella. “A sötétség elve: A rend mint káosz Cormac McCarthy *Nem vénnek való vidék* című regényében.” *Studia Litteraria*, vol. 40, nos. 3-4, 2016, pp. 105–20.

Waldron, Karen E. and Rob Friedman. *Toward a Literary Ecology: Places and Spaces in American Literature*. Scarecrow P, 2013.

Walsh, Margaret. "The frontier and the west: realities, myths and the historians." *The American West. Visions and Revisions*, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp.1–18.

"Wax Camps—From Desert Plants to Dollars: Candelilla, Wax Making, and Wax Products." *Texas Beyond History,* https://texasbeyondhistory.net/waxcamps/techniques.html. Accessed 21 Sept. 2019.

Woodward, Richard B. "Cormac McCarthy's Venomous Fiction." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 19 Apr. 1992, https://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/19/magazine/cormac-mccarthy-s-venomous-fiction.html. Accessed 28 September 2022.

Woolcott, Ina. "Jaguar Power Animal Symbol Of Solitary Path Reclaiming Power Shape Shifting Psychic Vision." *Shamanic Journey*. 8 Feb. 2015, http://www.shamanicjourney.com/jaguar-power-animal-symbol-of-solitary-path-reclaiming-power-shape-shifting-psychic-vision. Accessed 03 Oct. 2019.

Yeats, William Butler. "Sailing to Byzantium." 1928. *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats.* Wordsworth Poetic Library, 1994, pp. 163–64.