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A Psychoanalytic Reading of Cormac Mc Carthy's *The Road* (2006).

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Dedications

I dedicate this humble work to my parents, brothers, sisters and all my
friends.

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Abstract

This humble work studies Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* from a Freudian psychoanalytic approach. It exposes the shift of balance in the human psychic triangle as the superego and the ego weaken and the id thrives. Following Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, the present work has disclosed the prevailing issues that the novel tries to reveal, and how the content can be used as an instrument to reinforce, promote and contest perseverance in a world full of darkness. In fact, the novel has in its body absurdities that no man can bear. The Existence of evil in the novel hinder humanity to find its way into peace and new life. This work demonstrates that the world is become a sad play and it needs to be changed by humans' intelligence.

I. General Introduction

"It came to him, short-lived actions; it went out from him,
immortal Thoughts" (Emerson, Selected Essays,12)

The subject of the present research is "A Psychoanalytic reading of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006). One point of focus in this analysis is to show how *The Road* represents a shift of balance in the human psychic triangle. It reports the war taking place at the level of the human psyche and the triumph of the id in the light of the conditions surrounding man in the novel. It looks into McCarthy's work as an embodiment of Freud's ideas on the unconscious. It reflects on the consequences of returning into the id as it breaks free from the control of the ego and the superego. Indeed, Freudian psychoanalysis, as clearly will be shown in *The Road*, will be read through the analysis and the location of the three parts elemental to the human psyche including the id, the ego and the superego . Meanwhile the thesis will shed light on the moral atmosphere that will prevail in post-apocalyptic societies as the time- setting of the novel indicates, 2006.

Since World War Second, American literature has repeatedly questioned the existence of social and religious meaning in society capable of destroying itself. This is mainly due to the emergence of new values associated with new culture, and new principles. Indeed, ferment transformation in the cultural atmosphere of the late twentieth century is associated with high technological development, high mechanization and digitation. Under these influences, the postmodern culture becomes what Frederick Jameson calls "the culture of surfaces," a culture swallowed up by commodities, technologies, consumerism, and simulations of the real. Indeed, the postmodern society transforms into a gruesome milieu swallowing up its subjects in favor of consumption by providing them with different forms of entertainment commodities and technological novelties. The result is the slide of the world into the abyss of lawlessness.

Many writers of the era including Marilyn Robinson, Don DeLillo, John Updike, Paul Auster and many others stage religion, lawlessness, amorality and violence as the major themes of contemporary societies which—may be in the long term—will bring them down to their feet . They dramatize the meaningfulness of social assumptions, frail religious beliefs in contemporary societies. Yet, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, is an epitome of this experience.

Cormac McCarthy is the most frequently celebrated contemporary American writer, standing side by side with John Updike, Philip Roth, Don DeLillo and Toni Morrison (Duvall 1). He has written two plays; *The Stonemason* (1994) and *The Sunset Limited* (2006) and several novels including *Outer Dark* (1968), *Blood Meridian* (1985), *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), *Cities of the Plain* (1998), *No Country for Old Men* (2005), and his last one *The Road* (2006). Harold Bloom, as George Brosi suggests, called Cormac McCarthy as "one of four major American novelists of his time, along with Philip Roth, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo," and pronounced *Blood Meridian* (1985) to be "the greatest single book since William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*" (14).

Cormac McCarthy wrote most of his novels in 1960 and 1970, an era of remarkable social and political turmoil in America. Nevertheless, McCarthy, as shown in most of his novels, was disengaged with American society and contemporary issues. Indeed, works such as *Blood Meridian*, *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Cities of the Plain*, *The Child of God* and others, do not reflect the era's social concerns with the state of race, class and gender. Instead they are concerned with more universal themes such as "violence, good and evil; self reliance, the

nature of God; the desire for pastoral existence ; survival, destiny versus human will," George Brosi says (82).

Interestingly, human survival is a fundamental issue with which all his works are concerned. Leafing through his Southern novels up through his postmodern works as *The Road*, they all "explore both the process through which lone male protagonists survive the universal forces which affect that survival" (Brosi 79). McCarthy protagonists "engage in life or death struggle while confronting elemental issues that have challenged human beings since the beginning of recorded history – issues such as human nature and the nature of knowledge ; the persistence of good and evil, the existence of God and Gods' nature ; the role of destiny in determining a man's state of being ; and the supreme role of violence in realizing that destiny"(81).

McCarthy's literary career started with the publication of his first novel, *The Orchard Keeper*. It received the Faulkner Prize. The novel is stamped with "the Southern gothic literary tradition for its use of irony and the grotesque to explore cultural issues" (Greenwood 6). Between 1974 and 1975, McCarthy worked on *The Gardener's Son*, which was turned into a film. It was set in South Carolina and inspired by historical events. *Suttree*, McCarthy's third novel, explicitly set in

East Tennessee, was published in 1979. Throughout the seventies, McCarthy worked on what became his first novel set in the West, *Blood Meridian*. This novel was chiefly set in the 1840s and partly based on the memoirs of Sir Samuel Chamberlain. *All the Pretty Horses*, published in 1992, became his first commercially successful book as it won the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. It was succeeded by *The Crossing* in 1994, another commercial success, which revolves around a hunter's quest to trap a wolf in the mountains of Northern Mexico. *Cities of the Plain*, published in 1998, unites the protagonists of the first two novels, *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Crossing*, in a trilogy.

The Road, McCarthy's last novel, was published in 2006. In it, McCarthy journeys in the post apocalyptic landscape of a nameless world haunted by fear, darkness, savagery and ultimately death. McCarthy shows the regression of human beings into primeval modes of violence and savagery as food lacks. After an unrevealed disaster, the landscape turns into a desolate desert full of ash and darkness; all the plants and animals are extinct, and nature becomes an inhabitable place. People are not better than the plants and the animals in this novel, for they are on their way to the ultimate annihilation as the

novel shows. The main plot of the novel follows the journey of an unnamed man and his son in the road of this post-apocalyptic world. The man and the boy head south in order to find food and warmth, but before they reach the Southern coast, they have to experience lots of troubles and miseries that mark the post-apocalyptic world.

1. Literary Theory: Freud and Psychoanalysis

The psychoanalytic theory aims to structure the human mind with the unknown residing within. Nonetheless, Sigmund Freud is considered the forefather of modern psychology. His psychoanalytic theory dialogues about the development of personality. Freud's theory divides human personality into three separate elements, known as Id, Ego and Superego. Freud's initiative was a great move toward human unknown side. Thus, he brought a new cure to pour on any personality touched by disturbances. As a result, Freud came to define the structure of personality that is driven by internal and basic drives and needs. Moreover, Freud determined that the ID and the Superego are always in conflict and the only judge to stabilize that issue is the Ego. A new mean of psychology had been born; and Freud based his theory on the unconscious that exposes the true feelings, emotions, and thoughts of the individual. Psychoanalytic approach or theory consists

of revealing the inner to reinforce the personality and keep it in equilibrium. The Psychoanalytic has as aim the calmness of any personality by solving what hampers its good conduct and the expansion of the realm of personality development. In literature, specifically, it decodes the ambiguities within any text to facilitate its meaning and give more understanding about the author's objectives.

2. Review of the Related Literature

This novel, *The Road*, was an object of wide criticism and received a panel of essays that can be interpreted from different angles and viewpoints. Christopher J. Walsh, in his book entitled, *In The Wake of The Sun*, analyzes Cormac McCarthy's language throughout the novel. He names McCarthy as a reclusive "writer's writer" (253) because his literary work gives him a standing in literature's throne. Still, Walsh's focus in *The Road* was on McCarthy's splendid disclosure of human nature and society by exposing the discrepancy and the conflict within the individual as well as the cultural crisis. The whole scenes, in his understanding, in the novel "accurately represent the world" (257). Indeed, many themes pronounced in *The Road* have a significance that is directly tied to our lives. Still, *The Road* shows perils and death as a rite rehearsed by the characters and "how that

particular rite expresses deep-seated psychological and cultural anxieties within his protagonists" (Walsh 260). Indeed, McCarthy's work reveals individuals (us) struggling to defy the natural flow of life through their cupidity and recklessness—a fact that results only in destruction and shows "the fragility of our attempts to control or order the world, and it frequently problematizes the supposed progress of our culture" (261).

Walsh's book is of great importance as a prelude into the world of unconsciousness and the internal conflict within the individual and how it leads to destruction and damage. Nevertheless, my thesis differs from this book in that it is concerned with reading the novel, *The Road*, in the light of Freudian ideas on the unconscious.

In an essay entitled "Durability and Transience in *The Road*," the critic (where is his name?) reveals that McCarthy's *The Road* can stand as a tutor to humans' spirits as it advises to opt for other alternatives or choices rather than encroaching on or transgressing nature's rules. Still, the article goes beyond the natural standing through the analysis of the major characters and how they endured the hardships of an apocalyptic world. Thus, the father and the son stand as heroes by struggling to live, and "this struggle for survival seems to

suggest not a hell but an absurd and meaningless quest" (3). In fact, the central focus of the essay is "to answer a question about the meaning of life" and to find out "what makes life worth living?" (1). At this level, in the author's understanding, uncountable issues are to oppose their presence to reflect the meaninglessness of the novel and to say, simply, that *The Road* "is only a deception brought about by the tragedy of the two people and their world and the apparent futility of their struggle" (4). Though the article tackles important issues related to the question of existentialism and the meaninglessness and the futility of life mainly in the light of what happened in the novel, my thesis differs in that it is concerned with reading or interpreting the psychic imbalance within the individual characters in the novel.

In another article entitled "*Cormac McCarthy: American Canticles*," Kenneth Lincoln's reads *The Road* from an eco-critical perspective. In his views, ecological and naturalist views are laid to highlight the gloomy side of our world and how we hasten the decadence of our lives. We can see this in the beginning of the novel, "when he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night... nights dark beyond darkness and the days more each one than what he gone before. Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the

world"(1). Indeed, throughout *The Road*, the characters label the world they live in and the transition into new one filled with chaos. Thus "the world stops being itself" (167), Lincoln suggests.

Still, John Cant, in an article entitled "*The Road*," scrutinizes into the literary style of Cormac McCarthy. He believes that the novel has, as a central objective, numerous questions, and specifically philosophical ones, to ornament "the grand narrative" (183). The grand narrative for Cormac McCarthy, in Cant's understanding, is the western culture that centers on the "American Exceptionalism" (183). That is to say, all that is related to the cultural context and mixed with the historical circumstances. The style used by the author reflects gloom; what we read has, in a way or another, sorrow. "The city was mostly burned. No sign of life" (6). This passage in the first pages of the novel opens a difficult way to the characters to find life. To do so, we need ardent-hearted characters for which "the significance of life is asserted existentially and in a defiance of mere reason alone" (187). However, Cormac McCarthy suggests another start on which humanity should step on to live in harmony.

Richard Deco, in his article entitled "The depiction of Violence in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*" asserts that violence and all its

branches are "entirely of human construction" (1) and the consequence of the action is "the result of the human existence" (1). Everything we know about the old world is gone; and every step taken by predecessors is gone into ashes. The use of violence "was necessary for establishing the setting" (4). Yet, what faced the father and his son is a sign of carrying the fire, the fire of existence. Violence is a theme that pulls humanity, in the novel, to "restore its powerfulness and importance|" (7).

In an article entitled "The Route and Roots of the Road," Wesley G. Morgan takes in hand geography as his major theme of study in *The Road* in an attempt to map out the route followed by the father and son in the novel. He claims that geography and physical settings are a remarkable topos in most of McCarthy's novels and *The Road* is no exception to this rule. He says "Cormac McCarthy is known and admired for his careful research and close attention to the details of physical settings in his novels." And "One might expect that this generalization would hold true for *The Road* as well"(39). Morgan follows certain clues to map out the landscape through which the father and son are travelling. For him, McCarthy fictionally is

regressing back to his own roots in the Southeast, "Knoxville"(42), where he spend his earlier years.

Leafing through the first pages of the novel, according to Wesley G. Morgan, the trail can be recognized as "Middlesboro, Kentucky" (38). McCarthy writes that "A raw hill country. Aluminum houses"(12). In Morgan's view, In Middlesboro, as clearly described in McCarthy's novel, "there are a large number of mobile homes, euphemistically called "aluminum houses," just north of the Cumberland Gap tunnel. It seems safe to assume that the father and son pass through Middlesboro, Kentucky on their way over Cumberland Gap" (39). And in the mountains, beyond the Gap , the father and the son, as described in the novel, "stood and looked out over the great gulf to the south where the country as far as they could see was burned away" (39).

Still, Morgan suggests that Mr. McCarthy, at some point in the novel added that the father and the boy

walked out and sat on a bench and looked out over the valley where the land rolled away into the gritty fog. A lake down there. Cold and gray and heavy in the scavenged bowl of the countryside. What is that, Papa? It's a dam. (16-7)

Morgan suggests that the lake implied here is "Lake Norris" and the dam is "Norris Dam"(40). Moreover, in Morgan's words, the father and the son, instead of crossing over the dam, they head into "Knoxville"(39). In the novel, the child wonders whether they can "go down there (dam) and see it? I think it's too far and by dusk of the day following they were at the city" (McCarthy17). Again, here, in Morgan's explanation, the city meant here is "Knoxville, Tennessee"(39).

It is apparent from this review that Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* has drawn the attention of a great deal of critics who studied it from different perspectives. Yet, it is more surprising that, up to my knowledge, none of the studies reviewed the Freudian ideas on the unconscious in an independent study. As such, it will be my task in this thesis to fill the gap and read Freudian psychoanalysis in the novel. It is concerned with foregrounding Freud's philosophical ideas that are in evidence in his *The Road*. This thesis will study the patterns through which Psychoanalysis is represented in the novel through a detailed analysis of three component of the human psychic triangle.

In terms of structure, the thesis is divided into an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The introduction reads as a preamble

into the world of Cormac McCarthy as a writer, his themes and his literary tendencies. Chapter I entitled "*The Road* and Its Historical Background" looks into different aspects within the novel including its literary merit, its language and setting. Chapter Two entitled "Apocalypse and Revival in *The Road*" studies the conditions or the rationale that is behind the catastrophe in the novel. Chapter three entitled "Psychoanalysis and *The Road*" reads as a detailed analysis of the Freudian psychoanalysis. It foregrounds the shift of balance in the human psychic triangle as the id takes the lead in the post-apocalyptic world. The conclusion restates the general ideas discussed in the two chapters and comes up with some findings.

II. Chapter one: *The Road* and Its Historical Background

Introduction

The most thrilling thing in *The Road* is the fact of living within that novel or being as a character rustling to reach its own survival. Few who dared to face life and its cruelty as Cormac McCarthy does. It is both terrifying and instructive. Whenever we march through the novel's roads, we contemplate wonders; we discharge our souls to move out from our bodies. Fictively traced and emotionally felt, we just see words passing by and meaning constructing images. That is why we live within. Denaturalization of the existence tossed McCarthy to dig deeper into the gloomiest corner of life. Why humanity fights to annihilate itself? How it comes that from our blood that blood becomes terror? And for what reason we destroy each other? These absurdities are questioned in *The Road* to reveal the error we stick in.

Since its publication, *The Road* never stopped redefining new terms as peacefulness, survival and the good way to attain the zenith of jubilation. Thus, I will move with this novel to show the values of this novel as a contemporary American piece of art and to look forward for its impacts and moralities. Through examining the context

of this magnificent fiction, I will highlight the common ideas, events and features that are shared by this novel.

1. The Novel's Scope

1.1. *The Road's* Plot Overview

Almost no author wrote a novel at the level of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. This unique visionary masterpiece gives hope and fear at the same time. The story relates strange events that inspire doom and a quest for survival. The novel begins with a description of an environmental cataclysm, it is "like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world" (McCarthy1)¹. After ten years of this abomination, a boy and his father begin their journeying to find a better place where they can settle. The opening of the novel exposes the father and his son sleeping outside in the cold. This fact replicates the bitterness of their lives. Their existence worsens day after day and what they are encountering deafens the meaning of life. Nonetheless, both, father and son, set off on their journey, following a road through the countryside's vacuum. All the way, inside them, an inescapable sense of danger haunts their memories. As marching, like two lost spirits, they discover an old abandoned gas station. They find oil which is a valuable substance to use in their only lamp that gives them

hope. At camp, the father tells that they are heading South because it will hopefully be warmer there.

The father and his son move south for a long exhausting period, taking with them the same repetitive days. Besides, they are agonized by an endless nuclear winter that breeds hostile cold. Old memories flash the father's mind; he recalls home when he was child, yet; what tortures him is the memory of his wife. She likely killed herself because she could not bear breathing in such senseless biosphere. Then, ambivalent meanings cross his consciousness, for when a dream is pleasant; he worries, and when it is bad, he thinks that one is normal. The father, feeble and ill, cannot imagine how his son could struggle to survive alone if he dies. His constant worrying is due to the situation where he and his son are implicated; only barbaric survivors who turned by time to be cannibals.

The road throughout *The Road* never ends. The father who carries a gun with him, as mean of safety, instructs his son to use the bullet on him, because that bullet is merciful than barbaric souls. The father is protector to his son; he realizes that within of the boy lodges a human goodness. The father is dying and this is real. But the boy has the power to live alone. The man begins to cough more blood. The two

travelers, father and son, set up camp for the last time, and the father tells his son that he must go on alone. The following day, the boy awakens to find his father dead. He sits by the body of his dead father until a man appears on the road. Frightened at first, the boy trusts that the man is a good guy and so goes with him. There are others with the man, a woman and at least two children, and the woman talks to the boy about God. Thus ends the novel with a glimpse of hope and courage to live with others in a world full of mysteries.

1.2. The setting

In a civilized land called America to a wild one called apocalypse, the novel narrates the chaos that puts humanity in peril. McCarthy perforated the bottom of individuals' hearts; not to stigmatize their living, but to make seeable their greed and selfishness. Ten years after the nuclear catastrophe, America became a vast land filled with emptiness and disorder. Based on unknown facts how this calamity happened or how it reached that level of destruction,

McCarthy stretched his ideas to warn us, with his conception, about what could happen if we continue to tear each other. The visions of the writer or any other author "have historically been charged with picking up the check when the nation finds itself in a crisis, and in these

situations, succeeding generations of novelists attempt to get to the very root of the malaise affecting the national consciousness" (Harrison 2). Consequently, Cormac McCarthy stood as a healer to a wounded America, specifically, and to a torn humanity, in general. Although the location is not confirmed, we are thrown into a bleak, post-apocalyptic setting born of McCarthy's experience, imagination and skill with words. An unexplained disaster has destroyed civilization and ruined the landscape. The surroundings are desolate and barren of colour. Ash hangs thickly in the air, forcing the father and son to wear face masks. The ash is so thick; in fact, it has blocked out the sun; the burned vegetation has no chance of revival. This reveals the badness of what was regenerated from a damnation which is not taken in consideration by human beings. The author describes a world of "no sign of life" (McCarthy 6), it goes thus till the end of the novel. McCarthy incessantly reminds us of the isolation of the landscape in *The Road*. As we read the novel, we find sentences highlighting the fact; darkness, coldness, ash and other words reflecting the gloomy side of the setting. Equally to the characters, we find them wrestling against invisibilities they cannot support; their memories and dreams pull them to hug the life they were living before

the cataclysm, but reality erects a kind of illusionary wall which hinders them to move with. However, the rest of the time we see a gray ash covering the landscape. If we look from the boy's angle, we are going to result the fact that he ignores everything surrounding him. Continually, he asks his father about the scenes they encounter and why everything seems brutal and insane. Nevertheless, the father chooses what is best and safe for his son, because he is the last valuable thing he appreciates. Moving Southwest indicates a final destination towards salvation and rest; the two characters eulogize their destiny, especially the father. Nature is well described to introduce the portrayal of the novel. From the beginning to the end, dark images hover around and around throughout the novel, and give a futuristic touch of humanity's being. *The Road's* ending follows its beginning, nothing changed and nothing seems to be changed except the death of the father and the boy's finding of new mentors. Thus are the consequences of any none-thought initiative by humanity. It leads to nothing but destruction.

1.3. The novels' social background

1.3.1. The Novel and its Literary Standing

Cormac McCarthy, as a novelist, gives to the American literature new fragrance, his novels deride from the usual path; he creates throughout his novels brilliant scopes. The way the world is moving on, crises crushing down all the structures, whether economic, political or cultural which steer humanity to its ruin, led McCarthy to write *The Road* to make facts seen. The novel's terminology reflects a world of strangeness and chaos. It describes people struggling to find their places in a world full of horror ruled by no rule. McCarthy, as a writer and analyst, paints things that culminated since many decades to fashion a destructive potential. Economically, world economy plummeted leaving ill structures and none-stable countries. America, specifically, has seen threatening crises after being a country of opportunities and prosperity. Politically, tensions and wars, ravaging peace and co-existence, had badly negative influences on the functioning system. McCarthy's twentieth century literary career differed from the twenty first century writers; he changed his vision to express his fear of what is coming and why everything is become so vague. McCarthy affirms how bad transition can be effected from

being in paradise to hell, as the events tell us in *The Road*. However, the world described in *The Road* "is a nightmarish site, where the world has ceased to be" (Marvi 4).

Many critics assert that *The Road* is a post-apocalyptic novel. This literary genre seems to have experienced its own new rebirth of popularity; all this is due to the increasing fear of world devastation. Nevertheless, this genre tries to decipher human anxiety and to clear the way by erasing all obstacles, thus this method of writing is "an appeal to the survival instinct" (Andrade 2). McCarthy's patterns with this novel a life where nothing can be equal; he brings new narrative style to grasp on the vision he sees, not to make himself shown as predictor, but to cry out carefulness to what is coming. If we talk history, from 1945 till today; the race to armament got the first lead. The first atomic bomb used in 1945 by the United States gave tender spirits to other countries to do the same, and the emergence of the Cold War added more fears. Political pressures, civil wars, terrorism and economic disasters spoiled existence. Consequently, governments and individuals in every corner of earth gave to themselves authority to destroy.

Yet, what is clear is the writer's "profound correlations between the ways in which humans construct their relationships with the natural world," by putting away all grudges and "the manner in which they construct their relationships to each other" which is the most profound meaning of peace and living (Gifford 3). The other fact that attracts attention is the used language in the novel. Cormac joins the contextual body of the novel with a wonderful narrative technique, the journey of the father and his son is a series of "short stages," therefore; the readers, at once, distinguish that "the movement of the travellers and the movement of the text are one" (Bloom 184).

1.3.2. *The Road* and Its Impacts

Since the publication of *The Road* in 2006, all critical visions had scoped it context. The reason behind this is McCarthy's treatment of the subgenre which is marked by uniformity and similarity. All McCarthy's novels contain narrative elements of the renewal and newness. This is a classic kind of novel in which individuals search for a better world and for a real meaning of philosophy of life.

The most vital aim of Cormac McCarthy through his novel *The Road* is to establish a certain morality of life. Yet, the themes targeted throughout this novel are numerous, though obscure in their messages.

Greenwood suggested that "they are concerned with more classical and universal themes such as violence, good and evil, the nature of God, survival, destiny versus human will, self-reliance, and the desire for a pastoral existence" (90), consequently; the quest of human's nature desires and will do not stop within conceptions but they overstep their own nature.

Literature tends to simplify the meaning of existence, and it paves the way with moralities and significance. Thus is the objective of *the Road*; Richard B. Woodward said that the novel can encompass all the various disciplines and interests of humanity" (13). McCarthy throws us into a world full of murkiness where isolation and danger reside; the monstrous happenings indicate to us that we are present in McCarthy's allegorical worlds. Comparatively to other novels like *The Waste Land*, *The Road* is portraying humanity with no soul, no compassion and with no need harmony. At the end, a gleam of hope is always within reach, the death of the father and the new happenstance faced the boy by finding other living people, who believe in a better life, shape a picture of goodness. Ibarrola Armendariz admits that many critics have stated that McCarthy is "wonderfully delicate noticer of nature," who bases his thoughts on truth (3). *The Road*, on

the other hand, presents us with quite a different treatment of nature, since the whole landscape has been lacerated by the disaster and there are practically no signs to indicate what region of the country the father and his son are travelling in."Everything as it once had been save faded and weathered" (McCarthy 5). Cormac McCarthy's obsession of the post-apocalyptic philosophies comes to react through *The Road*. Most of his works denote the cynical side of human being existence; he frequently talks of death, the cruelty of life, and the downfall of happiness. "The grim emotion and violence that is prevalent in his work centers around the Southern Gothic genre" (Haddock 3). This is probably why it took the literary world a few novels to grasp his unique expressions, and probably this is McCarthy's final message to express his sadness and hatred of what happens. *The Road* is a typically paradoxical; McCarthy all over this novel invites and frustrates interpretations, basing on ideological, allegorical and levels. We can also designate an irony which arises out of attempting to frame a post-apocalyptic era. All the implications of economic globalization and natural cataclysm have a touch in McCarthy's point of view, and in *The Road*, McCarthy asks for a sense of logic. Eventually, *The Road* can be interpreted from different

angles; its context and content pull us to distinguish between good and evil, between reason and unconsciousness. We may, either, be the pillars of this novel and be, at the same time, characters and sequences through *The Road*.

1.4. The Author's Biography

What if Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* is talking about something else? Is he going to be praised as we admire him today? These questions have no influence on the novel because it resumes everything. Cormac McCarthy wrote many wonders to light up the magic of his ideas and themes. Born in the large New England city of Providence, Rhode Island, on July 20, 1933. He was the third in line of six children; his father was a brilliant lawyer and his descendants were, too. Cormac McCarthy did not live long in Rhode Island, nevertheless; at the age of four, he and his family, moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. The thing that marked Cormac during his childhood the fact of isolation; he raised as a Roman Catholic in the south. That detail "set apart from the majority"(Hage 7). In Tennessee, McCarthy met many people who influenced him, that kind of society shaped McCarthy's perspectives as a writer and on which he based many settings and scenes in his first written novels. His family's strong attachments on their identity made

solid his way of living. Little is known about McCarthy's life, but what can be told is that his life was privileged. McCarthy entered the University of Tennessee during the 1951-1952 academic year, but then he left college to join the United States Air Force in 1953, serving his nation for four years. He was stationed in Alaska for a couple of years, where he had a radio show. He also began reading with eagerness, using literature to calm down his anxiety during his free time in military servicing. After finishing his due time service in military forces; he returned to the University of Tennessee in 1957. He was encouraged by his professors to develop his writing skill, and then he published two stories which allowed him to receive the Ingram-Merrill Award for creative writing in 1959 and 1960. And later, he started work on his first novel. Later in 1960 he left college without a degree, having made the decision to pursue a full-time career as a writer. In 1961 he married Lee Holleman, a fellow student in university; who later became a poet, "her first volume of poems, *Desire's Door*, was published in 1991" (Lincoln 17). The couple moved to Chicago, where McCarthy worked as a mechanic while he continued work on his first novel. They had a son named Cullen, but soon after returning to Tennessee the marriage came to an end. McCarthy's early career began with his sending to a manuscript of

his first novel entitled *The Orchard Keeper*; however, the novel published in 1965 and was admired by the readers. In the same year, he voyaged to Ireland, his natal land, where he met Anne De Lisle and married with her in 1966. The couple set out a journey around Europe, in Spain McCarthy wrote his novel *Outer Dark*, which is a novel referring to biblical interpretation. Yet, this book "firmly established him as part of the Southern gothic literary tradition for its use of irony and the grotesque to explore cultural issues" (Greenwood 6). What helped Cormac McCarthy to build his reputation as a giant in literature was the publication of two novels, *Child of God* (1974) and *Suttree* (1979). These two novels reflect the dark lives of the southern society and how the twisting social hardships are tearing away individuals to divorce with their humanity and become brutal. After *Suttree* comes *Blood Meridian* (1985), this is the grand achievement of Cormac McCarthy in the 1980s. It was also the book that truly stimulated his literary reputation and put him high in literature's citadel. McCarthy wrote other novels which marked him with timeless recognition, these are; *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), *Cities of the Plain* (1998), *No Country for Old Men* (2005), and his last one *The Road* (2006).

Conclusion

Reading Cormac McCarthy's novel, *The Road*, is as learning life's secrets. Ornamented by allegory and principles, this novel flowers the meaning of existence; it rises up from the abyss of unconsciousness to the zenith of comprehension. Language, style, context and text are the most valuable steps throughout *The Road*. They illuminate the aim of the writer and the last significance of this work. However, a story of a father and his son, travelling from one place to another, seeking peace and life; and a new start to their life time. Oppositely, they face difficulties which lead them to perseverance and, sometimes, to despair. Fixed to heal individuals precipitating to joy their own lives and forgetting their communities and the value of coexistence; framed to follow truth and cast away tensions that can destroy our world. Thus is the aim of this novel; give faith and punish ignorance.

III. Chapter Two: Apocalypse and Revival in *The Road*:

Introduction

Turmoil is the mere agent reigning *The Road*, between apocalypse and revival lodges hope as a notion of perseverance. Cormac McCarthy's talented work advocates reason instead of ruin. Differently, he paints with dark light, not to unveil human beings' cruelty, but to portray the dimness of our world. I tend to analyze *The Road* through this chapter with a tendency dealing with two parts. First, with apocalypse that decimates existence, and the second one, the fact of living in hope. But, is there any link between man and nature in the novel? Or, does McCarthy personify apocalypse to peace? Nevertheless, what we encounter when reading the novel talks about chaos, brutality and no impulse to frame a new life. Eventually, a gleam of hope appears in the end of the novel which consists on living and nothing but sticking on life.

1. Nature and Man

Ten years since an unknown cataclysm destroyed the world, a father and his son set off on a journey of struggle to live. Walking over

a barren landscape, it seems that no God has powers on that land; waste land is the land of *The Road*.

Before the catastrophe happens, man's selfishness hid the value of the world where he lived, so that was the reason behind this human damnation. Yet, the father and his son harvested the ill-will of others as they "walk East and South in the denatured abstract landscape of the past-apocalyptic future" (Gifford 4). Repeatedly, nature is described as hell, every part of this nature has blackness as an emblem of destruction. The father, playing the role of a mentor, teaches his son to do what is best even though everything is under peril. This dimension signifies complexity; that is to say, all over the way, the father and the son meet failure and challenges. Terry Gifford continues in his essay saying "it may be that nature itself is the cause of the apocalypse of *The Road*" (5). But what nature do we take in consideration? Human nature is the cause of any disaster and from its greed, at the behalf of the self, nature is destroyed. This divergence, between nature and how it is defined by man, leads nature to be cruelty. Consequently, "what is at stake is nothing less than the divine in human nature" (Cooper 16).

Cormac McCarthy, as a writer, constructs his ideas according to history, all phenomena that touched humanity, especially in the 20th century, have "a profound impact on literature and criticism" (Habib 559). McCarthy symbolizes the character of the father to a leading voice; the father tries each time to teach his son the good way because in him he sees a seed of hope and human goodness. Mutually, the father relies on his child to appease his post-memories and worrying of his health. All that is related to the decadence of nature and consequently what the bleakness of nature can result. Paul Hamilton asserts that "humanity is distinguished by its expressive integration of its past in its present, and we forget at our peril the extent to which the child is the father of the adult" (122).

As moving South, the father becomes involved with nature's sadness, he frequently asked by his son about the happenings they encounter. Nonetheless, when the fire consumed the wood, the child asked his father; What is it, Papa? The father knows the danger of nature when it becomes furious , replies to his son; "It's trees. They're falling down It's all right. Come on. We need to hurry" (49) Thus continues through the remaining days of the father by this austere landscape; he could not bear the weight put on him, even his memories

"begin to fade with time, and he fears that the world will vanish like a fire dying out" (Davies 72). Ashes, fire, ravaged landscape are the terms used by Cormac McCarthy to well define the graveness of the collapse that spoiled nature's beauty and the wide gap that separates man from nature. But, does McCarthy refer to nature as the only solution to discard humanity from its ill-doings? We can distinguish all that throughout the novel. Each step taken is considered worse than the precedent; more horror in the eyes of the boy and more fear in the mind of the father. This link between humanity and nature is, in fact, a perfect technique to illustrate the hidden and to gratify the stubborn minds. The father and his son are the sound of existence; their journey can be marked as the Exodus. *The Road* is no more and no less than a novel talking about concordance.

2. Apocalypse and Its Personification

The conscious individual has no inherent characteristics, and this opens up consciousness to possibilities, setting aside, for example, present constructions of reality in favour of what might be. This nothingness, and the creativity it allows, is part of what Sartre means by freedom" (Ashworth 110). Apocalypse as a notion is a very serious event resulting in great destruction and change, whereas Cormac

McCarthy's *The Road* defines it differently; that is to say, the meaning of apocalypse is not destruction but renewal. He starts his novel with a post-apocalyptic landscape where lives are torn, where souls are desperate.

McCarthy, through his major characters, creates a scene of struggle whose major fact is resistance. Thus, the author makes two concepts; each one takes part from the other. Then, apocalypse, whatever the damage costs, implies that "human life can be meaningful, even in circumstances as desperate as those depicted in the novel" (Wielenberg 9). Cormac McCarthy's life is a subject of study, his childhood, on one hand, being past in a scope of isolation, influenced his ideas and writings as well. On the other hand, world's history of the 20th and 21st centuries grasped his attention to interpret them in a kind of hopeless ending. "There was also an increased awareness that the planet was on the cusp of irreversible ecological disaster, and that damage had been done to the environment that would permanently alter our relationship with landscape and wilderness" (Walsh 254).

These facts affected Cormac's way of thinking. Moreover, the writer tends to go beyond the concept of apocalypse; he models the

chaotic happening to give birth to a new model of living. Even though "the specter of a meaningless existence haunts *The Road*," the horror seems to be joy at the end (Wielenberg 9). How can humanity face Apocalypse, with despair or hope? If hope is the vital approach to survive, how can humanity water its seeds? This issue is posed by Cormac McCarthy. For the author, the fact of believing paves the way to everything. The conversation between the father and the old man goes on debating whether God exists or not; whether goodness still within hearts. Yet, a sentence used by the author to depict the way the world takes nowadays which illuminates the very problem of individuals when he writes "there is no God and we are his prophets" (88), this explains how terrible the condition the world is following.

McCarthy manages to explain that discarding God's light from lives may cause ruin, and any attempt towards divinity may help forging the sword of wrath. However, that point reveals the religious tendency of Cormac McCarthy. Even at the end of the novel, the boy's meeting with other people, who believe in God and praise his name, is a statement of hanging on faith as an ultimate resolution. To shoulder this, Roy F. Baumeister affirms that "the believer who is able to accept otherwise inexplicable events as being "God's will" may be satisfied

with this form of interpretative control" (158). Consequently, *The Road's* message aims to spread peace rather than war and confrontations. Its noble teachings pour wisdom upon unconsciousness to live in a world full of euphoria and friendship.

3. The results of the upheaval

Every sequence in life has its results; *The Road's* main result, from its beginning to its ending, is hope. Yet, if we follow the events throughout the novel, we would find destruction and hopelessness that haunt it. "Since World War II, American literature has repeatedly questioned the existence of social and religious meaning in a society capable of destroying itself" (1) Declares Thomas H. Schaub; therefore, Cormac McCarthy links his fictional ideas to conceptual happenings to make clear the play the world is rehearsing. *The Road* takes its roots from historical episodes; it has in itself the germs of deconstruction and construction. The malfunction of human structures and the race towards power are steering our existence to extinction. McCarthy targets by his novel heartless individuals and claims that the culmination of all that is apocalypse, but "the important thing is not the apocalyptic event itself; rather, it is the "pre-disaster conditions" determining the way human society is able

or unable to cope with disaster," or will humanity "resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard" (Holm 4). *The Road* projects the catastrophic results of any cataclysm in which disorder and barbarism are going to be symbols. This novel details in a precise manner the position of men within an environment full of doubt and fright to what to do to save their lives. The reason behind that disturbance resides in humans who lost faith either of their values or of their religious models. Holm affirms that "*The Road* does not pose the vertical question about a divine order behind the world but the horizontal question about a secular order in the world" (9). A post-apocalyptic novel is a work done to unify the objects that are dispersed from each other. Cormac McCarthy's fundamental objective is to draw lines between what can be and what cannot be done. "Apocalypticism has been described as a genre born out of crisis, designed to stiffen the resolve of an embattled community". (Lawrence 1). *The Road*, likewise, is designed to hover around souls that ignore the consequences of an apocalypse, and to warn them of a sudden slip in their doings. Cannibalism, barbarism and disorder are the most frequent issues of a disaster. However, these notions are meant to denote something else. The economic crises, the

environmental changes, wars and diseases are behind the issuance of *The Road*; McCarthy style of depicting the apocalypse "is itself a metaphorical explanation for the state of the world that McCarthy creates as his wider metaphor for the condition of man in the realisation of his cosmic insignificance" (Cant 186). Thus are the results of an upheaval in *The Road*. No soul caring for whatever it meets and resolution in actions. Cormac McCarthy wants to join reality with fiction in order to carry the fire, the fire of survival within a peaceful community.

4. What does *The Road* tend to explain and attain?

In literature, the thing that marks any work valuable is its own resolution. Fiction in literature plays a primordial role in shaping what reality gives. Nevertheless, Cormac McCarthy uses his novel to lay hands on dangers that may happen if individuals race to satisfy themselves. McCarthy feels that humanity is "like a man waking in a grave" (McCarthy 111), so advises people to not fall into error which leads destruction. All possibilities could be taken to frame McCarthy's *The Road*; he manages to connect between several facts to paint his imaginative novel. The tension that happened in the beginning of the twenty first century like 9 September events, war in Iraq, the

involvement of The United States in combating terrorism in Afghanistan and economics' fragility have their influence on Cormac McCarthy. "It is feasible that Americans in 2006 feared human-inflicted destruction of the U.S., if not the whole world" (Lane 12). So the fear of a nuclear war haunts the world since many nations compete to have nuclear weapons. From another angle, McCarthy draws a picture colored by ecological statements; in the beginning of *The Road* "we see [perhaps] the endgame of earth's ecology" (129). Contrary to what we decode from the verses of the novel, Cormac McCarthy's chief goal is earth's safety. The destruction of humanity due to that unknown catastrophe has a psychological side on individuals' determination. Despite violence that rules *The Road*, McCarthy endeavours to clarify that "there is also a profound belief in the need for moral order" (Wilhelm 133). *The Road* mirrors a hidden beauty; the post-apocalyptic landscape refers to the sublime. Therefore, the novel is a friend to nature.

IV. Chapter Three: Psychoanalysis in *The Road*.

Although I specified the psychoanalytical critical movement that I will follow in analyzing Cormac McCarthy's novel, *The Road*, still the Freudian analysis is too wide and varied, so I will introduce, as I already mentioned, the main concepts that will be used in analyzing the novel. Freud's most celebrated premise is his discovery that we are driven by "forces over which we have very limited control" (Guerin 123). These forces are actually what constitute our "unconscious" (Adam 56). The human psyche as Freud suggests is also divided into three main parts, mostly unconscious. The id, which is "an amorphous unstructured set of desires," (Thurschwell 82) contains the "libido." Freud postulates that the id is "lawless, asocial, and amoral" (Guerin 125). The second constituent of the psyche is the ego. The ego stands for "the reality principle" (Guerin 126) which manifests itself in reasoning that aims at reserving the person himself. The superego is the morality principle that "manifests itself in feelings of conscience, shame and guilt" (Adam 56). The mingling of these psychic elements together makes a stable human being, but the shifts in

balance between these elements "causes the repression which leads to neurosis" (Thurschwell 79).

McCarthy's novel, *The Road*, is a good example of the previously-mentioned shift in balance between the three elements of the psyche. This post-apocalyptic novel, with its environmental message, gives a clear example of what could happen if the human beings surrender to their ids, and how the environmental changes affect the allocation of the psychic triangle in favor of the id. McCarthy presents a return to the unconscious that results from today's carelessness about the moral principle (the id) in dealing with nature. So the clear message in the novel is that if we do not stop acting according to our current id-driven attitudes towards nature, the inevitable fall will be hard on us, and we will be all representatives of the id not only against nature, but also against each other. The id with its many representatives like nature itself and most post-apocalyptic people, the ego, as it commits suicide, or as it bends to the demands of the id instead, represented mainly by the man's wife, and the superego that is almost extinct, but surviving in the hearts of those who are "carrying the fire" (McCarthy 87) of morality, are the three psychic constituents in this novel. The protagonist in this novel will be analyzed as a representative of all the

psychic elements at once, for he does not really change in the current post-apocalyptic world as everyone else does.

1. The id

In the vanguard, with regard to the Id, the overriding constituent of the psyche, its manifestation in the world, the world before being hit by the natural catastrophe overwhelming the novel, we live in is introverted taking into considerations the right functioning of the ego and the superego. It should be noted that the main reason for the apocalypse in the novel is not directly pronounced by McCarthy, but apparently through certain clues, a nuclear war or global warming are the grounds or the possibilities one may think of.

Characters and even society as a whole in the novel loses the hold on its psychic elements, and the id thrives and reaches its zenith. We see that the chaos that results from either calamity is overwhelming and of great disturbing effect. Nature itself loses its beauty, and it becomes a savage place that no one can like or escape because people themselves become worse since they basically lose their superegos with their egos either helping their ids, or committing suicide. Indeed the manifestation of the Id in the novel takes different shapes including the devastated nature or landscape, the manifestation

of the evil nature of the human being, the spread of theft and cannibalism.

1.1. Nature (landscape) as the Id

McCarthy's depiction of natural vista of the post-apocalyptic landscape in *The Road* is indicative of the invasion or the release of the id. The setting of the novel reveals darkness, ash, blood and ultimately death. Although Freud associates the id with the pleasure principles, which has "no values, no good and evil," (125), as ...suggests, the eventual "self-destruction" (125) within its realm is inevitable." (2). In *The Road*, Earth is gloomy as it becomes "a waste country" and "everything as it once had been, faded and weathered" (6). That is to say, everything that is related to beauty, morality or even sense is gone.

It should be noted that McCarthy's pattern of the disturbed psychic triangle places only "ashes and dust" (11) on top of the natural id. On the way to the South, the father and the son witness the destruction of the world and the annihilation of life this "[d]esolate country"; "The city [is] burned, [and it has absolutely] no signs of life"(16) The forests and the other natural elements are not better than the city; the trees are "falling down," (102). Still, the nights and days

are "long and dark and cold," with absolutely no way of getting better or rising against the now oppressive id, which takes over and destroys everything making nature one of its representatives. The animals "were extinct," 127). The rise of the id in nature does not only affect its elements; the people who remain as representatives of the superego are badly affected, and they could see "[t]he cold relentless circling of the intestate earth" (138). Even the ones who are now representatives of the id wear "masks" (169) because of the polluted air, so no one is safe, even the worst of the worst, when Earth is id-controlled

1.2. The Human Nature as an Id

Human nature also has its part in this overwhelming turmoil. People are described in the novel as "stained and filthy," (62) beasts who have absolutely no interest in any moral values; they steal, enslave, and even eat each others. If this suggests something, it suggests the regression of the human being into primeval modes of violence to survive. When the man and the boy rest on the coast, a thief comes and steals all of their clothes and supplies without even leaving them anything to support themselves. When the man catches him and strips him out of his clothes, the thief claims that anybody would "have done the same" (275) in such a situation. So, it is clear

that humanity as a whole transformed after this catastrophe and men are under the control of their evil nature and id driven powers.

The monstrosity of the id-driven people does not stop at this level; the id dominates people making them tools for its desires, but people go beyond that by turning into actual cannibals. Thus, Cannibalism becomes a pleasure rather than a way of surviving. When one of those id-driven cannibal people sees the man and his son hiding in the bushes, he keeps looking at the boy thinking how delicious he could be. This cannibal and his group are full of supplies, so they do not actually have to eat people, but still they do it for pleasure. Another group of these cannibals keeps people in their basement to eat when they are hungry not when they feel like it. But this does not mean that they are not id-driven, for the rational thing to do in case of hunger is to find another source of food or to commit suicide rather than committing such a horrible deed.

2. The Ego

2.1. The Father as a representative of the complete psychic triangle

Although most people become under the control of their desires, very few people choose different paths. The unnamed man in this novel for example chooses to remain the same person as he was in the

pre-apocalyptic world, even if it means his own death. This does not mean that the man is an ego or a superego; he is actually a representative of the complete psychic triangle, so he is an id when he has to, an ego mostly, and a superego when the boy is around. This complicated character will be analyzed in three different ways according to his actions in different situations, which will eventually show the reader that he is actually a rare example of a coherent psyche that kicks and punches only in need, as a normal person would do in the pre-apocalyptic world.

1.1.1. The Father as an id in the novel

As I already mentioned, the man is an example of a unified psyche, in which the id is only a constituent. The man as an id is not as fully clear as it is the case with him in being an ego or a superego, but the decisive moments that he goes through, show his buried id.

The description of the man in this novel as an id starts from the beginning of *The Road*; the man's journey in the post-apocalyptic unconscious is actually "a great marching steps into the nothingness" (14) of the id. In spite of his moral and reasonable attachment to his son, he always gets worried about "food and shoes,"(16) which is mainly forwarded towards self-pleasure, id's main principle. The

moral agency that is manifested in the boy only blocks the id of the man for a short time, but when unleashed in few occasions, the man becomes just like the other people, who are ready to eat their own children which is shown in many instances in the novel.

When the man and the boy meet an injured person in the road, the man does not listen to the superego that tells him to help those in need, instead he walks out of the scene, asking the boy to stop "pulling at his cloak," (51) for nobody will help them if the table was turned. The man's lack of sympathy for others, with the exception of his son, revives again when a thief steals their cart of food and other supplies. The man tracks the thief down, then he catches and forces him to "take [his] clothes off" (274) leaving him for dead, but when the superego, regains grip over him, he tries to give the clothes back, but it turns out to be too late, for the man was already gone when they return to give him his clothes back. Still, in another incident, the man realizes that his son is about to be caught by some people whom he assumes to be cannibals, so he stops caring about the superego and starts acting like a complete id. As a result, he holds his gun in his hands without' even remember[ing] taking it from his belt," (64) which clearly indicates that he lost his touch with his consciousness and started acting

unconsciously. In fact he "shoot[s] from a two-handed position" (68) at the person whom he assumes a cannibal risking his son's life in process.

The massive authority that the id gains as a result of the apocalypse makes the other psychic agencies choose either to be repressed and dead or to bend to the demands of its power. In *The Road*, the ego maintains its commitment to the superego in the first few years of the apocalypse. The "reality principle" (Thurschwell 84) that defines the ego does not approve of what the id has to offer as a new conscious. The two dilemmatic situations in which the ego finds itself require making a hard choice; either to commit suicide and kill the thinking self, or to turn into a beast, then into a complete id, which means that in both cases the ego is doomed to death.

2.1.2. The Father as an Ego

The death of the main representative of the ego does not mean that everything that is ego-related is dead; on the contrary, the ego, as shown in many instances in the novel, survives.

The character that represents the complete pre-apocalyptic psyche, the man, is mostly described as an ego like his wife. Although

he is an id sometimes and a superego other times, his rationality and his surviving techniques make him mainly a representative of the ego. A normal person that lives in the pre-apocalyptic world would use his ego to discover whether there is gas in the gas station by many tricks, but the people who represent the id do not do that; they just look at the gas pumps without knowing whether there is something there or not. The man uses his mind and "smell[s] the pipe to make sure whether there was gas or not" (14)

As we are comparing the representatives of the id with the man as a representative of the ego, we should consider other aspects that make the man the rational ego unlike the others. Most people live in the road feeding on other people or stealing the goods from other wanderers, but the man is not a random wanderer, he actually travels "south" (9) because as a general rule, the south is warmer from the other parts of the country, a fact only those who use their egos would think about this. His aim is to protect the boy and most importantly his own body from the coldness of the north and the decadence of the id. Although his plan to go south is hindered sometimes by his id, he quickly restores his ego to the realm of consciousness, and keeps going on. The supposed warmth of the south makes the man

suppress his death wish, so he tries to keep warm because he does not want to waste the matches since he knows that if he and his son get themselves wet without having matches, they "would probably die" (14) before they make it to the southern coast.

The man's conflict with his moral agency escalates when he makes a reasonable decision that conflicts harshly with the superego. He has two bullets in his gun, and he starts wondering whether they are going to make it south, so he decides to shoot the boy if he was ever caught by anyone, lest he be eaten by the cannibals. The man does not stop at this; he actually teaches the boy how to shoot, not to kill the others, but to kill himself in case the man could not do it when the moral agency prevails. He doubts his ability to kill the superego "when the time comes" (28) because of the conflict between the id and the ego inside of his psyche.

The man's relationship with others also categorizes him as an ego. His distrust of the others springs from the fact that almost everyone in the road is an id, so taking a chance with the others, or trusting them is a foolish thing to do. The moral agency, the boy, looks for settling down in one place, which means trusting the others, but the man never does that because he believes, as McCarthy states, that

staying in any place for a long time is "not safe" (43). Many examples prove this idea like when they are at the vault, and they hear the barking of a dog, the man decides to leave immediately because it is the rational thing to do, in spite of the fact that they were happy there with lots of food and supplies for years to come. The man realizes that there are other egos and superegos out there, but the problem is that he cannot trust them, so he has to tell his son that although there are others like them, he does not believe that there are going to "meet any good guys on the road" (160)

Despite the ego's distrust of the id, sometimes it makes compromises in order to maintain the survival of the body. In this case, the man avoids everyone on the road, and keeps out of suspicious places, but this does not go on for a long time. The man has to eat and feed his son, so he makes hard decisions including breaking into a house of cannibals. The rational thing in such a house is to go fast and get out faster, and this is what the man inclines to do, but he finds a locked vault in the basement of the house, so he automatically assumes that "[t]here's a reason" (114) why it is locked, so he contradicts his better judgment and opens the door only to find a group of naked men and women ready to be eaten by the cannibal ids. This

shows the importance of following the ego in order to survive and that any attempt to leave the realm of the ego in such an id-driven world will endanger the very existence of the conscious self.

2.1. 3. The unnamed Woman as an Ego

The first example of the earlier ego that does not follow the demands of the id, and chooses to commit suicide as is the case with the wife of the unnamed man and the mother of the superego, the boy. The woman's relation to the id is related through her husband's dreams about her, giving the reader multiple flashbacks that help him/her understand the complexity of the also-unnamed wife.

In one of his dreams, the man remembers a conversation between himself and his wife that indicates that the wife is an uncompromising ego. The man tells his wife that they are not victims of the new ruling id, rather they are "survivors," (McCarthy 57) that are supposed to protect the rational and the moral principles, and never give up. The wife's answer shows her moral-free rationality when she answers her loving and caring husband that they are "the walking dead in a horror movie" (57).

The wife realized the futility of living in the post-apocalyptic world, so she gets rid of her superego, and does not follow the

irrational id, which makes her ego control all the decisions that she makes. When her own son was born in such an id-driven world, she rationalizes her son's life-to-be and discovers that it will be unbearable, so when she sees her son, she feels like her heart is "ripped out of" (59) her. The fact that she wishes death to her own son does not mean that she is completely out of superego; it actually means that her rationality prevails to make her take the right -rather than the righteous- decisions instead of living on a superego-related false hope.

Facing the ultimate truth that there is no life for the superego in the realm of the id is what really makes the wife the obvious representative of the ego. The husband, who is tinted with the other psychic agencies, keeps "begging" (57) his wife not to kill herself, but she realizes the fact that the new-governing id will eventually "rape...kill...and eat" (58) her and her son, so she refuses to listen to the moral principle, and before she leaves the house to her inevitable death, she rebukes her husband for wasting the bullets to get food instead of killing them and commit suicide.

The woman's behavior looks like an-id driven deed since it includes killing herself and her own son, but considering the misery

of the human life in the id-representative Earth, the woman's actions are the sanest actions among all the other measures. When she leaves the house to her death, she kills any feeling of remorse inside of her in order to perform what the ego dictates as the rational deed. She does not even say goodbye to her only son, when she goes out for the last time lest the repressed superego inside of her unconscious revive again, and she changes her mind regarding her decision to commit suicide.

3.The Superego

3.1. The Boy as a Superego

After having analyzed in details the first two components of the psychic triangle, the id and the ego, now we move to analyze the third component of the psyche, the superego. The first agency that was analyzed, the id, is completely "unconscious" as the Freudian diagram shows, and this is true in the pre-apocalyptic world, but in the post-apocalyptic one, things are different with the unleashing of the unconscious. As I already argued, the psychic allocation of the triangle is reversed in this world, so the superego assumes the older place of the id and becomes unconscious and rare. As a result, not so many

examples are to be found in this novel, since the superego is now repressed.

But still, McCarthy provides humanity with a dim hope in such a monstrous world. The superego is rare, but it is not completely extinct, so one may feel that even in such an id-dominated world, the superego still can save humanity from the decadence of the id. Of course, the hopes are not really high, for no fixed ending is provided in *The Road*. But maybe the survival of the main representative of the superego, as the argument will go, provides a rather less cruel ending than the other parts of the novel.

The main representative of the superego in *The Road* is the unnamed boy. The boy is described as a pure angel and as the "word of God" (3) on Earth. He is like Jesus, who provides salvation for humanity through suffering on the road, but unlike Jesus, the suffering of the boy may come to a waste because people do not deserve a second chance after they turned to ids. Unlike his father, who was born in the pre-apocalyptic world, the son is born in the post-apocalyptic one, so one assumes that the boy will be a representative of the id since everything around him represents the id. The boy breaks all the expectations and becomes a superego. The father, although his

superego is not that prevalent, plays a huge role in his son's morality because he interacts with him as a superego rather than an id or an ego. Maybe this is McCarthy's way of telling the reader that morality is the only solution to the problems of the world.

Clearly, the superego is adapted to live in the light, but the darkness of the id, makes the boy terrified, so he asks his father to "leave the lamp on till [he is] asleep" (8). Clearly, the repression of the superego into the dark area of the unconscious affects the boy, who is the only light among the darkness of the human misery. The description of the boy shows his weakness in the id-dominated world because the boy is "so thin," (39) which shows the general weakness of the moral principle in the post-apocalyptic unconscious world.

The boy's moral principles are shown in different places in this novel. As the biggest representative of the superego, the boy has a high sense of morality and guilt because he never allows himself to step on anyone, and he always tends to help those in need. When the father and the son meet a man that is "struck by lightning," (51) the man acts according to his ego and walks away as if he did not see that person because he knows that even if he wants to help the lightning-struck man, he will never prevent his ultimate death. The boy on the

other side does not give up on that man, and keeps asking his father to "help him" (51). When the man refuses to do so, the boy starts crying to convince his father, and then he stops talking to him for more than a day, but then, he forgives his father when he realizes the futility of his attitude.

Another example that shows how the boy deals with others is worth mentioning in this perspective. The boy does not care whether the ones he meets are good or bad people; he just assumes that they are good, and anything that they do springs from their desperate need. The already-discussed story of the thief who steals the father and the son's goods and supplies shows how the man is an id, but the same story shows that the boy is a superego. The man strips the thief out of his clothes and condemns him to death by doing so, but the boy does not approve of this; he actually asks his father to "help him" (277) instead of killing him. The boy's constant importunity forces the father to use his moral principle and give the clothes back to the thief, but the thief was already gone.

The boy's sensitive morality is magnified through his relationship with his dead mother. The mother turns into a complete representative of the ego, so she realizes the futility of living in such a

world. When she leaves the house, she wishes that the boy would die, and she leaves without bidding him adieu. The boy knows all about this, yet he does not stop loving her. He keeps wishing he "was with [his] mom," (56) which shows how the superego overpasses the mother's love in the post-apocalyptic world of the id. The boy takes it further and wishes he would die just to be with his mother.

The moral agency in the boy functions even in the middle of ordeals and need for food. The man for example brings some cans of food from a ship when they reach the southern coast, but the boy asks his father whether he believes that the owners of the food could be alive, and the father answers that probably they are. When the boy believes that the owners of the food are alive, he refuses to eat anything because the moral principal requires the righteous person not to steal anybody else's food even if he/she is about to die. The father interferes and tells the boy that he was kidding and that they are all dead so the boy would eat from "their stuff" (259).

The sensitivity of the child, which manifests in his actions, stops him from turning into an id or even an ego. The boy is always "sorry" (264) for anything even if it is not his fault. The boy is even sorry for things which he has no control over like being sick in a rainy day.

Also the boy's shyness, an important attribution to the superego, is clear in many occasions like when he is "embarrassed" (270) of his father seeing him naked. These characteristics of the boy stop the infiltration of the id into his mind. Everything around the boy forces him to become an id, but the boy actually does not stop watching; he fights it and defeats it, at least inside of his mind. The boy has bad dreams, but the reader does not know what the dreams are, so one can only assume that they are id-related. The boy represses the id refusing to tell his father about the "weird dreams" (269) he has.

Most people who represent the superego cannot bear the monstrous id-driven milieu, so they choose to commit suicide "hanging [themselves on] rafters" (16). Those who choose to end their own lives instead of having to eat their own children are not representatives of the ego like the boy's mother; they are substantially different. The mother does not have a choice because if she gets caught, she will definitely be raped and eaten by the id-representatives. When the whole catastrophe started, there were many representatives of the superego. People took the streets as their new refuges, but "others would come and help them" (33). As the id gained ground,

and with the gradual disappearance of the superegos, the road became empty of "godspoke men" (32).

3.1.2. The Man as a superego

The final analysis of the man as a representative of the complete psyche is his role as a superego. From the early beginning, the man is shown as a sensitive and a moral person. When the man's wife is in labor and "she [becomes] sick" (32) after that, the man does not give up on her; on the contrary, he looks after her and treats her in a good way. His treatment of course goes to a waste when the wife assumes the role of the ego, and she leaves him for her own death. He actually tells his wife that "he would die" (58) for her and for his son, but she answers him that he cannot protect them in such a world. The man also shows his moral principle clearly by forbidding his wife from killing the boy, and assuming full responsibility for his safety.

The man's relationship with main representative of the superego, the boy, shows his role in developing the moral agency in his son. The man used to tell the boy "[o]ld stories of courage and justice" (42) to remind himself and the boy of the importance of the superego. The man also knows that "he was placing hopes where he's no reason to," (228) which shows that his moral agency defeats his

reason agency in some occasions. The man's only flame that keeps his superego alive is the boy who always directs his father's psyche into the realm of the superego and away from the realm of the id.

The man puts the boy's need ahead of his own in many occasions in this novel. When for example they get into a deserted supermarket, and they find a can of coke, the man asks the boy to "drink it" (23) all in spite of the fact that he was longing to have one sip from it. The boy is more important for the man than himself since "the boy was all that stood between him and death" (29). But sometimes the man lies to the boy in order to make him feel better about life and about the future, but he stops doing so because such lies "made him feel bad" (55) about himself, which shows the prevalence of the moral agency of the man in some occasions.

Conclusion

The message that McCarthy conveys in this novel is crystal-clear; the future of mankind is going to be dark and id-driven if people do not act now. In the present time, the moral agency is still awake, but people are blurring it by embracing their deeper unconscious desires. The superego is still functioning in the pre-apocalyptic world, and this is when the attempts to change the world are possible. The union between the superego and the ego can come up ideas that will prevent the world from collapsing into nothingness. If people do not change their behaviors and do not stop waging their costly wars, the future will be id-driven the way it is in this novel, and there will be no chance of redemption for the mankind.

This work is psychoanalytical reading of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* which has an aim to reveal the immoral existence of individuals when facing hardships instead of cooperating and helping each other. The author took us into a world where destruction rules; where humans became beasts. No one could live peacefully because it was set in a post-apocalyptic world. By way of this, the novel contains tragic and allegorical sequences nurtured by violence, guidance and hope.

McCarthy's chief aim is to warn and make eyes open to see the real visage of humanity's existence if continuing the way it does. He, through his characters, shows the fear and hopeless individuals walking on unknown roads to seek a better life. The father and his son were the emblem of survival; they did what they could to keep living.

The characters' minds are tormented by multiple scenes that pushed them to act and react with uncertainty. That fact highlights the none-comprehension of the bizarre situation they faced; their whole psychological system functioned in a way to hinder their moving forward. But, instead of giving up, they raised in themselves a gleam of hope on which they stuck to survive.

Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic portrayal of survival's hardships set upon individuals who still living added a frantic image of our world if any catastrophe happens. The world described in *The Road* is a world where terror and death and where innocent souls have no place to endure.

We have summed up the characteristics of the father and his role as a protector of his son who needed support and passion; the latter, reflects innocence and hope throughout the novel. McCarthy, himself,

stands upright to defy the ill-functioning of individuals, and doing that, surely, will lead to a disaster or a catastrophic happening.

In this dissertation, we have showed the attentiveness of Cormac McCarthy in describing the hellish atmosphere breaking down our world. He wrote *The Road* in a scoop amalgamating doubt, fear, hope, love and numerous facts married with a futuristic vision to paint an era full of tensions and bad omens. With a psychoanalytical analysis, we tried to reintroduce the difficulties that suppressed the events of the novel and let apart those who struggled to live senseless and desperate.

The novel is a mirror to our acts that we do each day without paying any attention to their results. Cormac McCarthy paved the way to the harsh minded individuals and warns them of the blackness that is to come.

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