



TRAVERSE THE FRAGILE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE IN CORMAC MC CARTHY'S 'THE ROAD'

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ABSTRACT

Literature evaluates human lives through the powerful words of the authors. Here is an American writer, Cormac McCarthy, who has written his novels from a different perspective by using some characters and adding unacceptable behavior and facts. In Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, the natural world is a central theme that shapes the plot and characters of the novel. This paper focuses on the relationship between humans and the natural world. Through a close reading of the book and analysis of secondary sources, this paper explores how *The Road* portrays the natural world as a vital force that sustains life and as a fragile system easily disrupted. The novel explores the impact of environmental degradation on human relationships and suggests the destruction of the environment. At the end of the story, the author thus expresses the moral, religious vision, and desolation of the people's environment, humanity, and traditional surroundings. Ultimately, this paper argues that *The Road* is a powerful exploration of a post-apocalyptic world.

Keywords: The Road, Relationship, Human and Nature, Fragility of Nature, Tradition, and Degradation.

Introduction

McCarthy is an American novelist who portrays the inner nature of human

beings in his novels. The people refuse to accept evil characters from society for their illegal and immoral activities. The victims of evil want to recover by engaging with

other people, but situations force them to become evil. As a post-modern writer, McCarthy exploits the nature of evil through some characters. McCarthy's malevolent characters are examples of the future world. It makes the reader shed a tear about their sin, and it causes them to avoid those kinds of activities that exist in the world.

Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road* is a post-apocalyptic narrative exploring survival, human relationships, and the environment. *The Road* portrays the natural world as a "post-apocalyptic wasteland" destroyed by human actions. The novel depicts a world in which an unnamed disaster has eliminated most of humanity and left the surviving population struggling to survive in a harsh and unforgiving environment. The literature study focuses on the relationship between humans and the natural world. It seeks to analyze how literary texts represent and interact with the natural world and how environmental issues are reflected in literature.

Literature Review

The Road by Cormac McCarthy has been widely analyzed for its bleak portrayal of a post-apocalyptic world and its themes of survival, love, and hope in extreme adversity. However, the novel's

ecological themes have received less attention in critical discourse.

This paper builds upon and expands upon these works by offering a unique perspective on *The Road* that emphasizes the fragility of the natural world and its relevance to contemporary environmental challenges. By situating them within the larger context of ecological discourse and connecting its theme, stop-recent-day environmental issues, this paper provides a subtle comprehension of the ecological themes in the novel and their significance in a post-apocalyptic world. *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy is interpreted by closely examining its language, narrative structure, and characterization—this paper portrays the natural world and its relationship to human society.

Fragility of Nature and Consequences of Destruction

One of the central themes in *The Road* is the fragility and complexity of the natural world and the consequences of its destruction. McCarthy portrays the environment as a vital force that sustains life and an easily disrupted delicate system. The novel's father recognizes the natural world's significance and role in sustaining life.

However, the novel also shows the devastating effects of environmental

degradation. The disaster that destroyed most of humanity has left the environment polluted and toxic. The father and son encounter numerous scenes of destruction and devastation, from abandoned cities to fields covered in ash. This can be seen in some scenes - "They crossed a river by a concrete bridge where skeins of ash and slurry moved slowly in the current. Charred bits of wood." (McCarthy 43) "The city was mostly burned. No signs of life. Cars in the street caked with ash; everything was covered with ash and dust. Fossil tracks in the dried sludge." (McCarthy 10) Here, McCarthy portrays the destruction of nature as a traumatic event that alters the essence of the environment.

The Relationship between Humans and Nature

McCarthy introduces a new and strange thing to the world: the illegal relationship between brother and sister, which they made unconsciously at the beginning and consciously later. These kinds of horror and evil also exist in the world in a hidden part. It is too hard for the readers to understand the state of their relationship, and it is against the moral values of ancient tradition and culture. They both shared their adultery on occasion, which shows the curse of a helpless brother and sister who lived alone.

They have suffered like anything because of their evil commitment to each other. It is an experience that no one has experienced anywhere. Through this, the author warns the world that evil and struggle would not happen only to strangers but also to their family members.

The novel depicts a world in which the environment has been transformed into a hostile and dangerous place, where the struggle for survival is paramount. In this context, the relationship between humans and the environment is fraught with tension and conflict. The father and son must navigate a world where the environment is their greatest threat and their only hope for survival. The father recognizes the importance of the environment in sustaining human life, and he teaches his son to respect and protect it. He tells his son: "You have to carry the fire. It is inside you. It was always there. I can see it." (McCarthy 234)

Here, the father emphasizes the need for the son to carry on the legacy of human civilization and protect the natural world that sustains it. The metaphor of carrying the fire represents preserving the knowledge and values that define humanity and the need to protect the natural world from further destruction.

McCarthy portrayed a different image of a father in *The Road*. The

relationship between father and son is believable and lovable. The boy has lost his mother in a fire and become motherless. As a small boy, he accompanies his father and leads his life. The father has shown much care throughout his whole life. He patiently answers his son's questions, does all the work for his son, and teaches him swimming, hunting, and many more. The boy becomes precious in the pampering of the father. The father shows the perfect path for that boy, leading him to be a good character in society even though they suffer significantly from nature, circumstances, culture, and poverty.

However, the novel also depicts the destructive impact of human activities on the environment. The disaster that destroyed most of humanity is implied to have been caused by human actions, and the novel shows the consequences of humanity's destructive relationship with the environment. The father and son encounter numerous scenes of environmental degradation, from polluted rivers to forests destroyed by fire.

“He... 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.” (McCarthy, 05)

The novel also explores the impact of environmental degradation on human relationships. The father and son's relationship is shaped by the harsh environment they inhabit and their struggles to survive. In this context, the natural world plays a central role in shaping their relationship. The father recognizes the significance of the environment.

They wished to have a relationship with each other, and they had the pleasure at last; later, they wanted to recover from their sin, but their situation made them live as sinners in society. In the post-modern world, she suffered like anything without proper care and love. A male helped her sister in many ways. Though they want to come out of all the sufferings, the sin does not want to leave them from it. The suffering comes from every direction. They felt tired of facing this entire thing at the same time.

“He knew only that his child was his warrant. He said: “If he is not the word of God, God never spoke.” (McCarthy 4)

Here, the man reflects on the importance of his son, seeing him as a sacred and divine presence in his life. The man suggests that his son is his “warrant,” meaning his justification or guarantee for existence. He goes on to say that if his son is not the word of God, then God never

spoke. This implies that the man sees his role as a protector and provider for his son as a sacred duty given to him by a higher power. It makes the individual to become live in horror till the end. He faced terrible experiences whenever and wherever he moved. The men followed him and threatened to die.

The relationships in society between brother and sister, husband and wife, and friends and surroundings contain some morals. It makes them to live a perfect life in the society. However, here, it was not a good tradition to follow an illegal and incestuous relationship. It avoids principles of life, tradition, culture, and purity among the people and creates a new tradition of relationships between people that become furious and ugly. The people want to live in modernism. They are devoid of culture and tradition. Live relationships exist in Western countries for the sake of pleasure. The characters have changed the nature and the attitude of the society.

The novel creates many themes like loneliness, suffering, dimness, sickness and blindness, and violence. They do not mind the traditions, culture, and morals of life. However, they distract their way from naturalism. They articulated a new tradition in the modern world that they were the forefathers of the particular tradition. The novel suggests that the

natural world shapes human relationships and that the destruction of the environment can profoundly impact human relationships.

McCarthy's novel portrays the illustration of relationships in many ways. Feminine characters suffer through guilty conscience in his novels. The visual of the mother in his novel is different from that of another writer. Here, the characters are all immature. They find difficulties at a young age and fall before their maturity. The only reason for their entire downfall is the carelessness of their mother, father, and society. The protagonists of McCarthy have lost their relationships and hope before their adultery because of a lack of care and love.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road* offers a haunting vision of a post-apocalyptic world. This paper has attempted to fill the gap by analyzing the novel's portrayal of the natural world and its relationship to human society.

This paper has argued that *The Road* portrays the environment as a force to be reckoned with and emphasizes the interconnectedness of human relationships and then the natural world. The novel's portrayal of the natural world as a fragile and interconnected system is a powerful reminder of the importance of

environmental sustainability. It serves as a warning against the consequences of human exploitation and destruction of the environment. The novel portrays the natural world as a vital force that sustains life and an easily disrupted fragile system.

An ancient society ruled that women should obey the words of their husbands and their parents. It was a struggle for women to express their thoughts and feelings to others. Modernism makes all beings, including animals, live independently. An author quotes that the future life of human beings may extend to the peak level or fall to where they start their lives in the woods as animals. In ancient days, there were many rules and restrictions to lead life morally and pleasantly, but modernism has drastically changed the lives of humans, like that of animals. The tradition of modernism changes life as meaningless.

This chapter is all about the relationship conflicts that exist in modern human lives two normal. Sometimes, the conflict is between two members, and sometimes, it may happen for more than two. However, the relationship plays a vital role in everyone's life.

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