

Exploring the Psychic Perturbation in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*

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Abstract

Cormac McCarthy's remarkable novel *The Road* encompasses pre and post war poignant circumstances. In his earlier works of fiction he elucidated the realistic events which occurred during his time. He was a Rhode Island-born writer. It is a popular genre as it is regarded as the post-apocalyptic novel, the book exhibits number of thematic, structural, and stylistic patterns. He has photographed the realistic events which deeply shook the country. The people encountered mental and psychological issues in order to survive in the land which is full of gun sounds and ash powders. While crossing each place, they face many problems. At the time the protagonists of the novel understand each other. A father acts as a guard for his young son, they sheltered themselves in some stranger's residence. Other people also survive like them in order to lead a peaceful life. Eventually, some people leave the dangerous place to find peace and happiness. *The Road* speaks of McCarthy's commitment to uphold some values and myths that have contributed for his reputation and popularity. This article intends to examine the trails and problems faced by both the protagonist and the migrants, and also the depth of love that exist even at difficult situations.

Keywords: Love, Migration, Post-apocalyptic Fiction, Survival, The Road

Introduction

Cormac McCarthy who is popularly known as Charles Joseph McCarthy was born on 20th July, 1933 in Providence, Rhode Island. McCarthy is an American writer and he is a prominent novelist, playwright and screenwriter. *The Road* was published on 26th September 2006, in the U.S. it was a post-apocalyptic fiction and tragedy. The book is all about the bewildering journey of a father and his young son. The Novel was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2007 and the James Trait Memorial Prize for fiction in 2006. *The Road* was adapted as a film in 2009 and it was directed by John Hill Coat. *The Road* was recognized as one of the remarkable novels as it comprises optimistic reviews and honors. New York Times recognized this novel as “Illuminated by extraordinary tenderness, simple yet mysterious, simultaneously cryptic and crystal clear. The novel offers nothing in the way of escape or comfort nevertheless its fearless wisdom is more indelible than reassurance could ever be.”

The novel revolves around the pathetic circumstances of father and son, who are compelled to leave the country however reluctant to depart from their own nation. Despite they are forced to leave because of war crisis that prevailed in their country. The novel focuses not only on the war crisis, it also emphasizes the enmeshment between father and son, survival skills, loss of identity, cultural misplacement and fear of existence. Despite their loss, the author has artistically described the optimistic behaviour of the major characters and their successful attempts to survive and how they rebuild their life happily.

Migration occurs for many reasons like war, famine colonization, education and employment. Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* is associated with the difficulties of migration because of war and is relevant to the poem *Cactus Forever* by Mahmoud Darwish. The poem

highlights, how the father and son face more struggles to migrate from their own country to another country for their survival. Characters in the poem endure both physical and mental pain when they are coerced to leave their homeland for survival. Like *Cactus Forever*, the father and the son in the novel *The Road* are projected as the victims of war, as an aftermath of the war they leave their country as a result they undergo psychological and physical trauma.

The father and his son face acute emotional stress, when they try to migrate from their country to survive after the war, like Amir and Baba in the novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, which depicts their migration from Kabul to United States because of Soviet invasion. “He emptied the box and picked up a handful of dirt from the middle of the unpaved road. He kissed the dirt” (Hosseini 112). Their peaceful life has been completely shattered in their own land and they are coerced to survive in the land of ash- powder and gun sounds. Humans need a peaceful place to lead a normal life, they also have career and dreams to achieve. If there is a no peace in their country, they search for happiness and tend to migrate for the sake of mere existence. The battle for survival made them to enter into the farm house in search of livelihood. However they realize that people lack the sturdy state of mind to withstand the suppression and commit suicide, which reflects as a pessimistic part of humanity.

Father holds a pistol that carries two bullets in which he trains his son to use it and that paves a way for his son to continue his life, because they are placed in a dreadful situation. When they stayed inside the car, father witnesses the destroyers as they approach them. Father alarmed his son from there and traps the destroyers. They enter into the house and the little boy found another boy in the opposite building, so he tries to express his kindness towards him. Father and his son observe that some of the destroyers chase the victims of homicide. In their travel, father

acts as the guard for his young son unfortunately he falls ill and is unable to be the strongest support for his son throughout his lifetime. He is completely disheartened when he is shot by the stranger and the gun shot made him to end his journey.

Conclusion

At the final stage of the novel the father dies and the young boy's life becomes miserable that his father is not with him to support him further in his life. This mirrors that every life in the world needs a support as interdependence is considered to be essential. The author ends the novel in the melancholic tone that boy the feels lonely after his father's death which resembles the loss of his hope in his life but in turn he is adopted by another family, realizing the existence of love.

He slept close to his father that night and held him but when he woke in the morning his father was cold and stiff. He sat there a long time weeping and then he got up and walked out through the woods to a road. When he came back he knelt beside his father and held his cold hand and said his name over and over again. (McCarthy 281)

McCarthy explores the tragic adventure of father and son in the novel by picturing the realistic situation of war where everyone in the novel tries to escape from the predicaments in their life, from the beginning till the end of their travel hoping for beam of light throughout their life.

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