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Dark Issues in the Works of Cormac McCarthy

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. American literature of the 20th century.....	3
2.1 The American South and Southern Gothic	6
3. Cormac McCarthy	8
4. The Issue of Incest in <i>Outer Dark</i>	12
5. The Issue of Necrophilia in <i>Child of God</i> (1973).....	15
6. The Issue of Cannibalism in <i>The Road</i> (2007).....	19
7. Unifying Elements in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy	24
8. Conclusion.....	25
9. Endnotes	27
10. Bibliography	30
11. Abstract.....	32
12. Résumé.....	33
13. Appendices.....	34

1. Introduction

Cormac McCarthy is often classified as one of the greatest living American novelists. His books as for example *The Road*, *No Country for Old Men*, or *The Border Trilogy* changed the way not only readers perceive the Southern parts of the United States, and McCarthy's work won favor of millions of readers and critics around the world. His diverse style of writing abounds with the themes of violence, good and evil, human survival, and bizarre behavior of men, but what is more important for McCarthy's style of writing is the fact that he approaches such themes mostly with pessimism and gloominess. McCarthy relishes in the very darkness. However, these topics themselves would not make him such prosperous author if not for certain beauty by which he is able to describe the bleakness and repulsiveness of the world we live in. McCarthy chooses the most horrible actions of men, such as necrophilia, cannibalism and murdering of babies, and explores the darkest shadows of human souls.

The objective of bachelor thesis will be to clarify style of writing and literary status of Cormac McCarthy, and to reveal the dark and dismal themes in his books in more detail, providing specific examples - the issues of incest, necrophilia and cannibalism. Further, it will search for the typical attributes McCarthy uses to describe the given issues. The thesis will concentrate on the resemblances of these three books and make an effort to point out the differences which appear in McCarthy's work.

The bachelor thesis will be divided into several chapters and subchapters. The theoretical part will consist mainly of an overview of the American literature of the 20th century where the most important persons and movements which influenced the United States from the perspective of literature and culture are presented. Subsequently, the thesis will illustrate the background of the literature of American South and the genre of Southern gothic, a genre Cormac McCarthy's books are often classified in. It will outline the main themes used in the works of Southern gothic and mention several of its representatives. The personality of Cormac McCarthy will be described separately in its own chapter, in order to present the reader with the background of his life in more detail; the chapter will include for example the information about McCarthy's personal life, published works, themes used in his works and style of writing.

The practical part will then focus more closely on McCarthy's novels *Outer Dark* (1968), *Child of God* (1973) and *The Road* (2006), and with each of them one particular

dark issue will be discussed, namely the cases of incest, necrophilia or cannibalism. The thesis will employ direct extracts from the novels to illustrate the methods with which McCarthy handled the given issues and his style of writing.

Finally, the last chapter will serve as a unifying one. The author of the bachelor thesis will examine whether the analyzed novels hold the similar aspects and way of narration in the given issues, or on the other hand, whether they differ completely from each other.

Regarding the sources for creating the bachelor thesis, as the most helpful one serves Michal Svěrák's *World in a Handful of Dust: Critical Reception of Cormac McCarthy's work*. Nevertheless, several other printed and electronic sources, including the interviews with the author himself have been consulted. Apart from the specialized literature, the complete work of Cormac McCarthy lightens the comprehension as the whole. In addition, the thesis will be completed with several appendices as for example the summary of analyzed books and bibliography of all McCarthy's published works.

2. American literature of the 20th century

The end of the American Civil War did not have an impact only on social or political situation of the country, but it also significantly influenced the literary events in the United States in the beginning of the 20th century. *In response to the war, a generation of writers spoke out against social, economic, and political injustices in newspapers and magazines. Among these were journalists known as “muckrakers” for their devotion to exposing the dangers of the city and the evils of monopolies.* [1] Remarkable authors of this time such as Frank Norris and Hamlin Garland dealt with the problems of farmers and other social issues from the naturalist perspective. Stephen Crane can be considered as another representative of this period with his piece about the life of New York City prostitutes, or on the other hand, Crane’s civil war novel *The Red Badge of Courage* which was written without having any experience from the battle.

The World War I and the early 1920s brought fierceness and persistence to the American literature. Many authors experienced the horrors of the battleground themselves. They subsequently narrated their stories in their books. Francis Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway belonged to this generation of restless and pleasure-seeking writers of 1920s. Another one of the most significant writers of this time was Gertrude Stein, the one of many who lived in Paris and came up with the term “lost generation”. The term “lost generation” referred to the group of writers who fought in the World War I and were not able to return into the real world and start living their lives like they were used to before the war.

The era of economic depression declared the end of peaceful and passionate years of 1920s. In the literature, it was proven mostly by the social criticism and searching the way out of depression. The authors dealt with the themes of the rich struggling to lead a decent life and the problems of poor common people. John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* is considered as a masterpiece of that time and corresponds precisely to the themes mentioned above; hope versus hopelessness, man’s connection to the land or the greed of corporation. [2]

Authors with desire to make the literature new; appeared in the course of time; they wanted to make it special and different from the traditional forms of realism and naturalism. They were called “modernists” and were [...] *driven by a conscious desire to overturn traditional modes of representation and express the new sensibilities of their time.* [3] The poet T. S. Eliot, authors William Faulkner or Ezra Pound belonged to this movement and enriched American literature with their work.

After World War II, the United States came out as the strongest world power and assumed the role of speaking on behalf of liberal democratic ideals. [...] The literature of the 1950s reflected the cultural preoccupations of stability and conformity as it responded to the aesthetic project of modernism. Many artists sought to depict what they took to be common or essential to all Americans regardless of gender, class, ethnicity, or regional identity [4].

The postwar literature did not achieve such success in the United States. It was caused, apart from the other things, by the fact that the American continent was not really affected by war. So the American writers approached this issue differently. Norman Mailer, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. or Joseph Heller employed parody and humor to describe the brutality of war.

The generation of beatniks emerged in 1950s in New York City around Columbia University. As a matter of fact, it meant the transformation of writers into nonconformists and their attempts of finding unique style. The authors narrated about the events of their lives; which meant wandering through the USA, experimenting with recreational drugs, enchantment by Eastern cultures and jazz music. They were using vulgarisms and slang expressions which were familiar to them. After a while, the movement moved slowly to San Francisco, California. *Allen Ginsberg's Howl set the tone of the movement with its wandering, oral rhythms and energetic rejections of conformity.* [5] Following his legacy the writers Jack Kerouac, W. S. Burroughs and many others continued writing in similar style.

As the Cold War ended, writers worked to broaden the cultural achievements of the 1960s, widening the scope of American experience and casting diversity and plurality as aesthetic ideals. African American women such as Toni Morrison, Lucille Clifton, and Rita Dove wrote in national, racial, and ethnic terms; likewise, Sherman Alexie and Louise Erdrich succeeded in writing in the often ignored or suppressed tradition of Native American literature .[6]

After the World War II the existing attempts to picture the world as it is, did not suffice to the contemporary demands. It was inevitable to come up with new method of writing. And so postmodernism emerged. It used the irony and parody and refused the noble ideas or gestures. The biggest figure of this movement was mysterious Thomas Pynchon, the author of *The Crying of Lot 49* who never really uncovered his face or identity. Among other postmodernists belonged for example Don DeLillo and Philip Roth.

In the late 20th century the occurrence of the Civil Rights Movements rose which of course meant the augmentation of the new fields of literature as women's literature, gay and lesbian literature and empowerment of the minority literatures. It emphasized the cultural diversity of single groups. Therefore arose the simile "salad bowl" – in which are the varied cultures blended but do not lose its characteristic form.

The American culture has transformed in many ways that were unimaginable for the prior generations. Contemporary authors dispersed in many different directions and started to deal with various literary themes. And therefore the genres like science fiction, fantasy, cyberpunk, horror fiction and many others strengthened. Contemporary American literature counts hundreds of authors of different backgrounds and interests. Still to name just a few, among contemporary authors belongs surely with his famous novel *Life According to Garp*, John Irving, who draws inspiration from the events of his own life. Another one, Chuck Palahniuk, the author of *Fight Club*, who shocked the world with the insolence to scoff at absolutely anything in his cynical and depressive stories about contemporary American society. The representative of the southern gothic and grotesque literature, Cormac McCarthy, and last but not least, Stephen King, the master of the horror stories whose work was several times rendered on the silver screen and earned a great success.

2.1 The American South and Southern Gothic

Fundamentalism, Ku Kluxry, revivals, lynching, hog wallow politics – these are the things that always occur to a Northerner when he thinks of the South. [7]

The southern parts of USA were always surrounded by a great amount of myths and tales. Every myth comes out of a story and then lives with its own life; spreads around, changes and connects with more and more details. In the course of time, plenty of Southern myths have eventually changed into stereotypes. The myths such as the vision of Southern agricultural way of life or the moral South which respects the Decalogue in all the circumstances, and where God influences all the human pursuance, were generally known. Since the end of the American Civil War, not every of these myths corresponded with the vision of America as the Promised Land. America, where a man can reach success, fortune and happiness with his own diligence, and where everyone has the same chance no matter the origin, place of birth or religion. The Civil War clearly exposed that the image of the United States as the non-conflict “new world” was absurd. This apparent repose was disturbed not only by the slavery, which was considered necessary for the economic development in the Southern states, but in the first place, the effort of South to preserve the regional identity. [8]

The South is often portrayed as the place where people are innocent and pure; the real paradise on Earth, where the family and community are essential. People still live in harmony with God and nature there. However, the Southern identity was shaped mostly in a negative way. The stories full of unmotivated violence, inability to forget the tragic times of the Civil War, emphasis on family relations often accompanied with incest or secretly sold spirits ruled the territory of South. It is likewise pictured as the “hell”. Fred Chappell, contemporary poet and novelist from North Carolina, commented in his article “The Image of the South in Film” that this hell can have several forms; the life in prison is the most frequent hell, but it can as well be the hell of life in a dysfunctional family or the clash with uncivilized world with the sovereignty of the lowest passions. [9]

With the extension of myths towards bigger audience, stereotypical Southern identity soon emerged in the American culture and literature.

Between about 1920 and 1940, the American South experienced an extraordinary explosion of cultural and intellectual energy. As the “Southern Literary Renaissance,” the phenomenon registered its greatest national and international impact

in the works of such men as William Faulkner, Allen Tate, Thomas Wolfe, and Robert Penn Warren. [10]

In the early 1930s, the Southern authors were part of a modern school of violence and horror called „Southern Gothic“. Truman Capote, Harper Lee, Flannery O'Connor and Tennessee Williams, the representative authors, destroyed the limits between the traditional genre of Gothic and the realism and mixed both together. The stories were influenced by the works of masters of horror fiction, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker and Mary Shelley, and were enriched by the grotesque situations, crude and morbid scenes, violence, crime and poverty.

Over time, mostly thanks to pop culture, the tradition of South reached out of its region. It achieved its biggest success in the field of cinematography which since the beginning of the new century noticed higher numbers of westerns and films with the Southern themes. As an example, can serve the films such as *Lawless* (2012), *Slow West* (2015), *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (2007) or remake from Coen brothers *True Grit* (2010). All of these deal with the issues of jungle juice, criminals and cruelty of men. However, the image of South reached to the television spectators as well, and mostly thanks to the first season of *True Detective* from 2014. Even though, *True Detective* operates mainly as the genre of crime, it occurs with the certain signs of Southern myths, bizarre rituals, incest and sinful behavior of local men. By the same token, the tradition of South broke into the area of music in which arose the genre of Gothic Americana influenced mostly by country, rhythm and blues and folk music. The lyrics of bands like *Calexico*, *Murder by Death* or *16 Horsepower* often refer to the sections from Bible and the themes of Christianity, which has its wide representation in South in general. Shows of Slim Cessna's Auto Club may for example suggest some kind of religious ceremony.

The Southern literature obviously belongs among the most vital fields in contemporary American literature. It finally acquires its well-deserved fame in the new millennium.

3. Cormac McCarthy

There's no such thing as life without bloodshed. I think the notion that the species can be improved in some way, that everyone could live in harmony, is really dangerous idea. Those who are afflicted with this notion are the first ones to give up their souls, their freedom. Your desire that it be that way will enslave you and make your life vacuous. [11]

Although, Cormac McCarthy does not really belong among the genre authors, he is connected with the Southern literature and the genre of the Southern gothic, therefore he and his writings are of prime interest of this Thesis. McCarthy belongs in the limelight of critics in present days. Even though, he wrote the post-apocalyptic piece and for example the dramas, there can be also found several westerns in the list of his works. Cormac McCarthy is considered as one of the most important authors of contemporary American literature. His legacy, following the tradition of Melville, Hemingway and Faulkner, is connected with certain kind of tragic ecstasy and nearly verging with madness, beauty and strangeness. McCarthy himself is an eccentric who tries to recede from any lights of publicity. During his whole life, McCarthy gave minimum of interviews and did not reveal nearly anything about his personal life. McCarthy would rather talk about country music, rattlesnakes, molecular computers or basically anything, than himself and his books. [12]

Cormac McCarthy (born Charles) was born in 1933 in the state of Rhode Island. When he was four, his family moved to Knoxville in Tennessee where McCarthy grew up and studied. He left the local university earlier and entered the United States Air Force in 1953 where he spent four years. McCarthy published number of short stories, while already studying at the university. *The Orchard Keeper*, McCarthy's first novel was published in 1965, and the reviews came out mostly positive. He married a classmate, Lee Holleman. They have a son, Cullen. In spite of trying, the marriage did not end well. After the divorce McCarthy left for Europe where he met his second wife, Anne DeLisle. Unfortunately, after their return to Tennessee in 1981, McCarthy and De Lisle got divorced, too. The failures in his personal life did not make him stop writing, though. *Blood Meridian or the Evening Redness in the West*, McCarthy's most elaborated novel, was published in 1985. Among others, it took credit in well renowned periodicals like *The New York Times* or *Time magazine*. Although McCarthy had already written several books before, *Blood Meridian* was the one that introduced his maturity as a writer.

However, the real honor and attention of the readership were given to McCarthy after the publication of the *Border Trilogy*; the existential westerns set in the very Southern part of United States. These three books stand right at the borderline of McCarthy's earlier and "new" style of writing.

McCarthy moved to Santa Fe in New Mexico in 1999 and after a long pause, the 2005 publication of *No Country for Old Men* moved his work forward more to the contemporary period. This crude genre fiction set in the area of Texan and Mexican borders in the beginning of 1980s signified the massive upswing also thanks to the film adaptation by Coen brothers.

After followed for-now-last McCarthy's book *The Road* published in 2006, representing the biggest diversion from McCarthy's Southern style of writing. The success of the new title was completely unprecedented. It was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award already in January 2007 and placed into the Oprah Winfrey's book club in March. It all culminated in April 2007 when the book was awarded with the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The following year McCarthy was awarded with the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction.

McCarthy has just finished his latest novel called *The Passenger* which will be published in March 2017, approximately fifty years after his first book *The Orchard Keeper*. McCarthy did not say much about this new novel, being faithful to his tradition, but he revealed minor pieces of information in the interview for *Wall Street Journal* in 2009: *I'm not very good at talking about this stuff. It's mostly set in New Orleans around 1980. It has to do with a brother and sister. When the book opens she's already committed suicide, and it's about how he deals with it. She's an interesting girl.* [13]

The choice of the main character is surprising regarding the former occurrence of female protagonists in McCarthy's novels. He rarely focuses on women; he does not write about sex, love or domestic issues. He is more or less a "man's novelist". [14] *I believe in periods, in capitals, in the occasional comma, and that's it.* [15]

McCarthy's writing style distinguishes from others with his sporadic use of punctuation. [...] *in discussion of punctuation, McCarthy stresses that his minimalist approach works in the interest of maximum clarity.* [16] He believes that a good author does not need the help of colons, semicolons, apostrophes or even quotation marks. In Oprah Winfrey's talk show in June 2007 McCarthy explained his arguments for the omission of punctuation:

James Joyce is a good model for punctuation. He keeps it to an absolute minimum. And, uh, there's no reason to, you know, block the page up with weird little marks. If you write properly you shouldn't have to punctuate. [...] Punctuation is important. It's important to punctuate so that it makes it easy for people to read. If you write well, you need less punctuation because the reader can follow who is speaking. Simple declarative sentences. [17]

Contrary to that, McCarthy uses complex and linguistically challenging style. He chooses “strange” language which abounds with special liking in neologisms, intentional multiple meanings and false similes. However, McCarthy’s syntax flows with facility, as if he has clear control over the direction and agreement of his thoughts. [18]

Though he writes mainly about the period between 1933 and 1948 of American South, he does not refer to the cotton plantations and the history of slavery. He focuses more on the underdeveloped area of the Appalachian Mountains with white traditional republicans, liberty and self-reliant residents. McCarthy depicts “his South” and its brutality and poverty.

McCarthy’s protagonists are predominantly white poor Americans; outcasts, criminals, hermits, who wander through the Southern and Western parts of United States in purpose to unravel the secret of their life destiny. These young men, often reticent, wander through the wild country looking for the salvation from their guilt or spiritual meaning of existence. However, most of them soon lose this faith. During their aimless wandering, they are confronted with the presence of evil. But even though some of them die, their hero lives on.

McCarthy approaches all protagonists from the apparent distance from where he does not really uncover their inner feelings, mind and thinking. Instead of this, he emphasizes sensual observation of whole scenes. McCarthy presents all people as hostile strangers and potential enemies. [19] He does not claim, though, that his protagonists are criminals, or on the other hand the saints. He says that if the society let them to behave in this way, the guilt is on both sides.

What is likewise important in McCarthy’s books is the relationship between father and son. In most cases, the relationship is not warm; the father is usually dead, missing or does not express any feelings towards the son. The son is on the other hand filled with feelings of love, admiration, fear and hate. The only exception is the last

novel *The Road*; treating the relationship of father and son in the background of destroyed and devastated America. [20]

It is difficult to talk about the themes in the works of Cormac McCarthy in general, when his list of novels consists of several distinct styles. Nevertheless, what connects all his books (westerns, dramas, traditional Southern style and post-apocalyptic novels) is surely the unimaginable cruelty and brutal actions of men in gruesome details. *McCarthy's prose restores the terror and grandeur of the physical world with a biblical gravity that can shatter a reader.* [21] This brutality is showed on the background of the themes like death, paternal love, fight of good and evil, atrocity, moral degradation, cruelty, isolation, sexual deviancy and raw animalism of men. McCarthy explores the darkest shadows of human nature.

McCarthy is able to describe human cruelty and write stories so repellent with mankind's perversion that it is sometimes hard to accept. In a manner of speaking, McCarthy relishes in the darkness and practically eulogizes the odes to the violence in his books. *All the author's works, especially *Outer Dark*, *Child of God*, *Blood Meridian*, and *The Road*, deal directly with violence, human degradation, and both human and natural evil. These are some of McCarthy's primary concerns, and he more than confronts darkness – he seeks its deepest recesses.* [22] Among the most deviant manners of McCarthy's protagonists certainly belong the cases of incest, rape, violent murder, cannibalism, killing of babies and necrophilia. The dark issues which are further discussed in more detail below.

4. The Issue of Incest in *Outer Dark*

I've seen the meanness of humans till I don't know why God ain't put out the sun and gone away. [23]

Outer Dark is Cormac McCarthy's second novel from 1968. The whole story starts with the incestuous relationship of siblings Culla and Rinthy Holme, which is however in the initial part of the book hidden. Their relationship is firstly rather assumed than explicitly declared. Rinthy is in the final stage of pregnancy and all indicates that the baby's father is Culla. In the view of the fact that they live in an isolated cabin, Rinthy is forced to deliver the baby by herself somewhere in the deep forests. In the moment of birth one of the most significant themes of the novel, Culla's attitude toward the incest, is revealed. This "crime" of incest arouses in Culla continuous feelings of remorse. Rinthy's pregnancy poses for him the "disease" which he tries to hide from the world. In spite of that, *Culla knows that, just as he could not avoid its birth, he cannot avoid the day when his incest is revealed by the presence of the child.* [24] He is ashamed of the incest and from that reason he also refuses to help Rinthy to give birth.

On the other hand, Rinthy's attitude to incest is broadly silenced by the bond to the newborn. As though she would not perceive the frightfulness of incest and the act she committed with her brother; motherly love overshadows her good judgment. She does not see anything wrong on the whole situation with Culla. The most important thing for her is now the baby she gave birth to.

Because of Culla's feelings, he finally decides to give the child away and abandon it in the forest. Only the idea that he should become the provider and guardian of his son is absolutely unacceptable to him. [25] So, when Culla abandons the baby in the woods and the baby is then taken by a mad tinker, Rinthy decides to follow the tinker aimlessly in search of the baby. She is determined to get her boy back. She does not feel any shame or doubts about her acts, and what is more, she shows no hatred towards Culla. Rinthy unlike Culla reminds the Virgin Mary with her naivety and purity. Rinthy's permanently present breast milk can be understood as well as the symbol of maternal fertility, the gift of life and mercifulness. [26] As if not even the sin of incest would defile her. Everyone she meets on her journey decides to selflessly help her. [27] She meets with the hospitality and affability; her purity and innocence arouse the feelings of friendliness and empathy in people. In reverse, Culla often gets in opposite situations. His nervousness and poor self-confidence makes him suspicious and

he is continually accused of strange misdeeds. It is almost like he unintentionally wants to punish himself for his crime of incest.

The very theme of incest is rather distant in *Outer Dark*; the story mainly unwinds around the events which followed the incest itself. McCarthy deals with the consequences of the incest and reactions of involved persons and their feelings of guiltiness. There is no scene in which would McCarthy describe in details the case of incest, the reader can only suppose what happened between Culla and Rinthy. McCarthy plenteously employs the rich folkloric sources of American south; this is where he draws from the obscene tales about rural brothers sharing the bed with their sister.

Rinthy finally finds her way to the tinker and starts to clamor for her baby. However, the tinker keeps refusing her. He blames Rinthy that she was able to leave the baby and he is adamant in his decision. During their disputes tinker reveals the truth about Culla and Rinthy's relationship and realizes that the child is their creation. As Rinthy, for the first time in the novel, reacts negatively to the incest and yells at the tinker: *It ain't nothin to you*, the tinker in the contrary, solidifies that he will never give the baby back to her. He banishes her from the cabin and does not ever want to see her.

The tinker then continues on his journey with all the goods and the baby on his back, when he happens to meet three men; the ones Culla met before. They hang the tinker on a tree and get hold of the baby and torture it. Later on, Culla accidentally arrives to this scene.

He looked at the child. It had a healed burn all down one side of it and the skin was papery and wrinkled like an old man's. It was naked and half coated with dust so that it seemed lightly furred and when it turned to look up at him he saw one eyeless and angry red socket like a stokehole to a brain in flames. He looked away. [28]

Even for Culla this sight at the baby is outrageous, and his paternal feelings suddenly awake in him. The men as if know that the baby is Culla's and his sister's, but Culla keeps refusing any relation to the child and claims that he has nothing in common with it. In spite of this, he still keeps asking about the baby and it is clearly evident that in a way he cares about it. The men try to compel Culla to admit his fatherhood, but he throws away the last chance and is forced to watch the murdering of his own son.

Harmon was watching the man. Even the mute one stirred. The man took hold of the child and lifted it up. It was watching the fire. Holme saw the

blade wink in the light like a long cat's eye slant and malevolent and a dark smile erupted on the child's throat and went all broken down the front of it. The child made no sound. It hung there with its one eye glazing over like a wet stone and the black blood pumping down its naked belly. The mute one knelt forward. He was drooling and making little whimpering noises in his throat. He knelt with his hands outstretched and his nostrils rimpled delicately. The man handed him the child and he seized it up, looked once at Holme with witless eyes, and buried his moaning face in its throat. [29]

The scene of the murdering of a child in *Outer Dark* can be considered as one of the most repulsive ones in contemporary literature. McCarthy narrates it with radical linguistic parable. The men represent the symbol of horrifying evil; these three are also figures of judgment and retribution, who face Culla with his overwhelming guilt and exact punishment of inevitable justice. [30]

The other day, Rinthy enters the outlying glade and suddenly her journey is in the end. She searches through the quenched fireplace and finds the rib cage of her son without even knowing what she found, and all confused falls asleep in the ruins.

And stepping softly with her air of blooded ruin about the glade in a frail agony of grace she trailed her rags through dust and ashes, circling the dead fire, the charred billets and chalk bones, the little calcined ribcage. She poked among the burnt remains of the tinker's traps, the blackened pans confused among the rubble, the lantern with its skewed glass, the axle and iron wheelhoops already rusting. She went among this charnel curiously. She did not know what to make of it. She waited, but no one returned. [31]

Besides the horrible image of death and sleeping purity of Rinthy, she finally comes to the mercy of God and long awaited salvation. [32]

5. The Issue of Necrophilia in *Child of God* (1973)

McCarthy returns in his novel *Child of God* from 1973 to the Appalachian region, and as it is usual for his work, describes it with facility; the myths and stories of brutality, uneducated people, acts of violence, and what is more, cases of necrophilia set in this very area. This part of the United States was in the 19th century known for the crimes of arsons, murders, crippling of cattle, sexual deviations and even more. These social conflicts were mostly caused by slavery, alcohol, illiteracy, provincial isolation and domestic violence. [33] In Ballard's mother country, these acts of behavior, murders and incest, are common. However, this behavior mentioned above would not be itself as interesting as the brutality with which it is described; the moral and physical degeneration occurred everywhere.

In certain rural areas, the term "child of God" was generally used for children who were, from unknown reasons, "strange in the head" and crazy, yet still they were the work of God. [34] McCarthy's novel depicts the transformation of a man and his loss of moral values. Lester Ballard; McCarthy's child of God, small and dirty outcast, who lives on the very edge of society, is slowly turning from a miserable lonely and brutal creature into a barbaric murderer. Ballard was left at the mercy; his mother disappeared when he was young and father committed suicide later on. It was Ballard, who found him hanged in the barn. And so, he remained alone without family, friends or home. Until a certain moment, he strives for human contact; he flirts with the girls at the garbage dump or tries to buy the jungle hooch. However, Ballard after all ends up beyond the borders of socially accepted behavior and is unable to make proper contact with anyone. He lives alone in an old and abandoned house away from the people. The absence of human contact makes Ballard's behavior incomprehensible for other people; he steals food, attacks dwellers and reader can even observe him during such situations like urination, defecation and masturbation. [35] That can in some way remind the character of Bloom from James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

The narrator observes Ballard in voyeur-like style in the situations where Ballard himself acts as a voyeur; he watches dead or live animals, people and nature. Ballard's perverse behavior even attains up to the watching young couples having sex at the rear seats of the car while masturbating. One cold winter morning, Ballard runs into a car with the chugging motor. There is no sign of anyone in the car, but when he comes closer:

The front seat was empty but in the back were two people half naked sprawled together. A bare thigh. An arm upflung. A hairy pair of buttocks. Ballard had kept on walking. Then he stopped. A pair of eyes staring with lidless fixity.

He turned and came back. With eyes uneasy he peered down through the window. Out of the disarray of clothes and the contorted limbs another's eyes watched sightlessly from a bland white face. It was a young girl.
[36]

Ballard looks slowly over the dead girl. He observes her open blouse and touches her breast, rubs girl's nipples and sniffs to her underwear, when he finally decides to have sexual intercourse with her.

He poured into that waxen ear everything he'd ever thought of saying to a woman. Who could say she did not hear him? [37]

For Ballard, this is the first real physical encounter with the opposite sex. He completely loses control over himself and starts to copulate with a dead girl and later on brings her body to his house. In this moment, Ballard is still able, in some measure, to resist his own passions. As he never really had a girlfriend or woman before, now he feels an opportunity to finally achieve the relationship he always dreamt about. The reader encounters the nonsexual necrophilia, when Ballard takes care of the dead girl. He regards her as his girlfriend; touches and watches her, buys dress and underwear for her, prepares food and washes her dead body.

He sat and brushed her hair with the dimestore brush he'd bought. He undid the top of the lipstick and screwed it out and began to paint her lips.

He would arrange her in different positions and go out and peer in the window at her. After a while he just sat holding her, his hands feeling her body under the new clothes. [38]

Practicing intercourse with dead body, he carries on the sexual form of necrophilia. In certain cases of necrophilia, there are even known individuals who cut the victim to pieces, nevertheless Ballard does not go that far; he cherishes the strong emotions toward the girl and does not want to harm her in any way.

Ballard's necrophilia can be seen as an evident example of individuals who does not have any opportunity to have a sexual intercourse with living persons. For that reason these people resort to defenseless bodies.

Over the course of the book, Ballard's approach towards the necrophilia changes. Were not for the discovery of the dead couple in the car, Ballard himself

would never decide to practice necrophilia. Only after he experiences “the pleasure” of this deviation, Ballard resorts to murdering and tracks his own victims. From regular necrophilia, where individual uses already dead bodies for sexual pleasure, Ballard moves to necrophilic homicide; perpetrating murders to obtain corpses for sexual purpose. [39]

First evident case of murder in *Child of God* is definitely the scene in which Ballard kills mother of a small child, who refuses Ballard’s indecent proposals.

She was lying on the floor but she was not dead. She was moving. She seemed to be trying to get up. A thin stream of blood ran across the yellow linoleum rug and seeped away darkly in the wood of the floor. Ballard gripped the rifle and watched her. Die, goddamn you, he said. She did. [40]

The captured woman becomes the very first exhibit of Ballard’s creepy mausoleum hidden in the labyrinth of mountain caverns. [41] After this incident, Ballard resorts to further odious murders and gradually hoards the bodies in his stone kingdom.

McCarthy approaches the issue of necrophilia as from the apparent distance. He does not narrate the sexual intercourse between Ballard and dead women in details, but he allows the reader to imagine the whole scene by himself. That is precisely what makes *Child of God*, and McCarthy’s other novels in general, outstanding work filled with unspoken atrocity. However, McCarthy once in a while makes a remark of Ballard’s gruesomeness.

Here in the bowels of the mountain Ballard turned his light on ledges or pallets of stone where dead people lay like saints. [42]

After a gunfight with a new landlord of Ballard’s house, Ballard arrives to hospital. The town inhabitants have already had the suspicion that it is Ballard who has been killing the women and girls from their neighborhoods, and they demand Ballard to uncover the dead bodies of the missing women.

One evening what appeared to be some hunters came to see him. They talked for a while without the door. Then the door opened and the room filled up with men. They gathered about Ballard’s bedside. He’d been asleep. He struggled up in the bed and looked at them. Some he knew, some not. His heart shrank. Lester, said a heavysset man, where’s them bodies at. I don’t know nothing about no bodies. Yes you do. How many people did you kill?

*I ain't killed nary'n.
The hell you ain't. You killed that Lane girl and burned her and that
baby down in the house and you killed them people in them parked cars
on the Frog Mountain.
I never done it.
They were quiet, regarding him. [43]*

The locals take a grand dislike to Ballard. They do not understand the barbarity he was able to commit. For them Ballard is the monster driven by the lowest instincts who attacks their women and raises the amount of danger in their region. Eventually, Ballard leads them to his sacred cavern, where he, in unguarded moment, runs away. For couple of days, Ballard slogs through the darkened caverns to find a way out. When he finally attains the longed-for freedom, he is forced to head instantly into a hospital because of his injury and exhaustion.

He is never legally accused of any crime. What is important for the book is certainly Ballard's attitude toward all his crimes. In the end, he is sent into a state hospital in Knoxville where he dies from pneumonia in April 1965. He never inwardly feels any guiltiness for his crimes and does not admit that he ever done something inappropriate. His body is subsequently transported to the medical school in Memphis where it is used as an instrument for students. Unlike from Ballard's victims, his body after all finds its peace.

*At the end of three months when the class was closed Ballard was
scraped from the table into a plastic bag and taken with others of his
kind to a cemetery outside the city and there interred. A minister from the
school read a simple service. [44]*

6. The Issue of Cannibalism in *The Road* (2007)

Cormac McCarthy's last novel *The Road* (2007) starts alike his prior piece *Outer Dark* (1968). The main character, the man unnamed throughout the whole book, wakes up from the dismal dream in the cold and dark night. Still spooked from the dream in which he stared right into the eyes of a strange creature, the man reaches out to find his son sleeping beside him. After a while, the reader finds out that the Earth was hit by an unspecified catastrophe several years ago and after that the world remained silent, darkened and veiled. All animals died, most of the trees and buildings burned down, and the ground is now covered by omnipresent fly ash. The survivalists wandering through the darkened country like ghosts depend on the food supplies from the times before the catastrophe and it is only a question of time when the last can of food will disappear.

As Michal Svěrák expounds in his book *World in a Handful of Dust: Critical Reception of Cormac McCarthy's work*, *The Road* represents a symbolical climax of McCarthy's present work in a given context. With his first novel *The Orchard Keeper* through *Blood Meridian* up to *The Crossing*, McCarthy evolves the motif of human violence and destructivity, which he perfectly leads to the apocalyptic completion in *The Road*. Disgusting manners of men can be solved only by radical and devastating hit of force majeure. This hit would once and for all flatten the humankind from the Earth surface. For that reason, the end of times can be perceived as a gruesome catastrophe, or as a glorious completion of God's plan. [45]

This hunt for food in *The Road* alongside with the decline of society and the fall of hierarchic order lead survivalists towards the odious actions. The only possible reaction to the collapsed sociopolitical system is the hysteria. [46] The Earth has turned into the world of nightmare, slavery, suffering and confusion; the world of vain efforts. [47] Due to the lack of food the number of murders rises and some individuals even resort to cannibalism. The occurrence of cannibalism is certainly the most significant atrocity in *The Road*.

It is important to mention that in western civilizations cannibalism was always understood mainly in a negative way. The American's vision of cannibalism was determined by the puritan fear of indigenous populations; this primitive point of view is associated with the fear of ritualistic atmosphere and the mystique of something unexplored. For the people from the areas of Polynesia, Papua-New Guinea or some Indian tribes cannibalism served as a special ceremony. The human meat should have had the medical effects and for example the consumption of the enemy's heart meant

for the individual gaining of his mental and physical strength. However, McCarthy situated the story in the area of the United States, so he does not depict the ritual cannibalism known from the native tribes with the regenerative effect, but he deals with cannibalism caused by the famishment. It leads to the state of total decline of community and their moral values. The only moment when McCarthy slides to the mystical kind of cannibalism is when the father and the son find the baby speared on the spit as a scapegoat.

However, cannibalism in *The Road* cannot be viewed as the main theme of the book. To the fore comes the fight of good and evil; the novel does not deal only with cannibalism and gruesome behavior of men, on the opposite, it pictures the preservation of moral values and protagonists' attitude towards cannibalism itself. The boy is for the man the embodiment of innocence. All in all, he is the reason why the man still continues with the journey. Not being for the boy, he would have already stopped believing. He tries to protect him, to save him from all the bad. The boy was born after the catastrophe and man strived to raise him into a decent human being. This is the reason why the boy tries to help everyone they meet on the road. But likewise, the man wants from the boy to realize that he lives in a world full of hatred, chaos and terror where he cannot trust anyone and where he struggles for survival. It often leads to situations when the boy does not understand why they cannot help the people in need. It is important to realize that the boy lives in a very limited world only with his father and with no other touch of humanity. This is the reason why the boy still needs to assure from the father about the good and the bad ones. He needs to hear that they still "carry the fire". In one moment, the boy starts to realize that they do not have enough food to survive and refuses to trust the father, denying so that they will be okay and that they would never eat anyone:

I want you to tell me. It's okay.
He shook his head.
Look at me, the man said.
He turned and looked. He looked like he'd been crying.
Just tell me.
We wouldnt ever eat anybody, would we?
No. Of course not.
Even if we were starving?
We're starving now.
You said we werent.
I said we werent dying. I didnt say we werent starving.
But we wouldnt.

*No. We wouldnt.
No matter what.
No. No matter what.
Because we're the good guys.
Yes.
And we're carrying the fire.
And we're carrying the fire. Yes.
Okay. [48]*

A particularly important character is the boy's mother, who decides to rather commit suicide than to face the possible rape, torture and gruesome death in hands of vagrant cannibals.

*We're survivors he told her across the flame of the lamp.
Survivors? she said.
Yes.
What in God's name are you talking about? We're not survivors. We're the walking dead in a horror film.
[...]
I am begging you. I'll do anything.
Such as what? I should have done it a long time ago. When there were three bullets in the gun instead of two. I was stupid. We've been over all of this. I didnt bring myself to this. I was brought. And now I'm done. I thought about not even telling you. That would probably have been best. You have two bullets and then what? You cant protect us. You say you would die for us but what good is that? I'd take him with me if it werent for you. You know I would. It's the right thing to do.
You're talking crazy.
No, I'm speaking the truth. Sooner or later they will catch us and they will kill us. They will rape me. They'll rape him. They are going to rape us and kill us and eat us and you wont face it. You'd rather wait for it to happen. But I cant. I cant. [49]*

She gives up the commitment of life and the obligation towards her own child because of the fear and never-ending despair. She does not find any sense in present world, and even her son cannot force her to keep on going.

One of the most significant parts of the novel is certainly the scene in which the couple comes across a southern ramshackle residence. The father wants to explore the house and look around for some supplies. But the son does not like it and tries to convince the father to go away. The father is unyielding; they have to go inside because they are running out of food. Eventually, they enter the house and find the trap door into which they break:

He started down the rough wooden steps. He ducked his head and then flicked the lighter and swing the flame out over the darkness like an offering. Coldness and damp. An ungodly stench. The boy clutched at his coat. He could see part of a stone wall. Clay floor. An old mattress darkly stained. He crouched and stepped down again and held out the light. Huddled against the back wall were naked people, male and female, all trying to hide, shielding their faces with their hands. On the mattress lay a man with his legs gone to the hip and the stumps of them blackened and burnt. The small was hideous.

Jesus, he whispered.

Then one by one they turned and blinked in the pitiful light. Help us, they whispered. Please help us.

Christ, he said. Oh, Christ.

He turned and grabbed the boy. Hurry, he said. Hurry. He'd dropped the lighter. No time to look. He pushed the boy up the stairs. Help us, they called.

Hurry.

A bearded face appeared blinking at the foot of the stairs. Please, he called. Please.

Hurry. For God's sake hurry.

He shoved the boy through the hatch and sent him sprawling. He stood and got hold of the door and swung it over and let it slam down and he turned to grab the boy but the boy had gotten up and was doing his little dance of terror. For the love of God will you come on, he hissed. But the boy was pointing out the window and when he looked he went cold all over. Coming across the field toward the house were four bearded men and two women. He grabbed the boy by the hand. Christ, he said. Run. Run. [50]

Instead of the food they find the cannibals' horrible store full of scruffy corpses prepared to be eaten. This horrific house and motif of cannibalism can remind of Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. In this iconic movie from 1974, the group of young Americans sets out for the trip to western Texas where they become the victims of degenerated family of cannibals. [51]

But in McCarthy's, in contrast to Hooper, a reader can find piece of consolation in the hearty relationship of father and son. In spite of the barbarity, on the background of the odious world there still exists hope. Father persistently persuades son that it is them who still carry the fire throughout the abandoned world.

We're going to be okay, aren't we Papa?

Yes. We are.

And nothing bad is going to happen to us.

That's right.

Because we're carrying the fire.

Yes. Because we're carrying the fire. [52]

In the very ending of the novel readers can find sign of positivity missing throughout the whole book. After father's death, caused by health problems and exhaustion, boy meets a family who recognizes in him a good person and decide to adopt him. Moreover, the family travels together with a little boy and a girl, representing the hope for the humanity.

7. Unifying Elements in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy

As have already been said before, Cormac McCarthy is generally considered as the Southern author. It is understandable that most of his books are set in the very region of American South. The main characters of the *Child of God* and *Outer Dark*, McCarthy's second and third novels, roam through the Appalachian Mountains and its surroundings. The setting of the Appalachia shows the nature of local inhabitants as well. It is portrayed mainly in negative way in McCarthy's novels; local people have reputation that bares tokens of violence, racism, poverty and cruelty. In McCarthy's books, the simplicity of these unwise and poor people is later changed into atrocious acts such as the necrophilia and incest, which is more specifically demonstrated in the chapters three and four.

In the case of *The Road*, where McCarthy moves away from the traditional image of the Appalachia, cannibalism is not caused by lack of intelligence, but results from desperation and embodies the people's last choice. By the same token, it should be mentioned that the protagonists of *The Road*, unlike from *Outer Dark* and *Child of God*, are not the ones who commit these appalling actions. On the contrary, they are the ones who try to escape from the man-eaters.

However, what readers encounter in all McCarthy's novels is a brutal way in which he describes the given issues. He uses certain detailed beauty and strangeness to talk about the things which are repulsive and unknown to a man. In spite of this, McCarthy does approach the themes from the apparent distance and he comments the given issues as the person standing away from the scene. He does not deal with the feelings and psychology of the characters and he lets speak the actions themselves.

Regarding his writing style, McCarthy attains the utter perfection in *The Road* with plain and brief language, and loses the overly descriptive style used in *Outer Dark* and the *Child of God*. Nevertheless, his vocabulary comprises unusual terms and neologisms in all of these books. Furthermore, McCarthy constantly follows his simple rule to use the minimum of punctuation in order to make the text more comprehensible.

These three novels are not the only ones where McCarthy deals with the dark issues, but it is evident that in *Outer Dark*, the *Child of God* and *The Road*, he opens the taboos which are not usually discussed openly and primarily they are not portrayed so often in literature.

8. Conclusion

The bachelor thesis studied an American author Cormac McCarthy, who is often classified as one of the greatest living novelists, and it also closely examined the dark issues in his three novels. *Outer Dark* (1968), *Child of God* (1973) and *The Road* (2006) were chosen as the crucial ones for the work because of their dark themes - incest, necrophilia or cannibalism.

The thesis was divided into two minor parts – the theoretical and analytical one. In order to understand the works of Cormac McCarthy and the themes he chooses as a whole, the bachelor thesis contains the chapters about American literature of 20th century, American South and the personality of Cormac McCarthy himself.

The analytical part of the work described in more detail McCarthy's style and topics which he uses in his books. It focused mainly on the reasons which preceded the awful actions of men and the way how the protagonists coped with these problems.

The main objective of the bachelor thesis was to compare the examined novels and determine to what extent they use similar aspects, or on the other hand, how much they differ from each other. It was discovered that there is no doubt that McCarthy uses similar methods in most of his novels; the setting is often placed to the area of Appalachian Mountains, protagonists are the typical Southern dullards and behave in this way, the relationships among characters are often very tensed. The awful behavior of men is mostly caused by the silly actions and dullness. However, in the later period of his writing, McCarthy turns away from the typical depiction of American South in 1970s and engages himself in a new style of writing, which is very well visible on the example of *The Road* - the picture of postapocalyptic America and the helplessness it brings.

It is certain that all McCarthy's novels embrace some diverse features, but it is important that McCarthy gains from similar domains and applies it then to his books. What surely encounters in all McCarthy's novels is the brutality he uses to describe behavior of men. It means that in all McCarthy's novels appear the aspects which resemble each other.

To the bachelor thesis were as well added the appendices – several pictures of Cormac McCarthy and book covers to illustrate the world of McCarthy from the

pictorial way, summaries of examined novels and bibliography of McCarthy's existing work.

In the view of the fact that McCarthy's published work comprises quite a large number of books, readers can assume that *Outer Dark*, *Child of God* and *The Road* are not definitely the only novels where McCarthy holds forth on dark issues. *Suttree*, for example, deals with the matter of sexual harassment with fruit, *Blood Meridian*, on the other hand, opens the topic of scalp hunters who massacred Native Americans which would deserve its own analysis and research. Therefore, this thesis may serve as the preliminary source of information for further study of Cormac McCarthy's literature.

The work on the dark issues of Cormac McCarthy was definitely interesting and contributing and helped me to better understand the traditions of American South and its own literature.

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11. Abstract

The bachelor thesis deals with the American author Cormac McCarthy and focuses on the dark issues in three of his novels. The bachelor thesis is divided into theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part consists mainly of an overview of the American literature of 20th century where the most important persons and movements are presented. Subsequently, the thesis illustrates the background of the literature of American South and the genre of Southern gothic in which is Cormac McCarthy often classified. Cormac McCarthy is paid attention to in a separate chapter, in order to present to the reader for example the information about McCarthy's personal life, published work, themes used in his work and style of writing. The practical part includes the analysis of three McCarthy's novels in which it examines the themes of incest, necrophilia and cannibalism. In individual chapters, the work is targeted mainly on the techniques with which McCarthy handled the given issues. *Outer Dark*, *Child of God* and *The Road* were chosen as the most significant books. Final chapter serves as a unifying one where the work examines to which measure McCarthy utilizes similar aspects in these novels or whether they differ from each other completely.

12. Resumé

Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na osobu amerického autora Cormaca McCarthyho a temná témata v jeho literatuře. Práce je rozdělena na praktickou a teoretickou část. Teoretická část se zabývá především shrnutím americké literatury 20. století, jejími hlavními styly a autory. Práce pak dále popisuje literaturu Amerického jihu a žánr jižanské gotiky, do kterého je McCarthy často zařazován. Osobnost Cormaca McCarthyho dostala svou vlastní kapitolu, ve které je čtenář blíže seznámen s osobním životem autora, jeho dosavadní publikovanou tvorbou, stylem psaní a tématy, která McCarthy ve svých knihách používá. Praktická část pak zahrnuje analýzu tří z McCarthyho děl, ve kterých rozebírá témata incestu, nekrofilie a kanibalismu. V jednotlivých kapitolách se zaměřuje hlavně na způsob, jakým McCarthy dané téma uchopil a jakým způsobem jej popisuje. Jako nejpodstatnější díla byla k této bakalářské práci vybrána *Vnější tma*, *Dítě boží* a *Cesta*. Závěrečná kapitola slouží jako sjednocení celé práce a ve výše zmíněných knihách zkoumá, do jaké míry McCarthy používá stejné způsoby k popsání daných témat nebo jestli se naopak jeho přístup pokaždé liší.

13. Appendices

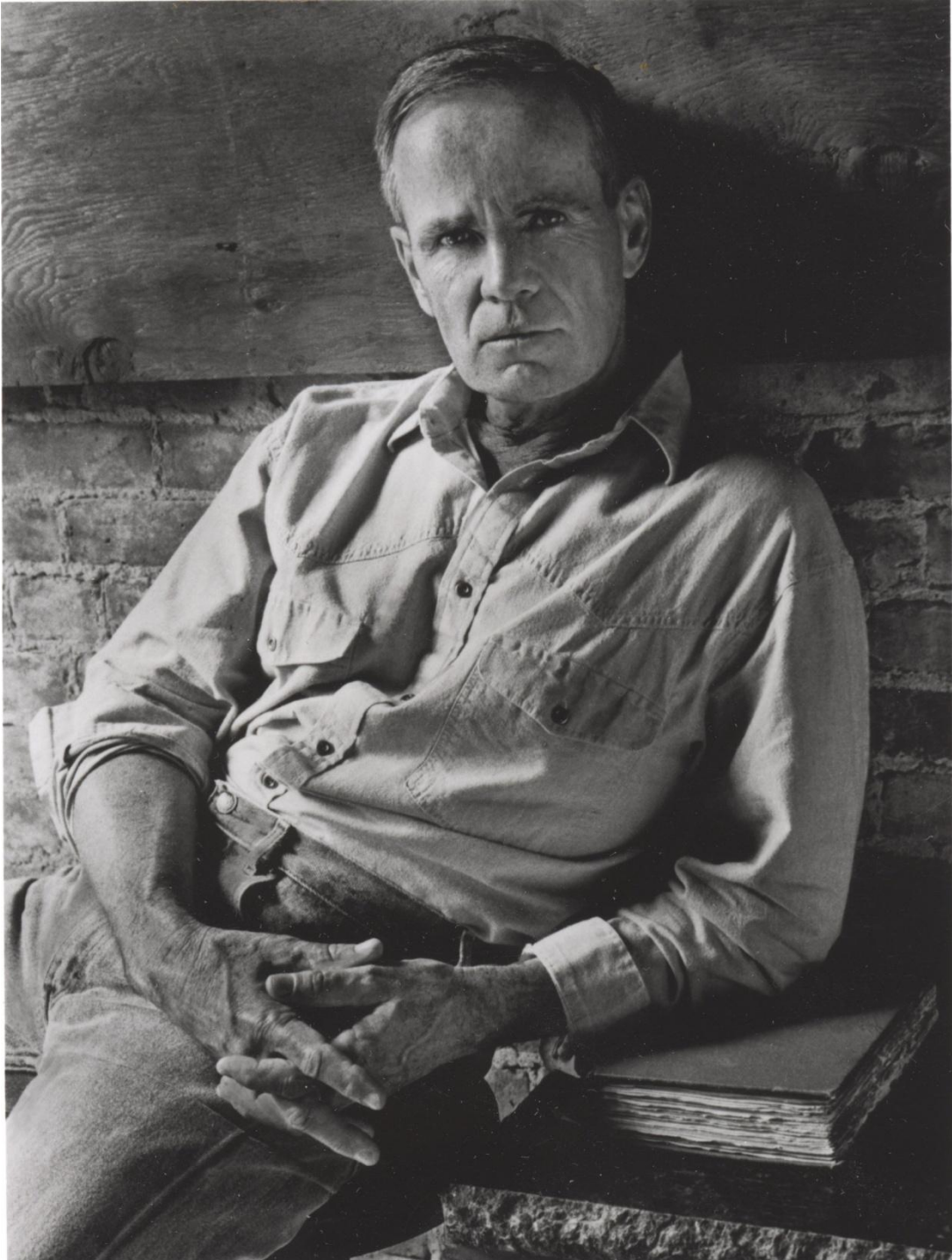
Appendix I: Pictures

Appendix II: Summaries of the books used for the analysis

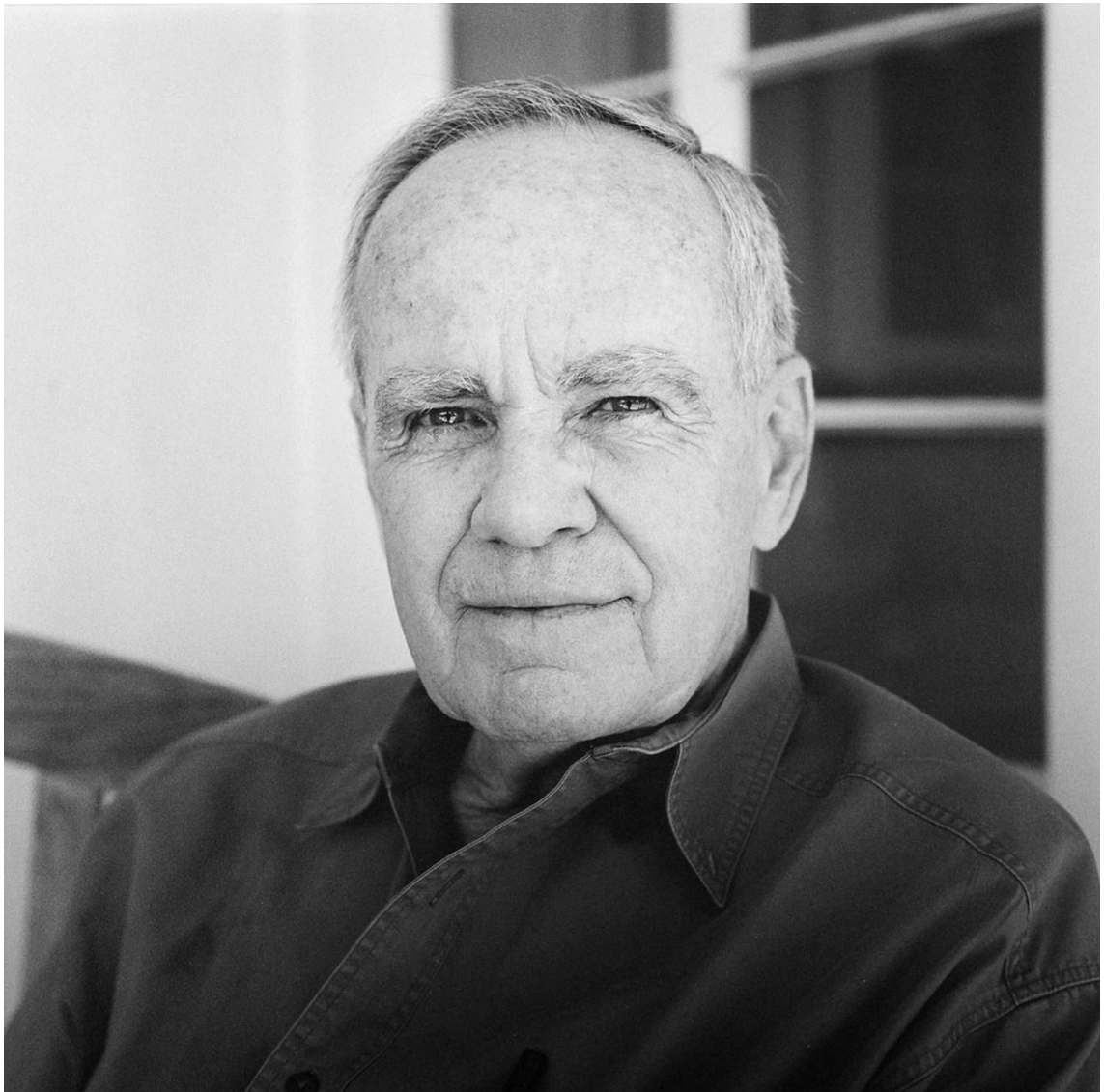
Appendix II: Bibliography of published works of Cormac McCarthy

Appendix I: Pictures

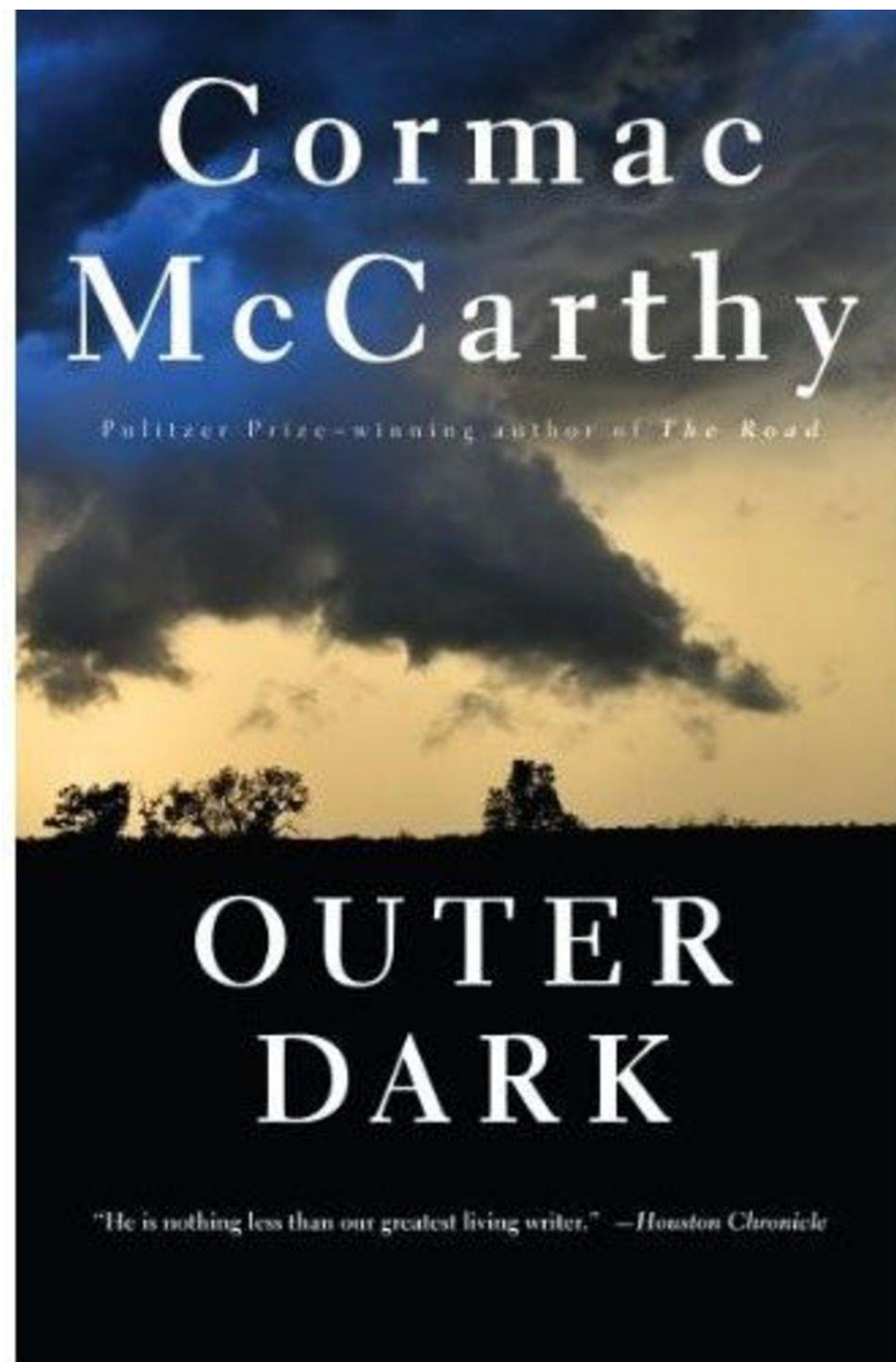
Picture I: Photography of young Cormac McCarthy by Marrion Ettlinger



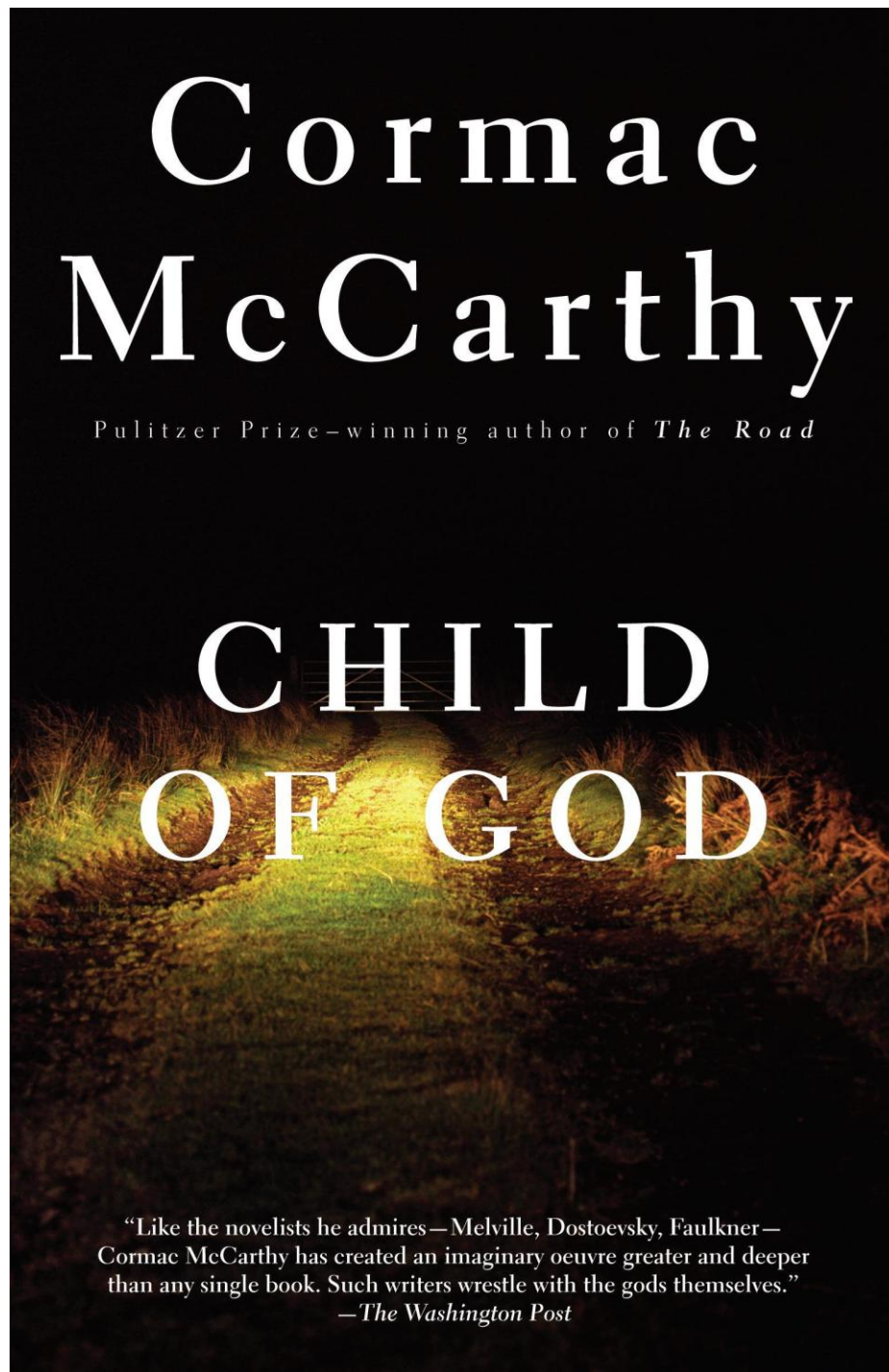
Picture II: Photography of Cormac McCarthy from 2013



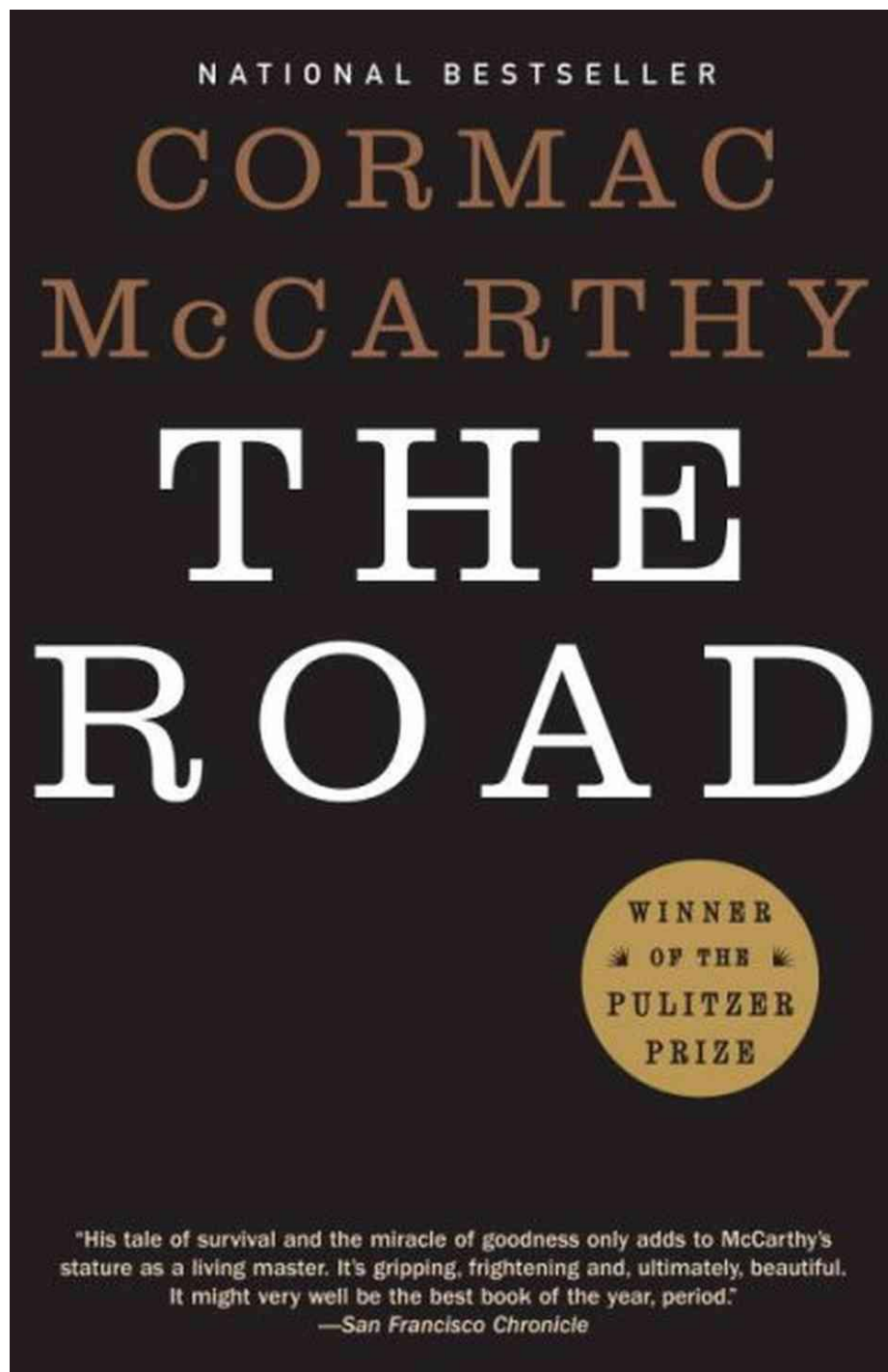
Picture III: Book Cover of *Outer Dark* (1968)



Picture IV: Book Cover of *Child of God* (1973)



Picture V: Book Cover of *The Road* (2006)



Picture I:

Cormac McCarthy's typewriter: A writer and his tools are seldom parted [online]. The Telegraph. 2009. [Retrieved 22th April 2016]. Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/6711628/Cormac-McCarthy-s-typewriter-A-writer-and-his-tools-are-seldom-parted.html>

Picture II:

Cormac McCarthy at 80 [online]. Eamonn.com. 2013. [Retrieve 22th April 2016]. Available from: <http://www.eamonn.com/2013/07/15/cormac-mccarthy-at-80/>

Picture III:

Outer Dark [online]. The Official Web Site of the Cormac McCarthy Society. 1996. [Retrieved 22th April 2016]. Available from: <http://www.cormacmccarthy.com/works/outer-dark/>

Picture IV:

Child of God [online]. The Official Web Site of the Cormac McCarthy Society. 1996. [Retrieved 22th April 2016]. Available from: <http://www.cormacmccarthy.com/works/child-of-god/>

Picture V:

The Road [online]. Goodreads. 2007. [Retrieved 22th April 2016]. Available from: https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6288.The_Road

Appendix II: Summaries of the books used for the analysis

OUTER DARK (1968)

The story takes place in Appalachian woods in the Tennessee at the turn of the 20th century. The main characters are siblings Rinthy and Culla Holme who live in a rural cabin in the woods. Rinthy gives birth to a child whose father is probably her own brother. However, Culla does not want the baby and throws it away and deludes Rinthy about its death. A wandering tinker shows up at the cabin and tries to sell Culla some of his goods. When tinker continues with his journey, he comes across a neonate tossed in the moss and he decides to take it with him. Meanwhile, Rinthy is desperate and constantly demands from Culla to tell her, where the child is. She internally feels that the child is still alive. What is more, Rinthy reveals a grave which Culla set up and finds nothing in it. After Rinthy's urging, Culla finally admits that the child did not die. Rinthy, still recovering from the childbirth, immediately sets out for a journey to catch up the tinker. She inquires people, who she happens to meet. The tinker has something that belongs to her and she is determined to get it back, but nobody knows anything. Rinthy's love to the child is getting stronger from day to day as she continues with her journey. Later, Culla comes to the cabin and finds out that Rinthy is gone; he decides to go and search for her. Contrary to the way people generously treat Rinthy, Culla lands himself in unpleasant situations being mostly considered as a robber and a villain. In the meantime, Rinthy catches up the tinker after all and she demands her child back. At first, the tinker refuses and starts to accuse her of leaving the baby alone. Rinthy strives to justify herself, yet she finally admits that the child is the creation of her and her brother Culla. The tinker is absolutely disgusted and warns Rinthy that if she keeps haunting him, he will kill her. But shortly after, the tinker makes up his mind and starts to feel guilty and decides to give the child back to Rinthy. However, he unexpectedly runs into the threesome of murderers who trail Culla throughout the whole story. The tinker unfolds the child's origin to the threesome and he ends up hanged on the tree. The child does not experience much better future, the threesome tortures the baby and when Culla enters the scene, the little cadaver is lying in the middle of the fireplace all burned down. Afterwards, Rinthy finds the fireplace and as if together with her look at the bones and small ribcage arose the peace in her body. She finally found her baby. The threesome decides not to slay Culla, they leave him alive so that he has to wander through the country and try to find his own peace.

CHILD OF GOD (1973)

The book is based on true events from the late 60s in the 20th century, in Tennessee. The story is narrated by the transformation of the main character, Lester Ballard, from a simple unwise and unattractive “country dunce”, into a murderer and necrophiliac. Ballard has no family; his mother had left when he was just a child and his father hanged himself shortly after. The society rejected Ballard because of his bizarre behavior and so he rests solitary for his whole life. The book begins at the auction sale of Ballard’s family house. Ballard does not respect any rules or standards of people and therefore he gets angry when his house is sold for the nonpayment of taxes. Ballard happens once to see a parked car at a resting place. He observes with pleasure a young couple during having sex inside the car. After a while, the couple notices Ballard and immediately drives away from the resting place. Afterwards, Ballard comes across another car with a young but dead couple. Firstly, he decides to rob them and leave them alone, but later he returns to the car and takes advantage of the dead girl. Finally, Ballard returns to his house with the dead body over his shoulder. The dead girl is hidden in the loft where Ballard repeatedly rapes and abuses her. He keeps buying her clothes and food and inwardly pretends that the dead girl is his girlfriend. However, in the halfway of winter Ballard’s house is swept by fire and burns out completely. Ballard is forced to move into a cavern with his remaining possessions. After some time, Ballard discovers another car and shoots the young couple in it down. He drags the dead girl into his “home” where he already hides all his previous victims. Later in the story, Ballard appears on the land of his former farm dressed in clothes of his female victims and assaults the present owner with rifle. Nevertheless, Ballard is shot and wounded by the landlord and wakes up later in hospital with only one arm. He hardly manages to realize where he is and the sheriff with the delegation from the town comes for him so that he can reveal all the dead bodies. Ballard leads others to his cave labyrinth where in unguarded moment escapes from the others. He suffers from hunger and cold for couple of days until he finds his way out. Ballard spends the rest of his life exhausted in a State Hospital. He is never condemned for his acts.

THE ROAD (2006)

The author narrates the story of a father and a son, who are traveling across the devastated land of the United States of America, several years after an unspecified disaster which hit the planet Earth. The post-apocalyptic world is hostile and unforgiving. The sun never rises, nor sets and the ground is covered by omnipresent fly ash. Towns and houses are all abandoned. The couple knows that they would not survive another winter in the north and so they are heading south to the coast even though they do not know what, if anything, awaits them there. The father and son have just one another; son's mother had committed suicide shortly after the disaster struck. They push a shopping cart filled with blankets, food and what is more - a revolver with two bullets – one for the boy, one for the father. The couple struggles for survival and fights with hunger and cold. The wariness of the father towards the strangers who they run into on the road is crucial for McCarthy's story. The father constantly suspects the menace in everything and tries to protect his innocent son from the 'bad ones'. However, that is precisely what the son does not understand and he strives to help everyone. What the little man probably comes to realize within the story is the danger of cannibalism which is waiting for them everywhere after the disaster. People have turned into heartless monsters when the hunger had overtaken the world. The couple even comes across the cellar overcrowded with people and corpses who are prepared to be eaten by someone. After a long voyage, the couple arrives to the beach. Father's health condition suddenly starts to worsen and he begins to realize his forthcoming death. He cannot continue with their journey and he persuades the son that from now on he has to walk by himself. The son refuses the fact that his father is going to die and repeats constantly the sentence *You said you wouldnt ever leave me.* [53] In spite of the son's refusal, the father dies. After three days of son's mourning, he sets out for the journey again. Shortly after, the son meets man and woman and after the initial doubts, he decides to join the family and believes they are the 'good ones' as well.

Appendix III: Bibliography of published works of Cormac McCarthy

Novels

- ~ The Orchard Keeper (1965)
- ~ Outer Dark (1968)
- ~ Child of God (1973)
- ~ Suttree (1979)
- ~ Blood Meridian or the Evening Redness in the West (1985)
- ~ All the Pretty Horses (1992) – First Volume of Border Trilogy
- ~ The Crossing (1994) – Second Volume of Border Trilogy
- ~ Cities of the Plain (1998) – Last Volume of Border Trilogy
- ~ No Country for Old Men (2005)
- ~ The Road (2006)

Short fiction

- ~ "Wake for Susan" (1959)
- ~ "A Drowning Incident" (1960)

Screenplays

- ~ The Gardener's Son (1976)
- ~ The Sunset Limited (2011)
- ~ The Counselor (2013)

Plays

- ~ The Stonemason (1995)
- ~ The Sunset Limited (2006)