

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

N° :.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

Sustaining Survival in a Post-Apocalyptic World:

Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Master Degree**

By: Boutaina BOUKHALFA **Supervised by:** Mrs. Nassima AMIROUCHE
Sarrah GHERSALLAH

Academic Year: 2016/2017

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Dedication

To those who are always there for me...

To those who have always faith on me...

**To: my Family Members, GHERSALLAH Sara, ABDELHAFID Meryem,
SEFSAF Ferhat, Wafa, Sabrina, Djamila, Salema Mazari, and TAHI
Hadjer. Thank You For Being There.....**

Boutaina BOUKHALFA.

Dedication

To the memory of my beloved FATHER...

To the boy in *The Road*...

Sarra GHERSALLAH.

Abstract

Throughout history, individuals who tended to undergo the sinews of such extraordinary journeys towards the unknown were to be glorified and circumambulated in their countries. Hence, their valiant endeavor to survive in the multitudinousnesses of complexities and to escape the ultimate dead ends is often engraved in the screen of mind of their peoples as they are kept twinkling just like stars over generations. In this respect, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy has received paramount success in the world. It has often been characterized as a post-apocalyptic literary genre, yet it is more about journey literature, which is the crux of the matter behind achieving the present research. Throughout the current research, we tried to encapsulate the historical background of the topic which is of high significance as far as such trends “apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic, journey literature“are concerned. The second part was consecrated solely to the study of the novel as we tried to approach one of the core concerns of *the Road*, survival. This theme was depicted and analyzed from different angles for the sake elucidating the authenticity and the originality of our work.

Key words: Apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic, journey literature, *The Road*, survival.

الملخص:

على مر التاريخ، كان من يُخاطر بالقيام بالرحلات الخارقة نحو المجهول محل تمجيد و تعظيم من طرف قومه. لذا تُعتبر النجاة من هكذا صعوبات جمّة و الخروج حيا من الموت المحقق إنجازا لطالما حُفر في ذاكرة الشعوب على مر الأجيال. و في هذا المنوال، رواية كورماك مكارثي "الطريق" صورت السياق السابق الذكر و حققت نجاحا باهرا حول العالم. من جانبها الأدبي، صُنفت الرواية ضمن "أدب ما بعد النهاية"، كما تم تصنيفها ضمن طابع أدب الرحلات الذي هو فحوا إنجاز البحث الحالي. هذه الدراسة، و في جزئها الأول، سلطت الضوء على الخلفية التاريخية للموضوع و مساهمتها في تكوين المفاهيم المتعلقة بالنهاية، ما بعد النهاية، و أدب الرحلات. أما الجزء الثاني من البحث فيتمحور حول تقصي مفهوم الصراع من أجل البقاء الذي يُعتبر أحد أهم ركائز الرواية. هذا المفهوم تم تقصيه و تحليله من زوايا مختلفة بهدف إبراز رؤية مبتكرة و جديدة للموضوع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نهاية "العالم النهاية"، ما بعد النهاية، أدب الرحلات، الطريق، البقاء.

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General Introduction

Surely some revelation is at hand;

Surely the second coming is at hand. (Yeats)

At the dawn of a new millennium, the world has been witnessing frequent occurrences. Beginning from the collapse of the World Trade Centre to the hole in the Ozone Layer, and now the nightmarish terrorism of the so-called ISIS. These events have horrified the whole world. They are deemed to be modern projections of the deep-set fantasy of all religions, the Apocalypse. These circumstances have raised the quest for life's meaning in a self-destructive world. Correspondingly, such a quest is of the interest of religious, scientific, and even literary figures.

Moreover, coping with the aftermaths of the world after the fall of its old order has been a subject matter of various literary works. *The Road*, written by Cormac McCarthy in 2006, is one of the narratives that picture grave new world after the occurrence of an unknown catastrophe. The landscape of the novel recalls the “the stony rubbish” of Eliot's *Waste Land* and invokes the “rough beast” from Yeats' *the Second Coming*. Though the sterility of the landscape in which all signs of life are inexistant, survival remains the objective of the characters. Each one seeks to survive according to their own conception of the term. That is, surviving the apocalyptic event depends on each character's plans, motives and equipments. As a result, the policy of survival is brought into debate. Likewise, the impact of seeking survival on the characters' actions is questioned by many critics. Therefore the main question that will lead this research is about how each character forms his/her conception of survival and how he sustains it in the novel.

McCarthy's Pulitzer Prize winner novel has captured an interdisciplinary appreciation of many researchers and critics from different domains like philosophy, psychology, and even ecology.

Willard Greenwood claims that *The Road* strengthened the position of Cormac McCarthy to be a pioneer in the American literary realm. He also argues that through *The Road* sharpened the literary fingerprint of his McCarthy's style which is of a plain narrative and a precise prose. To explain, though *The Road* narrates a post-apocalyptic event that implies a set of religious and ideological overtones, the language is simple and the style is plain (Greenwood.77).

In his dissertation, "*Apocalyptic Motifs in Browning's Childe and Cormac McCarthy's The Road*", Brandon Trung Moen makes a comparative study between the two literary works. This study is carried out by Campbell's Theory of Monomyth. Trung finds out that *The Road*, as *Child Roland*, is an allegory that reflects an inward human aspiration. He synthesizes that the landscape, individuals and communities suffer due to man's force of destruction (60).

Another critic, Inger-Anne Softing, discusses McCarthy's skill in manipulating dichotomies. The latter stresses utopia and dystopia as the central elements of the novel. This technique helps in contrasting and relating opposites like good and evil and hope and despair. In *The Road*, the physical and the psychological components are the core of such opposition. For example, the comparison between the polluted landscape and the pure inner self of the protagonists is one of the opposites that dominates the novel (Softine 704).

Furthermore, in his article, Paul D. Knox raises two questions about the ideology that can survive apocalypse that happened before the opening of *The Road*. He asks: "What sort of ideology survives an apocalypse, and why does it do so?". Then he concludes that the issue of meaning and meaninglessness is to be the tissue of survival. To explain, those who have a purpose to reach and a meaning to find are the most qualified to sustain their surviving (1).

Additionally, in order for the topic of the research. "Susataining Survival in a Post-Apocalyptic World", to be tackled, a set of objectives is intended to be reached. First, this paper aims at finding out the conception of survival for each character in the novel. That is,

every character has a given notion and purpose behind their survival. Another objective is to introduce post-apocalyptic literature because most of readers are not familiar with this genre. Moreover, the research will shed light on Joseph Campbell's monomyth, which is rooted in old mythologies and classical narratives, in a contemporary novel.

For the purpose of accomplishing the intended objectives, this research will apply Joseph Campbell's the Monomyth, specifically the Adventure of the Hero, in order to describe the journey of the protagonist in *The Road*. The description of the journey will provide close insights on how the hero, together with the other characters, is sustaining survival in the wasted country.

The first chapter will be devoted for some of the contextual elements that surround *The Road*, either historical or literary. As the novel portrays the aftermaths of an apocalyptic events, light will be shed on the concept of apocalypse and its religious origins. Equally, the chapter will provide some of the characteristics that pushed the apocalypse to be of a secular source during modern era. In addition, another portion of the chapter will give an idea about the writings that have reflected the apocalyptic warning and its global appeal. Then, some biographical elements about the writer and a brief summary of *The Road* will be offered in this part. Eventually, the chapter will end up by presenting Campbell's theory, focusing on the Journey of the Hero which will be the applied in the coming part.

The second chapter, on the other hand, will deal with the practical part of the research. First, Campbell's theory will be applied on *The Road* by reflecting the phases of the journey in accordance with the events of the novel. This will last from the departure until the return of the hero from his journey. The second part of this chapter will be about the sustainment of survival. To explain, each strategy is used by the characters to survive, it will be represented and backed up by the actions of the survivors. The end of this chapter will try to show the relationship of the journey with the theory and the sustainment of survival.

Chapter One

I. Surrounding *The Road*

Introduction:

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned
Yeats, the Second Coming*

The lines written above attempt to draw a picture of the globe at its end. As they were written on the aftermath of World War One, they depict the anarchy and the loss from which the world was suffering. However, Yeats' lines revive again in a 21st setting in a form of a novel. The latter exceeds the limits of apocalyptic horror and brings the second coming into sight. *The Road*, written by Cormac McCarthy, is thought as a restatement of the Book of Revelation. (Cooper 219).

In the heart of namelessness and timelessness, readers of *The Road* trace their comprehension of the story. As the events succeed in a post-apocalyptic world, McCarthy uses an allusive technique that overlaps with the past in order to picture the devastation of civilization and the historical ebb (Hage38). For instance, *The Road* echoes Kurtz' last words in *Heart of Darkness*: "the horror, the horror" that foreshadow the second millennium and it puts Eliot's *Waste Land* into a 21st century setting. Based on the contemporary context of the world, Cormac McCarthy's work takes place in a futuristic landscape that anticipates the scenario of the new millennium. The latter is depicted in the horrifying events which are man-made, moving through spiritual and humanistic experiences, until reaching an unassured hope at the end. It is, therefore, a recall for things fall apart and a reminder of paradise lost in a twenty first century's post-apocalyptic wasteland.

Although *The Road* is an allusion to the works mentioned above, it is distinctive in many considerations. The historical context that surrounds *The Road* is affected by

contemporary issues such as global warming and apocalyptic terrorism.

Moreover, the genre of *The Road* falls under a myriad of classifications like journey literature, horror, and mainly post-apocalyptic genre. On the light of these considerations, the first chapter is devoted for providing some contextual evidence that contribute to the construction of *The Road*.

1. Unveiling The Apocalypse:

According to Oxford English Dictionary, the word “apocalypse” stands for a situation causing very serious damage and destruction of the world. The word’s origin is from the Greek word “apokalupsis”, from apokaluptein which means to “uncover” or “reveal”.

Uncovering the apocalyptic world is a timeless and placeless universal mission. Back in history, ancient apocalypse was associated with religious documents found in the three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The three religions have each a holy book that gives an account of the apocalyptic prophecies and God’s destruction of the world.

The Hebrew Scripture:

The Hebrew Bible, or in the Christian traditions The Old Testament, with three major subdivisions: the Torah (the law), the Nevi’im (the Prophets), and the Ketuvim (the Writings). Every above subdivision consists of different books. The first letters of each subdivision describe the whole collection i.e. **TaNakh**. The Talmud is another sacred collection in Judaism, it is composed of composed of the Mishnah (a record of oral law), and the Gemara (supplemental teachings). Most of the Jewish eschatology derived from the Tanakh, in addition to the critical interpretation from the Talmud. According to Tanakh and Talmudic

commentary, the end of human history is portrayed with the domination of the earth by the Israeli nation under the leadership of the Messiah.

Jewish Prophecies propose that the Messiah will have both human and divine attributes. He will defeat his enemies, restore the borders of Israel, and sovereign a confederation of kingdoms from his capital in Jerusalem. The Messiah will introduce an age of world peace and prosperity (Leonhard, 22).

The Christian scripture:

Christian visions of apocalypse derive from four major Biblical sources: Old Testament prophecy, the Gospels, the New Testament Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. The latter is a new version of apocalypse, written with a strand of prophecy and in an epistolary format. The text contains the usual traits of apocalyptic literature: a vision mediated by angels, the use of symbolic language and numbers, the situation portrayed of crisis and persecution, an ultimate battle between the divine and the demonic, and a movement from the old to the New Jerusalem. (Leigh7)

Verses from the Book of Revelation about the Apocalypse:

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were Passed away; and there was no more sea.
And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

(Bible, King James Version, Revelation)

Apocalypse in Islam:

"O mankind! Fear your Lord and be dutiful to Him! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgment) is a terrible thing. The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling, and every pregnant one will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the Torment of Allah "

(Qur'an22:1, 2.)

Much of Islamic eschatology is derived from *hadiths*. Islamic eschatology is the Signs of the Hour (the resurrection) that were mentioned in the Qur'an and in the Hadiths. The signs are divided into small signs succeeded by great signs.

The Christ then will return to earth to fight the antichrist in Damascus then Palestine. The devastation molded by the damned of the earth, the coming back of the beast, and the destruction of Mecca will declare the start of universal resurrection and the penalty of the human spirits. (Filiu 18)

The signs that have been set so far were addressed by Prophet Mohamed (PBUH).

Huthafah ibn Asad said, "The Prophet g, came over us as we were studying among ourselves (knowledge pertaining to) the Hour. He said, 'What are you discussing?' We said, 'We are mentioning (affairs pertaining to) the Hour.' He g said, 'Indeed it will not come until you see ten signs: The smoket, the Dajjaal, the beast, the rising of the sun from the West, the descending of 'Eesa ibn Maryam, Yajooj and Majooj, three Khusoof (plural of Khasf, the swallowing of the earth and all that is on it) — the Khasfof the East, the Khasfof the West, and the Khasfof the Arabian Peninsula — and the last of them is a fire that will emerge from the East and that will steer people to their place of gathering." (Ibn Kather 72)

Apocalypse Now ¹

We are all, personally, to blame. (Toby Lichtig)

In the modern era, apocalypse has witnessed a second resurgence. The new form has emerged as a consequence of human deeds. Works starting from the mid 1900's have been the result of a newer fear of world devastation created by humans. Nuclear holocaust, environmental threats as global warming, alien invasion, and other acts of blindness represent modern projections of today's world (Lichtig, the Guardian).

¹ Apcalypse Now. Universal Pictures, 2015.

2. Modern Issues Provoke the Apocalypse:

As the gate of the 21st century is opened, the remnants of the previous century are still held in the memory of the world. There are visions of ambition to civilize the world through scientific and technological advancement; however, these visions are gloomed by the two world wars and the Cold War during which humanity experienced the most destructive weapons ever. Those weapons, particularly the nuclear ones, are a share of the burden carried into the twenty first century, they recall the beast in the *Second Coming*, or in other words, the end of the world.(D. Sokolsk and M. Ludes. Foreword)

Go Nuclear, Go Apocalyptic:

Since the post-World War Two, the world has witnessed a considerable development in the nuclear realm. Nagasaki and Hiroshima`s bombing marked a turning point in such development; they initiated a new age of warfare based on atomic bombs. The latter is deemed to be the most terrifying weapon that has been used ever by human beings. The explosion of the bombs brought the death of the two cities in few seconds. Yoko Ata, a Japanese writer, survived the bombing of Hiroshima, said:

” There was a fearful silence which made one feel that all trees and vegetation were dead...I thought it might have been something which had nothing to do with the war, the collapse of the earth which it was said would take place at the end of the world”(Langely,2006).

Moreover, during the Cold War there was an implicit-undeclared war fueled by the deterrent effect of the bomb. The world was in a bipolar state that put nuclear proliferation under control. This bipolarity threatened the peoples due to the “mutually assured destruction” which was balancing and horrifying (Addison, Jones 23).

This development has left a tremendous drawbacks on the life of the planet and the individuals . In his article, *You and the Atomic Bomb*, George Orwell warns humanity of the capability of destroying itself by its weapons. As the latter was available and cheap, argues Orwell, humans were to drop into barbarism. Likewise, the prevailing of nuclear weapon created a new reimposition of slavery in which non-productive nations were enslaved by the productive ones, and human beings themselves were enslaved by nuclear greed. (Orwell)

Global warming Raising Global Warning:

Throughout their existence on earth, humans have strived and thrived to facilitate their lives. Industry is considered as a vital sector in advancing human lifestyle; however, this sector is the source of carbon emission and the planet`s pollution. It is, therefore, believed that global climate change is bound to human activities. Scientists and experts assume that humankind`s days on earth are numbered. This assumption is based on the catastrophic climate change that is occurring all over the world. For instance, the rising sea levels and the melting of arctic ice sheets threaten coastal areas. In addition, the climate change turn farms and into deserts where people suffer from harsh conditions of massive famine and droughts. More than that, numerous animal species are threatened by extinction; for example, oceans become more acidic and marine animals like fish, dolphins, and jellyfish begin to die in large numbers. Moreover, the unpredictable weather based on global warming, causes giant storms which destroy cities and towns. Consequently, the increase in climate change is raising a global warning and proposing the question of the earth`s survival (Spalding 6-9).

Terrorism, an Overrated Nightmare of the 21 Century:

The concept of terrorism does not stick to a given definition. One proposed definition declares: *“It is hard to describe, but everybody knows it when they see it.”* Terrorist’s actions are fed by religious convictions, extremists’ thoughts, and apocalyptic cults. Terrorism poses a serious threat on the international security, this claim is sharpened by the attacks of 09/11 that stand as a reminder of the destructive nature of terrorism (Maerli 214)

Terrorists’ actions are typified by extreme violence which, in the recent time, is deploying Weapons of Mass Destruction in order to have a large impact. The use of such weapons raises the terror at the psychological state of inflicted people, the massive deaths and damages of physical substances. As a consequence of these horrifying images, concerns are increased over future new brand of terrorism : Superterrorists who hold evil intentions and possess destructive weaponry. Eventually, terrorism is a human-made and a human-self-destructive practice that is driving the world to the edge of its end. Echoing this, former U.S senator Sam Nunn said:

The most significant, clear and present danger we face is the threat posed by nuclear , biological and chemical weapons. The question is not whether we must for terrorism or for attacks with weapons of mass destruction. These two threats are not separate but interrelated and reinforcing ,and if joined together, become our worst nightmare. (Maerli 213)

3. Post-apocalyptic Writers:

Frank Kermode states: *«Men in the midst make considerable imaginative investments in coherent patterns in which, by the provision of an end, make possible a satisfying consonance” (Kermode 17)*

Through this quote, Kermode is trying to say is that people of the midst are always in state of anxiousness when it comes to the understanding the world .But the fact that there was a past and there is the present world concludes that there will be absolutely an end. This equation makes sense to people.

The need to unveil the ambiguity surrounding the end stimulated intellectuals belonging to different social classes to generate diverse texts about apocalypse. Writers were among those who were attached to the secular doomsday visions.

Writers in the process of unveiling this world produced a body of narratives where each gives his own perception of the end of the world. Texts have been varied according to their period of writing, from ancient books who undertook apocalypse from a religious angle as *John's Book of Revelation*, to modern books whose focus is on secular apocalypse related to human actions.

In her article entitled: "*Keeping Count of the End of the World a Statistical Analysis of the Historiography, Canonization, and Historical Fluctuations of Anglophone Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Disaster Narratives* ", Jerry Määttähas conducted a research about apocalyptic narratives and concluded that the resurgence of apocalypse in its new secular concept emerged in the first decades of the nineteenth century, with the anonymous translation of Jean-Baptiste Cousin de Grainville's *Le Dernier Homme* (1805) was published in English, and inspired not only a number of British Romantics to write about the last men on earth and the end of the world, but also Mary Shelley's much more secular novel *The Last Man* (1826). Shelly's *The Last Man* represents the starting point of the Anglophonic non-religious writings about the apocalypse. (3)

Shelly's *The Last Man* is considered as an apocalyptic allusion about the end of the human civilization. The novel provisioned the world in the late twenty-first century where a plague was spreading everywhere. As a post-apocalyptic text, the novel portrays a tragic love story and the gradual extermination of the human race.

Then comes the period of post-1945 where writers expressed their deepest concerns about the events coincided the period. The aftermaths of World War 2 and the introduction of new arms like the nuclear weapons. At that time, technology was able to realize the

destruction of the world and the extermination of its human beings. For instance, the Holocaust was the reason behind killing millions of Jews by the Nazis in 1930s and 1940s. In addition to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that pictured a living Armageddon. (Jones 28)

Writers of the post-45 period worked on trying to warn people of the cataclysmic destruction or decline of humanity. Among these writers Barry Commoner and his *The Closing Circle* (1971), Roberto Vacca's *The Coming Dark Age* (1973), Robert Heilbroner's *An Inquiry into the human prospect* (1974), L.S. Stavrianos's *The Promise of the Coming Dark Age* (1976), Isaac Asimov's *A choice of Catastrophes* (1979), Fred Warshofsky's *Doomsday: The Science of Catastrophe* (1977), and Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* (1982). The common aspects among these novels are their ranging to different pernicious scenarios related to astrophysics, climate, geology, and others linked to nuclear catastrophes and the collapse of society. (Wojcik 99)

Another contributing phase to the production of secular apocalypse is the traumatic events of 9/11. The attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States affected many people and was stored particularly in the American collective memory because it prevailed the weakness of the world's leading superpower and shacked the American national security. *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004), a novel written by Spiegelman shed light on the tragedy of 9/11 and its effects. Some other representative novels about the horrific event such as Messud's social satire *The Emperor's Children* and Philip Roth's fascist allegory *The Plot against America*, and Richard Gray's *The Falling Man* involved themselves in finding the real meaning of the event. (Keniston 8-9)

Traumatic fiction was not the only product of the post 9/11; Zombie novels also saw a reoccurrence in the American literary scene. The common link between texts related to 9/11 attacks and zombie texts is that they are both post-apocalyptic narratives.

Post-apocalyptic narratives portray a world without government and military systems, and reflect people's anxiety and concerns about their status quo. Zombie narratives bear a set of significant roles in which they work for improving how people, in their society, react to government and military concerns. (Kolpin 8). After the 9\11 events, the zombie apocalyptic culture has replaced the shadows of nuclear Armageddon in the American scene. American citizens have lived in a constant state of fear and paranoia and the zombie world become there spot to express their psychological concerns. In the fictional zombie world, small group of survivors bound their own tribe of close members mainly family and friends and suspect everyone beyond this scope. The most recent example of the post 9/11 Zombie narratives is Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*. It is an ongoing graphic novel series and television show that has captured a wide view. Other zombie narratives include *28 Weeks Later*, and *world war* (Neff 3).

4. Cormac McCarthy on *The Road*:

4.1 Insights on McCarthy's Life:

Cormac McCarthy, named originally Charles, was born in Rhode Island in 1933. He moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, at age four. Cormac was raised Roman Catholic; he attended Catholic High School in Knoxville, then went to the University of Tennessee in 1951-52. His major was liberal arts. Throughout his career, he insisted on his need for privacy, avoided public appearances and remained deeply absorbed in the work of writing, not in the construction of the public persona of Cormac McCarthy.

So far, McCarthy has published ten novels. *The Road* is his latest novel that gained him the Pulitzer Prize and advanced him to confront the American literary scene. As Richard B. Woodward asserted, "There isn't anyone remotely like him in contemporary American literature" (Hage 03). In his interview with Oprah Winfery, McCarthy told about the story of

the composition of the novel. He was in a hotel room in El Paso, when he awoke around 4:00 a.m. and saw lights on the horizon, he imagined that there had been a nuclear holocaust. This image stuck in his mind. About a year later, he started writing this book when he was in Ireland. He said he wrote it in about three months. When he started writing, he said that he realized that he had been writing it in his head for more than a year. McCarthy dedicated this book to his son John, which marks the first time he has dedicated a book to any person. (Greenwood 79-80)

4.2 Synopsis of *The Road*:

The Road, published in 2006, depicts a journey of a father and his son as they make their way to the South seeking a warmer climate. The journey takes place in a post-apocalyptic wasteland after an unknown catastrophe occurred and left “*No sign of life*” (McCarthy 20). The father decides to depart in order to survive the calamity. Unlike his wife who commits a suicide fearing the threat of cannibals who are among the survivors and named “the bad guys.” On their journey, the father and the son cross lands full of ashes and devoid of flora and fauna with few supplies of survival. Eventually they reach the South, precisely the sea, which is grim, colorless, and lifeless. At the end, the father dies leaving his son who meets a family that convinces him that they are the “good guys” who will protect him.

5. Mapping *The Road*:

Cormac McCarthy has published a body of ten novels. His narratives fall within three separate literary traditions: Southern gothic, the Western, and post-apocalyptic. His first four novels, *The Orchard Keeper*, *Outer Dark*, *Child of God*, and *Suttree*, are Southern gothic. His next five, *The Border Trilogy* (*All the Pretty Horses*, *The Crossing*, and *Cities of the Plain*), *Blood Meridian*, and *No Country for Old Men*, are Westerns.

His latest novel, *The Road*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in fiction in 2007, is considered as post-apocalyptic (Greenwood 14).

Among the elements of fiction McCarthy stresses on in his works is the sub-genre element. McCarthy created confusion to the readers concerning the boundaries of the genres in his novels particularly *The Road*. For critics, detecting the genre of McCarthy's *The Road* come up with the same impulse as the boy in the novel; we want to find ourselves on the map and feel justified:" *the boy nodded. He sat looking at the map. The men watched him. He thought he knew what that was about*" (153), that is, "*everything in its place, justified in the world*" (153-154).

This confusion led critics to draw different conclusions about the genre of McCarthy's novel *The Road*. Some critics positioned it in the stream of post-apocalyptic literary scene. Post Apocalypse narratives aim at depicting the harsh reality survivors confront after a universal catastrophe. The central idea of some post-apocalyptic fictions is the disaster itself, while other fictions' main concern is the aftermaths of the catastrophe and the strategies used to sustain survival, and this what *the Road* is about. In the novel the author describes in short what causes the destruction of the world and elaborates the survivors' journey. (Andrade3).

Recently, McCarthy has been asked in a conversation with the Wall Street Journal about the nature of the catastrophic event in *The Road*; he answered by saying:

"I don't have an opinion. It could be anything – volcanic activity or it could be nuclear war. It is not really important. The whole thing now is, what do you do? "

Post-apocalyptic fiction is a sub-genre of science-fiction. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'science fiction' as: "*imaginative fiction based on postulated scientific discoveries or spectacular environmental changes, frequently set in the future or on other planets and involving space or time travel*". The genre has been very popular in literature and, more recently, in other mediums such as films, comics, and video games.

The genre of science fiction is acquainted with images such as flying spaceships, aliens, and distant planets. Early science fiction narratives include *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift and Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, or the Modern *Prometheus* (1818).

Other critics place *The Road* in the genre of journey literature, particularly as that tradition has developed in American literature. The journey of the father and the boy begins with dispossession and displacement. both seeking a promised land on an American coast; the father and boy, an indeterminate southeastern coast that they hope will be brighter and warmer. The cause of the displacement in *The Road* is indefinite. The father of *The Road* is an isolated individual, focused on the nuclear family and distrustful of the company of others. In the book, characters leave, die, or disappear who are either unable to maintain faith in the journey or, perhaps, do not possess the stamina required of the journey itself just like the mother. The role of the father in *The Road* is a protector, nurturer, and caregiver of the son. The end of the journey tells about an ambiguous hope, the boy joins a family on the road who appear to be good people since the woman talks to him about God (241).The book offers little specifically upon which to build hope beyond these moments, readers are left to draw their own conclusions (Woodson 88-89).

According to other critics *The Road* belongs to the horror realm genre. However, there are no marvelous aspects, such as zombies, or ghosts, or ghouls, or supernatural or satanic reasons. Even the horror genre's feature of tearing-apart is not needless, but rather a reasonable, if abominable, consequence of human famishment. Cleave, a critic, classifies *The Road* as adventure story and epic or a grail quest in an underworld but ultimately a lyrical epic of horror. In truth, this unusual combination of lyrical descriptions of the landscape in sharp contrast to the details of Eco disaster, deprivation, and cannibalism may provide one of the more compelling aspects of this novel (Glenna 3-4).

Although mapping *The Road* into the appropriate genre brought critics to generate different perspectives and views, critics contribute in a way or another in emphasizing that Cormac McCarthy and his Pulitzer Prize, *The Road*, constitute an entire universe waiting to be explored.

6. Theoretical Insights :

Campbell's Monomyth:

Joseph Campbell, born in 1904, is an American psychologist and a mythological researcher. Throughout his research career, he came up with many common threads between myths and stories about heroes around the globe. In his lifelong research, Campbell discovered several basic stages through which most of story and myth heroes go through, regardless of the culture of the myth. This commonality of heroes' quests and journeys is named "*the monomyth*" that is the core essence of his book: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, published in 1949 (E. Palumbo).

Campbell's book is about the heroic journey that demonstrates the self of the hero, and his book is derived from a myriad of myths. The journey is typified by an imminent danger which takes the hero from an ordinary world to the world of struggles. To fulfill the adventure, the hero goes through ongoing perils. The latter involves the loss of one's self, the hesitation to be involved in the adventure, and challenges of a tremendous and terrifying nature. Throughout this experience, Campbell declares that a person would be filled with more vision as well as being intensified by the principles of spiritual life (Campbell 27). Hence, *the Hero with Thousand Faces* explains extensively a literary formula that stretches from the prehistory of old folk tales, myths, and legends until the present time. Such a book marks a great achievement in twentieth century's intellectuality (E. Palumbo).

As has been noted before, “the monomyth” is deemed to be the nucleolus of Campbell’s work. Its impact extends to the field of cinema, the creator of Star Wars, George Lucas, demonstrates that Campbell’s monomyth inspired him to set the foundation for his groundbreaking films (E. Palumbo). As a term, monomyth was coined by the novelist James Joyce in *Finnegans Wake* (Campbell 12). The monomyth is derived from different sources; the life of religious leaders like Christ, Mohamed, and the Buddha is one source, because the monomyth is about deep spiritual issues. Another source springs from mythologies, legends, fairy tales, and fables of some religious and tribal groups such as Judeo-Christianity and Buddhism, the Egyptians, the Native Americans, and the Sumerians...etc. Campbell’s purpose can be recognized through his words:

“My hope is that a comparative elucidation may contribute to the perhaps not-quite-desperate cause of those forces that are working in the present world for unification, not in the name of some ecclesiastical or political empire, but in the sense of human mutual understanding” (Campbell 50).

So it is his mission to focus on the elements shared by different myths, fables, and legends in order to build up a unified cultural heritage. That is because for Campbell, the commonality of the literary productions is a reflection to the shared human experience (E. Palumbo).

The monomyth per se is about the recurring and unavoidable transformations and renewals of one’s self. In order for heroes to accomplish their adventure, they have to go through three phases: separation or departure, initiation, and return (Campbell 30). Throughout these stages, the heroes move from what they are to what they are becoming. Likewise, the plot structure of their adventure symbolizes the evolution and the rediscovery of one’s self. As Campbell asserts: “*the hero is each of us*”, the outward physical journey of this hero echoes the inward psychological journey of mankind across times and spaces (Campbell 27). For instance death and rebirth, as recurrent themes in the monomyth, symbolize the death of an old pattern in one’s life and the rebirth into a new situation.

Eventually, the monomyth is a luminous dream that demonstrates the common cultural heritage of humankind. (E. Palumbo 2014)

The Adventure of the Hero, that is going to be applied in next chapter, is a part from the monomyth. This part follows the hero from since he departs until he returns back from his adventure. The journey is depicted according to the aim, the ongoing, and the accomplishment of the hero to his adventure. More precisely, the journey is divided into seventeen steps which come under the umbrella of: departure, initiation, and return (Campbell 40). However, some narratives deviate from norms of the theory by either following a different of steps or skipping some phases, as the case of *The Road* whose hero does not return back.

Jungian contribution to the Monomyth:

Carl Gustav Jung is a Switzer psychologist. His lifelong researches and trips to African, American Indian tribes, and other peoples made him recognize a set of commonalities, which are named archetypes, between those peoples. The universal patterns i.e. archetypes are shared among all stories and mythologies regardless of cultures or historical periods. Jung hypothesizes that apart from the human mind contains a collective unconscious shared by all members of the human species, a sort of universal and primal memory (Jung).

Inspired by the realm of archetypes, Joseph Campbell adopted Jung`s ideas and applied them to the world of mythologies. He defines the term of archetype in his own way:

Recall that an archetype is a representation of the Irrepresentable. It is a shard of something so enormous that the greater thing cannot be apprehended by the mundane mind. But smaller images of the greater —the kinds that are found in art, mythos, music, dance, and story—can be grasped by us mere mortals (Campbell 29)

In his work, *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell refined the concept of hero and the journey of the hero. The adventure itself witnesses a multitude of recurrent archetypes that are derived from Jung`s works. For example, the hero is a character archetype.

It is typified of possessing exceptional gifts, being fearless of death, and being destined to provide the world and mankind with spiritual meaning and comprehension of itself. He can be a warrior, a lover, a tyrant, or saint...etc. For another example, the archetype of the journey is a corner stone in Campbell's paradigm. Going through a journey enables the hero to deepen insight and meaning. Via various journeys throughout history, heroes have sought to bring back fertility, peace and renewal to their waste land (Campbell 9).

Conclusion:

To conclude this chapter, the context that surrounds *The Road* is of many dimensions. The apocalyptic event shapes the gloomy atmosphere of the novel. Such event springs from a modern projection of apocalypse that is not limited within religious boundaries. Rather, issues such as nuclear weaponry, global warming, and terrorism contribute to the restatement of apocalypse in a non-religious mold. This restatement has pushed many writers to portray post-apocalyptic scenes. The works that have been produced like *The Road* can belong to different genres: post-apocalyptic, horror, and even journey literature. The latter is to be the focus of the monomyth that will give a portrayal of the journey of the characters. Eventually, McCarthy's work has a historical and literary background from which he put a foundation for his road.

Chapter Two

II. The Journey of the Hero and the Sustainment of Survival

[Frosten bur i natta og telen bur i jorda.
Elden bur i menneske og skiftar ikkje bustad.]
*The coldness dwells in the night and the frost in the earth.
The fire dwells in man and is there to stay.*
(Vesaas)²

Introduction:

In the middle of the environmental and social collapse, the characters still struggle to maintain survival. Through his work, McCarthy demonstrates the reactions of the characters to the calamity and their actions to survive it. The contemporary French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard claims that human survival is the elemental issue in McCarthy's works, notably in *The Road* in which the writer explores the process through which the protagonists survive and the forces that hinder their survival (Greenwood 89).

1. The Adventure of the Hero:

“Myth is the secret opening through which the nexhaustibe energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation...” (Campbell 11)

The motif of the road has deep roots in the literary and the cultural traditions of American writing. It is not just a road as a location, but rather it is a journey that holds allegorical and archetypal dimensions; similarly, this is the case of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. The journey of *The Road* does not generate from scratch because it has historical and cultural backgrounds in the American literary scene. For Fenimore cooper it was track into the forest, for Melville the oceans of the world, for Twain the great Mississippi, and for Whitman a long passage to India. Therefore, the term journey is an umbrella that unifies the writers mentioned above; each of which seeks freedom, movement and exploration in open territories. Additionally, *The Road* mirrors a journey of the spirit that seeks Canterbury or Jerusalem in McCarthy's way (H. Schhaub). Moreover, the idea of the journey can be put on a universal

²² Vesaas, Tarjei. “Dei levande” (“The Living”). In 30 Poems. Edited and translated by Kenneth G.Chapman. Oslo: Universitetesforlaget, 1971.

scale beginning from the old classics until contemporary narratives. That is because journeys share fundamental structures which go beyond times and places (Pilditch 108-109).

By the same token, the monomyth is associated with landscapes, allure of travelling, and idea of change or becoming. These three components are the essence of any road across which the journey would be accomplished (Pilditch 109-110). The purpose behind applying the monomyth is to keep a literary analysis of a given text safe from private and unrecognized interpretation. As Campbell claims :”Freud, Jung, and their followers have demonstrated irrefutably that the logic, the heroes, and the deeds of myth survive into modern times” (Campbell 35). Such a theory, the monomyth, advances the literary interpretations to a universal stage and keeps them applicable in all times and places; chiefly, when it comes to journeys (Campbell 35). On balance, *The Road*’s namelessness of characters, events and places makes the work globally resonant. To explain, the journey of the unnamed father and his son toward the coast can happen anywhere at any time. Equally, McCarthy`’s work signifies an inward journey of the self that seeks discovery and enlightenment. That is to say that the great construct, the monomyth, underlies all literature from Homer to McCarthy (Pilditch 109-110). Consequently, *The Road*, or the journey, will be analyzed through the phases of *the Adventure of the Hero* to shed light on the common threads between the novel and Campbell`’s theory.

Coupled with the journey of the hero, *The Road* is the story of a quest in which the father and the son are in a “barren, silent, godless” (McCarthy 2) landscape seek to reach the coast. Across their road, they hold a quest that is the core of the novel and it is one of motives behind their survival. In his essay, Thomas H. Schaub, argues that readers of *The Road* are likely to recognize it as an allegory of spiritual survival (H. Schaub 2). By the same consideration, the idea of the quest is nucleus of the monomyth because every hero has a quest to accomplish. Heroes from old classics until contemporary writings have been “*All in quest for the essence of Truth and Wholeness in life —and, beyond that, for that which can*

light the dark again”, as claimed by Clarissa Pinkola Estes (Campbell 14).

Hence, the monomyth and *The Road* share the idea of the quest, in addition to other points that will be discussed later. This commonality will lead the journey of the father through Campbell’s pattern: the Adventure of the Hero. However, McCarthy’s quest is set in a contemporary context that may differ from the mythological and classical quests.

Departure (Separation):

This stage is to be the first in the mythological journey. It marks a departure from an ordinary world of the hero to an unknown zone. In this stage the hero separates from his mother that can be a mother as such or it can be even his mother land (E. Palumbo). In *The Road*, when opening the first pages, the reader learns that the father is already in the new and unknown zone, “*When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he’d reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him.*” (McCarthy 1). It all begins in the world of black roads, ashen scablands, and barren woodlands. There is no portrayal for the pre-apocalyptic world because the apocalypse has already begun before the novel opens. Thus, the journey of the man starts in the post-apocalyptic wasteland where he and the boy have to go through some steps to fulfill the stage of departure.

The Call to Adventure:

After the unnamed calamity occurred, probably it was a nuclear holocaust that caused a nuclear winter on earth (Greenwood 77), the father finds himself unable to survive another winter in his post-apocalyptic hometown “*There’d be no surviving winter here*” (McCarthy 2). This reason calls him to go to the South in hope of finding a warmer climate that may enhance the chance of his family’s survival (H. Schaub).

The context that surrounds the call is described by Campbell as following :” *Typical of the circumstances of the call are the dark forest, the great tree, the babbling spring, and*

the loathly, underestimated appearance of the carrier of the power of destiny” (Campbell 47). Likewise, this description fits *The Road* as it is written in its first sentence: “*When he woke in the woods in the dark...*” (McCarthy 1) . Equally, Campbell typifies the region of the call of being fateful, distant, and dangerous (Campbell 49). McCarthy’s landscape is also “*barren, silent, godless*” (2) and it is named “*the wasted country*” (4) where The blackness pervades all sides, in the ashen scabland and in the barren woodland.(14).

As shown above, such circumstances are challenging to the man whose supplies to survive are of a short lasting time. In addition to the two bullets he is saving to end his life and his son’s if they would ever face the cannibal’s threat. So the call that is received by the hero marks a decisive stage that can push his journey forward or pull it backward.

Refusal of the Call:

Following the reception of the call that is considered to be a call to live or to die, the hero finds himself in a dilemma (E. Palumbo). He is faced by harsh conditions of the present situation and offered a challenging, often dangerous, opportunity to overcome his situation. If he refuses the call, the journey will either stop or the hero will be just a subject to act upon. This claim can be approved by Campbell’s words:

“Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in boredom, hard work, or ‘culture,’ the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless...” (52)

The man in *The Road* faces his wife’s refusal to accompany the family to depart. She does not appreciate her survival with the family, but rather, she wants the husband and the son to join her ending up their lives. This is apparent in the last conversation with her husband:

*We`re survivors he told her across the flame of the lamp.
Survivors? She said.
What is God`s name are you talking about? We`re not survivors. We`re the walking dead in a horror film.* (McCarthy 57).

The wife does not only regret the days she has lived since the occurrence of the catastrophe, but she also blames the husband of his inability to protect the family in the future, “*You cant protect us. You say you would die for us but what good is that?*” (58). After these words, he gets confused because he cannot leave his wife easily, “*I wouldn't leave you*” (58), as he has to live for protecting and assuring his son's survival, “*That the boy was all that stood between him and death*” (29).

On the overall, the distinctive motive behind the wife's and the husband's survival draws a continuity for the journey. That is, the wife considers the idea of staying alive as a meaningless purpose, “*I don't care. It's meaningless*” (58). Her fear of the cannibals drives her to commit a suicide, in a passage she says: “*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*” (58). Unlike the mother, the father is ready to face it because he is in search for meaning and he has a quest to accomplish (H. Schaub). The two characters' ideologies are raising scholar debate, as Ashley Kunsu remarks, “*scholarly debate over what McCarthy is talking about has often focused on the issue of meaning versus meaninglessness*” (D. Knox 96).

Consequently, the father's acceptance of the call marks the beginning of the journey. His rejection to end up his life and to refuse the call to adventure shows that he is active to the destruction. That is to say, he is not a passive victim who abandons his quest. Such a reaction is addressed by Campbell in his book:

The myths and folk tales of the whole world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest. The future is regarded not in terms of an unremitting scree of deaths and births, but as though one's present system of ideals, virtues, goals, and advantages were to be fixed and made secure. (Campbell 55).

Crossing the Threshold:

Crossing the threshold is also known as: Entering the Unknown. It is deemed to be the fourth step in the departure (Campbell 69), but the succession of events in *The Road* sets crossing the threshold in the third position. In this phase, the hero enters a new world full of danger which is the fuel of his adventure. Campbell describes this stage as:

"The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades" (82).

The Road reaches the threshold in the first pages. As the father wakes up in the dark forest, he is next to the gate of the new strange world, "*Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world.*" (McCarthy 1). Here the hero gets into the world of the unknown leaving behind the old world of ideals and humanity that may not appear again (Søfting 709). For instance, in a passage the father says that there is no other stirring world because it has been taken by the good people who left (McCarthy 32).

Furthermore, the threshold is given a set of characteristics that are shared among the folk mythologies. It is a deserted place pervaded by darkness and danger (Campbell 68). *The Road* is no exception of this, it is identified by gray days, ashen landscapes, and blackened trees. In this waste place, people have no conception for time, "*He thought the month was October but he wasn't sure*" (McCarthy 2). In addition, they are threatened by the reduction of food which can hinder their sustenance of survival. As a first challenge in the threshold phase, they have to go through the mountains, but they don't have enough food. This is described in: "*There was a good chance they would die in the mountains and that would be that*"(McCarthy 29).

Belly of the Whale:

In this stage from Campbell's paradigm, the hero has already crossed the threshold and he gets to be more involved in the journey. Correspondingly, he is swallowed in the belly of the whale, or in other words, he is in a total engagement in the adventure. Campbell refers to this stage as below:

“Instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again. The disappearance corresponds to the passing of a worshiper into a temple - where he is to be quickened by the recollection of who and what he is, namely dust and ashes unless immortal” (84)

Comparatively in *the Road*, many obstacles frustrate the journey of the man. The first hindrance is as horrible as dragons and monsters in old mythologies, but it is of humane aspect. Along the road, troops of cannibals are in search for human meat to satisfy their hunger. The calamity brings a new social order that is shaped by “the good guys” and “the bad guys”. Therefore, in the horror of brave new world, the man is armed by a pistol and two bullets to protect his son and himself; in case they face the cannibals, the father can use them to shoot the boy and then himself before being eaten alive (Greenwood 78). From another angle, readers of *The Road* can infer easily that the man and the boy are “good guys”; likewise, they consider themselves as such and they strive not to be among the “bad guys”. This claim is apparent in many conversations between the father and the son.

*He turned and looked. He looked like he'd been crying.
Just tell me.
We wouldn't ever eat anybody, would we?
No. Of course not.
Even if we were starving?
We are starving now.
You said we weren't.
I said we weren't dying. I didn't say we weren't starving.
But we wouldn't.
No. We wouldn't.
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. (McCarthy 136)*

In addition the threat of the bad guys, the man and the boy face a reduction in their supplies. Due to the lack of the basic needs like water and food, they are in the brink of extinction. One scene may illustrate what was said above:

Two more days. Then three. They were starving right enough. The country was looted, ransacked, ravaged. Rifled of every crumb. The nights were blinding cold and casket black and the long reach of the morning had a terrible silence to it (McCarthy 136-137).

The remained sources of food from the old world fail to provide any sort of survival. Once they entered a used-to be supermarket, they found few ancient beans, destroyed softdrink machines, and coins in ash which have no more value in the wasted country (McCarthy 22). In addition, the natural sources of food and water are not fertile anymore to quench the needs of the characters. The roadside trees are dead, lakes are void, and nothing is living anywhere.

Furthermore the ghost of the past worsens the situation of the father and involves him more in the belly of the whale. His memories of the pre-apocalyptic life are present in his post-apocalyptic world. In a setting, he his son visit his childhood home where he used to live forty years ago. He remembers Christmas days and winter nights that were enjoyable with his sisters. Yet, the catastrophe marks the fall of the house of the father where he cannot find his childhood things. At the end he regrets visiting the house when saying: “*We shouldnt have come.*” (McCarthy 27).

In another scene, the man starts to forget about the old world that is not even a memory. He gives new names for things he forgets and puts the past into oblivion for “There

is no past” (McCarthy 56). However, sometimes the father can remember and tell his son about some old stories of courage and justice (54). The son, on the other hand, is preoccupied with the future imagination as he did not live in the pre-apocalyptic world. “*The child had his own fantasies*”, the narrator says, “*How things would be in the south. Other children. He tried to keep a rein on this but his heart was not in it. Whose would be?*”(55). So, the father`s trials to tell about the past are a sort of reviving his pre-apocalyptic days which are consigned into oblivion (H. Schaub).

On the whole, the past and the memories burden the father and confuse him. That is because he coincided the two worlds whose situations are of a total difference. He compares his childhood, “*This was the perfect day of his childhood. This day to shape all the days upon*”, with the ashy days of his son. McCarthy, then, uses memories to stress the fact that the old world has faded away. Thus the past and history do not matter much in sustaining survival after the apocalyptic event. Northrop Frye, in his *Secular Scripture*, says that memory is one`s companion that can convey only dark knowledge and visions of absurd(H. Schaub). This is present in the father`s words:

You forget some things, dont you?

Yes. You forget what you want to remember and you remember what you want to forget (McCarthy 11).

Another factor that worsens the situation of the father and sets him deeply in the belly of whale is his bad health condition. Freud suggested:

“All moments of anxiety reproduce the painful feelings of the first separation from the mother—the tightening of the breath, congestion of the blood, etc., of the crisis of birth. Conversely, all moments of separation and new birth produce anxiety.” (Campbell 47)

Correspondingly, earlier in the novel one learns that the father is suffering from a physical hardship. For instance, "...*He stood bent with his hands on his knees, coughing. He raised up and stood with weeping eyes. On the gray snow a fine mist of blood.*" (McCarthy 30). This quote resembles Freud's suggestion because the father got sick just after separating from his hometown. Most probably, his anxiety springs from leaving his home, his dead wife, and heading a road to the unknown. To exemplify, in a passage he remembered his wife, then "*He coughed till he could taste the blood and he said her name*" (56). Coupled with his sickness, the man was shot by an arrow in his leg that bled badly (283).

To sum up this stage from the journey, the father is in the heart of hardship. He faces the threat of the "bad guys", the reduction of supplies, the agony of past memories, and bad health conditions. These factors collide to drown him in the belly of the whale in which he has to swallow the hardship by overcoming it, or to be swallowed and defeated by it.

Supernatural Aid:

This stage is ranked the third in the process of departure, but according to the succession of events, it comes the fifth in McCarthy's *The Road*. The supernatural aid is a protective figure, often a little old crone or an old man, who encounters the hero and provides him with amulets against evil forces (Campbell 69). The supernatural does not indicate only something of magic like the Fairy Godmother in Cinderella, but it indicates also something that is "above the laws of nature" (E. Palumbo). That is because there are plenty of hero stories that do not have wizard or witches like the case of Ely in *The Road*.

Ely is an old man who meets the father and the son along *The Road*. It is the first time for the father to have a long conversation with a strange person other than his son. Their talk lasted for long, this shows that the father starts to build a trust with someone in the waste land. Equally, the father allows Ely to join their campfire and share food (H. Shaub). As a result,

his trust marks a turning point in the journey. Such a point is addressed by Campbell in his monomyth:” *One has only to know and trust and the ageless guardians will appear*”. (66)

In the light of the supernatural aid, Ely declares that there is no God. This declaration provokes the belief of the man whose reaction affirms his belief in God: “No?”(McCarthy 180-181). In another incident, the father accepts to give Ely some food as the boy insists do so. The old man wonders and says about the boy:” *Maybe he believes in God*”. The father replies: “*I dont know what he believes in.*”, but inside father`s thought, he recognizes that his son has values which contribute to the sustainment of survival. (H. Shaub)

Additionally, the old man considers the boy as a hopeful sign for a better future. Ely did never think that he would meet a child again. He even thought that the boy was of an angelic nature, not a humane. (McCarthy 183)

After the meeting with the supernatural figure, the father revives his belief in God. In addition, he makes sure that his son is secured with a moral code which enables him to keep his goodness and sustain survival. The old man also reminds the man that they are not alone, “*There`s other people on the road*” (McCarthy 181). After this step, the hero closed the first phase, departure, and prepares himself for the next.

1.2. Initiation:

Initiation is the second phase in the Adventure of the Hero. It is divided into six steps: the road of trials, meeting with the mentor, temptation, atonement, apotheosis, and the ultimate boon (Campbell). As it is mentioned before, some narrative deviate or skip from Campbell`s paradigm (E. Plumbo). This is the case of *The Road* that is applicable only to the road of trials and the ultimate boon.

The Road of Trials:

After departing from his homeland and getting involved in the journey, the hero gets a succession of trials that he must survive. In his trials, the hero is assisted by supernatural power which he has already encountered before (Campbell 89). It is mentioned in E. Plumbo's *The Monomyth in American Science Fiction Films: 28 Visions of the Hero's Journey* that in order for the hero to endure the road of trials, he may pass through the same phases of "Departure". He reaches the zenith of hardship which is equal to being swallowed in the belly of the whale. In addition, the hero is to be helped by agents of supernatural power that is similar to the supernatural aid. Consequently, these elements have been already analyzed in the previous phase.

However, there is a distinctive feature that typifies the road of trials from the other steps. In this stage the hero strives to overcome his opposites (E. Plumbo). In *The Road*, the father aspires to balance between a set of opposites. For example, he is compassionate with his son, but he is ready to kill him if they face the cannibals. He may do so because of his love and responsibility as the son is his world. As a result the father confronts, and even goes beyond, human limits (Søfting 710). For another example, the man has never made a conversation with a stranger before he meets Ely. The man moves from an introvert situation to an extrovert because he begins to build trust with someone other than his son (H. Shaub).

This is significant in the attitude of the father who tries to balance between the opposites of being open and covert at the same time. Eventually, the father tries to swallow down his pain and not to worry his son. In one scene, "*He woke coughing and walked out so as not to wake the child*" (56), in another, he "*felt a sharp hot pain in his leg.*" (181). Despite the hard health condition, he pretends to be in a well being in front of his son.

It is therefore a struggle between his physical pain and psychological will to keep going on the road of trials. To sum up, confronting opposites reveals McCarthy's exploration of good versus evil and the sustainment of hope in his works, the father in *The Road* is of no exception from that. (Greenwood 80)

The Ultimate Boon:

When the hero has completed his journey, he aspires for a reward that can be a beautiful princess, a kingdom, or a holy grail. However, the highest boon is enlightenment or revelation (E. Plumbo). In *The Road*, the child is the warrant of the father and all what stands between him and death. Therefore, the man seeks survival to secure the life of the son who is deemed to be the word of God," *If he is not the word of God God never spoke.*" (McCarthy 3). As a consequence, the boy's safety is to be the purpose and the reward of the journey. Late in the novel when the father is dying, he tells the boy to persist hope and sustain survival for he is the fire bearer.

You have to carry the fire.

I dont know how to.

Is it real? The fire?

Yes it is.

Where is it? I dont know where it is.

Yes you do. It's inside you. It was always there. I can see it (McCarthy 298).

Carrying the fire symbolizes a flourishing civilization and a continuous code of ethics held by the boy in a wasted world that is void from emotions and intellect (Cooper 221). The son himself is aware of the fire he carries, once the father told him:" *You're not the one has to worry about everything*". The boy's answer was: "*Yes I am, he said. I am the one*" (McCarthy 277). Therefore the child is the ultimate boon of the father's journey.

Though the father could not sustain his physical survival as he dies, he maintains the physical and the moral survival of the son. The latter is deemed to be “The Grail”, as the novel was entitled earlier, because the father imagines him like a “chalice”. This motif is rooted in mythology as it represents the treasure or the boon of the adventure (Cooper 222).

Return:

For the full norm of the monomyth, when the hero has accomplished his quest, he has to return back to his community. He has to do so in order to renew his society through the boon he gained, often wisdom or knowledge (Campbell 177). Yet, *The Road* deviates from Campbell’s norm as the hero or the father dies before he returns. The man fulfills his quest depicting his wife’s words, “...you wont survive for yourself” (McCarthy 59), and he secures the boy’s life throughout the journey. According to the archetype of child, the boy is a good omen as it spares hope for a future human existence (Campbell 120). In *The Road*, the boy is left in an open end when he joins a family that it is supposed to be among “*the good guys*” (McCarthy 304).

2. The Sustainment of Survival:

“*Nobody wants to be here and nobody wants to leave.*” (McCarthy 180)

The post-apocalyptic theme of survival concerns itself with how the characters in the novels are coping with living in a dystopian world. The remaining lucky few must survive an anguished world and endure the results of the calamity be it a nuclear war or divine apocalypse. It places humans in an unwanted position where basic life conditions are rare and hard to find.

McCarthy in his latest work, *The Road*, portrays a society in a state of crisis and chaos. A post-apocalyptic wasteland where survivors choose different strategies to sustain their survival. McCarthy in his fictional journey presents the post-apocalyptic society with a new

social order, he categorizes the lucky survivors into two main classes, the class of the “good guys” represented by the nameless father and the son as the main protagonists in the novel, other minor characters such as the man’s wife, Ely the Elijah with a minor role in the story. The other classification is of “the bad guys” represented by survivors turning to acts of cannibalism, and others who adopted robbery as a technique to sustain survival. (*The Road*)

The “good guys” category commits to a set of principles such as don’t eat people, don’t steal, don’t lie, keep your promises, help other, and never give up. The “bad guys” manifesto is related to eating human flesh and stealing their properties (*Wielenberg 4*).

2.1 The Conceptualization of Survival

Throughout the fictional events of the novel, McCarthy sheds light on a world after a calamity has taken place. The nature of the catastrophe is never mentioned in the novel so, it can be a divine end or an end related to human actions. Inside *The Road*, the survivors of this disaster are always in state of looking for food and shelter to sustain their primary urgent needs and also searching for meaning to their existence. In the process of searching, each of these characters develops survival strategies. The unnamed man and the son, the good guys, in their search for a better life conditions go through physical and psychological struggles. The physical obstacles as the environmental changes and human cannibalism, in addition to psychological barriers are related to the man’s passion to survive. He seeks survival for protecting his child, and for religious and moral reasons.

1-1 The Father’s Survival Strategies:

1-1-2 Morality Struggle and Survival:

One of the main issues discussed in McCarthy’s novel is the position of moral codes in a world where meaningless, violence, and social order have vanished and human error, greed,

and evilness has flourished. The father in *The Road* symbolizes the ideals of the old world because he has carried with him those ideals to the post-apocalyptic world. In a way the father succeeded in keeping the old world moral laws when he chose not to adopt cannibalism as a means to survival. But in another way he finds it difficult to keep these ethics inside him and at the same time promoting them to his child.

In the novel the man faces obstacles that shake his identity as a good guy. One incident is his encounter with a man who is at the point of death. The child wants to provide help to the man, but the man is not okay with it. The father justifies his attitude to the boy by saying “I’m sorry for what happened to him but we can’t fix it” (McCarthy 50). Later he tells the child: “he is going to die. We can’t share what we have or we will die too” (52). The man’s action seems to be a sort of selfishness and egoism but in a way justified under the circumstances of lack of food. But the justification of the father’s behavior can lead to engaging in justifying other violations and as a result profaning the codes of the good guys. At each time the father and the son meet someone on the road, a dog, a little boy, an old man, a thief, etc. they fall under the test of whether they should afford help or keep their supplies to sustain their own survival (Wielenberg 5).

Keeping the moral codes of the old world put the father in a situation where he had to choose between his and his son’s assistance request to others applying their moral principles and the reality of a harsh world and the act of giving would do no good.

1-1-2 The Role of Religion in Maintaining Survival:

Religious presence in McCarthy’s *The Road* is not clear. The father declares in a set of times that God’s existence is questioned. The most compelling evidence of the father’s suspicion is portrayed in the novel’s first pages when the man addresses his son, he states: “if

he is not the word of God God never spoke” (5). The above statement asserts that whether the father’s son is God’s word, or the whole cosmos has got no God (Wielenberg 1).

Another scene of the father’s doubt about the existence of a Lord is when he tries to speak to him, he says: are you there? He whispered. Will I see you at the last? Have you a neck by which to throttle you? Have you a heart? Damn you eternally have you a soul? Oh God, he whispered. Oh God (10)

Despite the fact that the father keeps on distrusting God’s entity, some events of novel reflect not just to his presence but also to his help and support to the father and the son in their survival journey. One of these events has befallen when the father and his child are on the point of starvation and discover an underground bunker occupied with food (McCarthy 138). Afterwards, confronting death by famishment another time, the child encounters a house in the far distance, and the house appears to contain food (McCarthy 202). These incidents has something to do with God’s miracles or they are just concerned with chance and luck? (Wielenberg 1)

Another key point to make in relation to religion and its link with survival is that the novel’s early drafts were under the title *The Grail*. McCarthy placed the novel as a type of grail narrative from the genesis book, and the boy represents the grail itself. Ancient grail narratives put an emphasis on the purity of the grail bearer as an important portion of the grail’s ability to come back to humans. The grail bearer is associated with the glory of the essence of divinity inside him and also associated with light. The father envisions his son as “golden chalice, good to house a god” (McCarthy 78) and sees seeking his survival as priority number one. (Cooper 223-224).

The Father's Survival in Search for Meaning:

Sooner or later they will catch us and they will kill us. They will rape me. They will rape him. They are going to rape us and kill us and eat us and you won't face it. You'd rather wait for it to happen. But I can't. I can't (The Road, 56).

This was the last conversation of the wife with the father before she committed a suicide. Though the father believed that “she was right” (58), his actions declared that she was wrong. At the end of the novel the father dies but is not eaten and the son joined another family. Throughout the novel, the father was aware of the desperate circumstances surrounding him but he tries at each time to convince himself and his wife that there lies a point behind the living struggles. In a scene he tells his wife that they are survivors; she responds that they are “the walking dead in a horror film” (55). The wife finds life meaningless whereas the father shares another vision of life, this paradoxicality of visions brings the question of what makes life meaningful to the father into existence. The answer of this question is one of the reasons urging the father to seek survival. The consistent search for life's meaning and bounding connections with his child, or in another word love is what strives the man to survive (*Wielenberg, 9*).

One illustrating scene to the above argument occurs in a happy scene the father and the son shared when they camped near a waterfall. The man attempts to teach the boy to swim: “He held him and floated him about, the boy gasping and chopping at the water. You're doing good, the man said. You're doing good” (*The Road, 39*). Another illustrating example of the father's insistence on bounding connections as a meaning for life is in one of his flashbacks. The flashback describes a day rooted to the man's childhood. In it, he and his uncle spend a whole day sailing across a lake to recollect one piece of firewood. They exchange no talk. The man distinguishes this day as “the perfect day of his childhood” (13). The day was great although the man and his uncle had no oral communication. The secret behind this greatness

is the chance that has been given to both of them to share their deep connections in which they are doing the same task; the uncle is sharing what he knows to the man, and the man is getting inspired from his uncle's work. This is what induces the perfect day, and this is what constructs human lives. (*Wielenberg9-10*)

Despite the terrifying terrors the man and the son go through, they share a close bond. This close bond is what draws meaning and value to their lives and merits proceeding the struggle for survival. For them, every day is a triumph, a day of achieved meaning and value. "The day providential to itself. The hour. There is no later. This is later. ... So, he whispered to the sleeping boy. I have you. (McCarthy 54). The perfect day of the father's childhood resembles every day he spends with his son. Days of common goal and shared and learned knowledge (*Wielenberg, 10*).

Parental Love:

"My job is to take care of you," he tells the child, "I was appointed to do that by God. I will kill anyone who touches you" (McCarthy 65)

McCarthy in his master piece, *The Road*, has painted a society in state of crisis. A wasteland where the darkest corners of human nature are prevailed. Selfishness, violence, and the darkest social practices have contributed with great deal in shaping the fictional events of the novel (Lane 3). In his work, He has depended on a travel narrative and an apocalyptic acme to unwrap the aggressive side of the human nature, but at the same time he has stressed on a bright side in the human character, the side that has to do with human sympathy and goodness.

Parental love as a dissent and straight strategy has been used by the father as a motivation to pursue his quest of survival. The father's love toward his child is fueled by his central role as a protector, instructor, and life supports provider.

His main job is around sustaining safety from the threats of the cruelty and danger of the new world (Dhurubathanan 2). As he stated "my job is to take care of you" (McCarthy 43). Unlike his wife's decision to put end to her life, the father lives in order to seek life for his child. He does not wish to preserve his son from the devastation of civilization and the threats they confront. For him, suicide would be the ultimate choice of the boy if he had encountered a real danger.

The man's passion for his son does lead him to guarantee his son's survival. The man oftentimes manifests the power of this love, most clearly in his direct determination to shoot and murder the man who denounces the boy's life. From the begging to the end of the journey, the man does not kill out of causing harm or for nutrition. He only detriments others (the man who attacks the boy and the thief who takes their cart) when they have endangered the boy's survival. His cautiousness toward others, which is well justified, appears chiefly for the security of his son.

The man has expressed his love towards his son in many occasions. One occasion is when he was dying, he tells him to eat his part of the food, rather than sustaining it for himself in hope of healing him. Another occasion is the different presents the father has obtained for his child such as a can of Coca Cola, a powdered drink mix, and other donations. These little gifts the father has devoted to the son present one dimension of the love he holds for his son.

The Boy and the Implications of "Carrying the Fire"

The boy in *The Road* is born in a post-apocalyptic world. He is a blank slated about what the world was like before the apocalypse. The boy has been operated to believe that he and his father are the "good guys". Completely through the novel, the boy has proposed to offer help to the people he and his father meet.

The boy has adopted the old world morals that he has bestowed from his father's stories. By repeatedly proposing assistance to other survivors, he seems to have no doubt in human's goodness.

One of the instances that depict the boy's will to help others is his encounter with an old man struck by lightning calls himself Ely. The boy insists on providing help and food to the man through his father strongly opposes the idea due to the lack of supplies (McCarthy 141). The child always points to the subsistence of other good guys but the father seems to have no existence in his ethical universe. (*Johns-Putra 19-20*)

"*Because we are carrying the fire*" (83). This expression is of great importance. It has pushed the boy to carry out his survival journey. The father gives his son hope when stating again and again that they are carrying the fire. The word "fire" has got many interpretations.

Literally speaking, the man and the son are carrying the fire, or the tools to produce it. The fire keeps them warm, cooks their food, and provides light to the father so that he can read stories to his son at night.

In another perspective, fire is the infrastructure of civilization and it is the initial instrument of the devastation of civilization in *The Road*. Perhaps to carry the fire is to carry the seeds of civilization. If civilization is to come back to the universe, it will be through the endeavor of the boy. The boy is the bearer of the fire as portrayed in the last scenes of the novel when the father was dying the son asked him if the fire is real the father replied by yes then the child asked about its location, the father says: "it's inside you. It was always there. I can see it" (234) (*Wielenberg 3*).

In the Christian belief, the Holy Spirit is most of the times acquainted with a flame or fire, is like the heart being enlightened by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Lawrence 164).

According to another interpretation the fire is life. The fire is life in its full passion to live. The bearer of this fire must have this eagerness to live. In the text, the father's job is to

light that fire that burns inside the boy's spirit. Every father needs to enlighten his son. In the novel, McCarthy is referring to god and god is the father himself. The father who is inclined to sacrifice himself for his son is god. God is in every human being and it's inside essence is the fire. McCarthy is urging to keep carrying the fire otherwise the world of nothingness would prevail (DEČO 27).

The notion of "carrying the fire" has contributed to great extent in motivating the son to complete his search for life's meaning in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. Earlier in the novel the boy seems to realize that he has a mission when the father tells him that he does not have to worry about everything, and the boy replies "*I am the one who has to*" (277)

The Mother`s Conception of Survival :

After years of her son's birth, the mother in the fictional events of *The Road* decides to put an end to her life. The motives behind her call accounts for different stories.

One proposed story is her psychological and physical exhaustion due to the tremendous efforts she made to survive a post-apocalyptic world reality. The mother killed herself to ameliorate her son's and husband's means of survival. When the father decided their urgent departure to the South looking for better life equipment because "there would be no surviving another winter" (*The Road* 4), the mother was in a state of physical and emotional illness. She was afraid that her health state would cause problems of getting attacked by the "bad guys". She is also aware that after eight years of survivalist living, her husband's 22 is still full with only two bullets. These two bullets represent the protector of the family from being raped, capture, or killed and eaten in one case, or they are the father's tool to kill his son and himself if he was obliged to in another case. (Greenwood, 78)

Another suggested story for the wife's favoring suicide over sustaining her survival is her lost connection with her husband and her son. In one of the novel's scenes the man tells that he would never leave her, she replies that she doesn't care and identifies herself as a "faithless slut" (57). She announces:

"My heart was ripped out of me the night he was born so don't ask for sorrow now. There is none. Maybe you'll be good at it. I doubt it, but who knows. The one thing I can tell you is that you won't survive for yourself. I know because I would have never come this far. A person who had no one would be well advised to cobble together some passable ghost. Breathe it into being and coax it along with words of love". (57)

This quotation proposes that the woman does not feel grieve any longer. There is also denotation that she has lost faith in her husband and his ability in taking care of their child. As declares before: "you can't protect us" (56). She states that she has "come this far" for the reason of surviving for other people; the statement that she does not hope for life any more hints that she cares no more about these people. The carelessness the wife gives to her life, husband, and son raises an inquiry, what lies behind the woman's coldness toward her life and her family? Perhaps this coldness is driven from seeing her husband breaking his oaths, the incident of killing the dog though giving a promise to the child not to. Another contributing incident is witnessed in a flashback that tells about the boy's birth and the father's ignorance to his wife, "her cries meant nothing to him" (57). This attitude contributes to the mother's lost faith in her husband and accounts for the father's guilt over his wife's suicide: "he did not take care of her and she died alone somewhere in the dark" (*The Road*, 32) (Wielenberg, 10)

McCarthy's depiction of the mother as a minor character in the entire novel in addition to her delineation as a failure to survive a post-apocalyptic has been criticized by scholars and also critics. *The Road* is one of McCarthy's novels where the female character is marginalized. When asked about the reasons behind this in his only interview with Oprah in

2007, he explains:” *women are tough, you know, they’re tough. I don’t pretend to understand women; they find them very mysterious*” (Grossman, 84). McCarthy’s claims of not understanding women spared him their inclusion as major role-players in his works.

The Bad Guys and the Conception of Survival:

Violence has been a core issue in human’s interaction throughout history. In the world of fairy tales and folklore as an example, violence has been represented through the depiction of characters practicing violent scenes such as killing. Among these scenes is Shakespeare’s plays and their central plots of war, crimes, and abuse. Violence can take different forms, it can be related to emotions and psychology as it can be physical. (Kneale1-2)

In the fictional world of *The Road*, post-apocalyptic people adopt the physical violence strategy in their journey to sustain survival. These bad strategies are the products of the total absence of laws and order and also the necessity of supplies such as food and other means to survive. The Darwinist notion of “survival of the fittest” is practiced throughout the successive events of the novel where People turned to acts of cannibalism and robbery.

Cannibalism as a Survival Strategy:

“Murder is everywhere upon the land populated by men who would eat your children in front of our eyes” (McCarthy 192).

The Road takes place in a post-apocalyptic wasteland where the needs justify the deeds. Some survivor’s desperate situation turn them to groups of bearded and tattooed cannibals with “*reptilian calculations*” in their “*cold and shifty eyes*” (McCarthy 75) searching for human flesh to consume as a way to preserve their existence.

In real life events, the act of cannibalism is considered as a norm in some tribal conventions, but it is still regarded as inhumane in most parts of the world. Cannibalism is the

act of eating other people's flesh. There are two types of cannibalism, the first type is called necro-cannibalism, and it is about eating the corpse of someone who is already dead. The second type is called homicidal-cannibalism, eating the flesh of someone who is still alive. The second type is considered as a crime whereas the first type is considered as something supernatural and hopeless.

The practice of cannibalism whatever the type is present in *The Road* due to the complete disappearance of animals to hunt and the lack of food. The reliance on cannibalism and the ignorance of the moral codes lies under the Darwin's famous statement of "survival of the fittest". Taking the life of other survivors may prolong once life, but at the same time it destroys humanity and turns people close to monsters. (Bø 19)

On a horrifying scene about the practicing of cannibalism is revealed when the father and son discover a house in which cannibals are storing, dismembering, and gradually eating people. The scene is a terror depiction and emphasizes the futility of the father's quest to behave nobly in a debased world. He is surrounded by evil.

Robbery as a Survival Tactic:

The harsh conditions portrayed in *The Road* turn people to bandits. A bandit is said to be a criminal in the pre-apocalyptic world of laws and order. The absence of such authorities contributed to their prevalence. The father in *The Road* sees every survivor as a bandit. This special classification of people demands the total consciousness of the father. The conception of evil and survival policy can be related to one another. The choice of obeying the rules and laws of the old world would prevent identifying survivors as bandits. The selection of the appropriate survival strategy in a post-apocalyptic wasteland is grounded on morals and the way you act when you can no longer be judged by your deeds. (Bø 22)

Conclusion:

All in all, there is a common thread between the adventure of the hero and the sustainment of survival. Each stage from the journey demonstrates the struggle of the characters to find the means and the meaning for their survival. As an example, in the second stage the father is frustrated by his wife's decision of not going through the journey. Moreover, her refusal to live any longer reflects her conception of survival and mirrors the fact that survival for her is putting an end to her life.

Another common point between Campbell's journey in the monomyth and McCarthy's journey is enlightenment. That is, the ultimate goal of each journey is to find meaning in life, to improve one's spiritual inward, and to enlighten the blackness that pervades the journeys. For instance, the father's goal behind going through the adventure is to bound strong relationship with his son, and to secure the life of his child's life. Moreover, throughout their journey, they are carrying the fire which symbolizes seeds of civilization, fertility, and life. In the last conversation between the father and his son, the latter asks if the fire does really exist. Then the father's reply is: "*It's inside you. It was always there. I can see it*" (McCarthy 298). Therefore, the fire symbolizes life, specifically, the life of the boy that marks the Ultimate Boon of the journey. Correspondingly, the same boon is the purpose of classical journeys from Homer's *Odyssey* and ever after. Eventually, enlightenment is a the quest of all heroes from Homer to McCarthy.

General Conclusion:

This research, entitled “Sustaining Survival in a Post-Apocalyptic World: Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*”, has been conducted to achieve a set of objectives. As the title suggests, portraying and analyzing the process of sustaining survival is the core essence of this research. For this reason, finding out the conception of survival was set as the primary objective. To clarify, in order for a character to survive, he/she should have a conception about the motives and the means of their survival. Then, introducing post-apocalyptic literature through Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* was set as the second objective for this research. Finally, applying Campbell’s theory in McCarthy’s mold was the third objective in order to put a theory that is rooted in old mythologies and classical narratives into a 21st century text.

Through our analysis of Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*, we reached some important results about human actions and reactions when the world falls apart. We noticed that the elemental issue of *The Road* is human survival that is explored by McCarthy through two aspects: the strive of the characters to survive and the forces that stand against that survival.

Our study of the novel led us to draw a set of conclusions. Firstly, we found out that the apocalypse is a universal theme that is wrapped with global interest. Such a theme has witnessed a shift in its recognition. That is to say, apocalypse had been rooted in pure religious origins as it was introduced in the three Abrahamic faiths. Its conception evolved around God’s destruction of the universe. Yet, some modern circumstances like, nuclear weaponry, global warming, and terrorism have generated a new meaning of the apocalypse that is of a secular dimension. We observed also that *The Road* is a myriad of different literary genres. Some critics position the novel as a post-apocalyptic genre because its events take place in wasteland after an unnamed calamity occurred. While others set *The Road* as journey literature as it depicts the travel of a father and his son along the road. This genre, journey

literature, pushed us to adopt Joseph Campbell's Monomyth to describe the journey of *The Road*.

Secondly, in order to detect the sustainment of survival journey, we applied the adventure of the hero that is a part from the monomyth. Such a theory helped us to accompany the characters through their journey and to discover their conception of survival. Such conception is related to the two opposite of inner human nature: good and evil. For the former, named the good guys, survival depends on moral and ethical strategies. Furthermore, survival is sought for the sake of creating meaning and bounding human relationships. Whereas, the bad guys rely on cannibalism and robbery to sustain their survival. That is because their purpose is to achieve physical survival far from any moral or spiritual purposes. We also used Campbell's theory, that is based on old myths and legends, in a contemporary narrative. Such achievement stresses the universality of *The Road* as it crosses times and places; it resonates and revives Homer's Odyssey Journey in 21st century.

However, as we were restricted by time and we lacked retrieval of some important books, our work could not reach some points. For instance, less focus was devoted to survival and survivalism as an ideology. In addition, our lack of experience hindered us from enlarging the scope of goals. To explain, apocalypse and survival are multidimensional themes that can be treated from economic, political, cultural, and even ecological perspectives. For these reasons, we recommend further researches and studies to be conducted as *The Road* is a fertile universe waiting to be explored.

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