

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

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DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

Utopia in Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and Dystopia in
Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*: Challenging the Myth of
American Exceptionalism

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master

By:

Miss. Samya BEDDIAR

and

Miss. Amel BELADJOUZ

Academic Year: 2016 /2017

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Declaration

We hereby declare that the thesis entitled Utopia in Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and Dystopia in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road: Challenging the Myth of American Exceptionalism*, is our own work and that all the sources we have quoted from have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signature:

Date:

Acknowledgements

All Praise is to Allah.

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This dissertation is dedicated to our parents, who have supported us for a long time.

We also dedicate our humble dissertation to our families and our friends.

Special thanks to our dearest friend: BADRA Anwar.

Special dedication to the memory of MOHAMED CHICOUCH Sofien who is always alive in spirit.

Thank you

Abstract

This dissertation studies the Myth of American exceptionalism in the Utopian novel *Paradise* by Toni Morrison and in the dystopian novel *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy using an analytical-comparative approach. It is noteworthy to know that American exceptionalism manifests itself in different ways, but the most troubling for international politics was the way this myth was explicitly proclaimed in a series of public speeches. Therefore, both novels are studied to criticize this myth through shedding light on its violent nature that justifies war and imperialism. The novels are studied thematically in relation to the elements of Slotkin's theory *regeneration through violence*, mainly Frontier and Violence, American hero, Guns and Weapons and American Wars. Moreover, a stylistic analysis is undertaken to show how this myth affects both novels and the political agenda in U.S foreign policy as represented in Bush's speech in the aftermath of 9/11 Attacks which gave legitimacy and meaning to Iraq Invasion 2003.

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General Introduction

The myth of American exceptionalism has been existing in the United States for more than four centuries and it is considered as the most powerful myth on the soil of the New World because of its massive impact on the creation of the national character and identity of the country. American exceptionalism soon became linked with “manifest destiny”, the idea that the United States was ordained by “divine providence” to spread its control across the American continent and its democracy around the world. This myth is a term used by the founding fathers, among them is John Winthrop who defines the Americans as chosen people with a special mission to spread democracy and civilization in the world.

However, the notion of the myth of American exceptionalism as a divine providence changed to a myth that functions currently as an imperialist and militaristic myth. This change is reflected in literature in which it became a major concern to many writers such as John Cant and Herman Melville who question the reasons behind such a change. They wrote about American exceptionalism in relation to different cultural and historical factors.

American exceptionalism is important for understanding American society and American foreign policy because it has become a public myth that provides a philosophical foundation for debates on specific policies, including U.S foreign policy. For that reason, Toni Morrison and Cormac McCarthy wrote about utopia and dystopia, however, they shared the same theme which is the criticism of American exceptionalism as a myth that both justifies and produces war and imperialism in relation to the historical contexts of 9/11 Attacks and Iraq Invasion 2003.

In this respect, this thesis aims at studying the two novels, produced by two different authors in different settings to explain how they depicted the criticism of American exceptionalism in relation to the Attacks of 11 September 2001 and Iraq Invasion 2003.

This thesis will address two main questions:

- 1- How the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism is depicted in the utopian novel *Paradise* of Toni Morrison and the dystopian novel *The Road* of Cormac McCarthy?
- 2- How do Toni Morrison and Cormac McCarthy criticize American exceptionalism in relation to Attacks of 11 September 2001 and Iraq Invasion 2003? And how do they use the rhetoric and language to criticize American exceptionalism in relation to Bush's speech?

This research is based on analytical-comparative approach in which we will analyze and compare between the utopian and dystopian novels to see how they criticize the myth of American exceptionalism in relation to Richard Slotkin's theory *Regeneration through Violence* that is useful for understanding violence and imperialism that are rooted in the myth of American exceptionalism. In addition to the use of *Critical Discourse Analysis Theory* that examines and analyzes language and rhetoric of both novels in parallel to Bush's speech.

The findings of this study will provide a general view of the nature of American exceptionalism as a myth that celebrates imperialism and wars. This study will be useful in constructing the understanding of the real meaning of the myth and its violent underpinning.

In the work of *The Identity Challenge in Toni Morrison's Paradise* by Vida V. de Voss, *Paradise* addresses specific issues of race, gender and history. This thesis argues that a close reading of the text reveals Morrison making visible the invisible presence of the other in the formation of the self. *Paradise* will similarly portray the constructed nature of human identity.

In a thesis entitled *The Road to Paradise : Toni Morrison's journey from embracing the past to transcending it* , Helena Chung Man Har studies one of the most important subjects in

the novel of Morrison which are : the past in relation to three other recurrent themes : Identity , violence and religion.

As for McCarthy's *The Road*, *Meaning and Morality in the works of Cormac McCarthy* by Shane Phoenix Moon is a thesis that examines the work of McCarthy in which the researcher argues against assertions that McCarthy's work is nihilistic in that he presents a world in which life is meaningless. Hence in his analysis he concludes that McCarthy's novels are not nihilistic, instead McCarthy's novel *The Road* has strong allusions to the existential philosophy of Jean Saint Sarter, Fredirick Nietzsche and Soren Kierkegarad.

These studies give a large amount of data about the two novels. They enable the readers to understand certain issues like: Search for identity, religion and nihilism. However, none of them discuss the criticism of American exceptionalism in these utopian and dystopian novels.

In this respect, this thesis will contribute to fill the gap through an analytical-comparative study these different novels set in two different periods of time explaining how the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism was depicted in both novels.

In order to answer the previous questions, the work is divided we into two chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of Slotkin's theory and Critical Discourse Analysis Theory. Then, it gives information about the origins of the myth of American exceptionalism and its criticism relating it to the politics, literature and rhetoric. Then, it deals with the biography of both writers and the historical context in which the works were produced. Finally, it gives a general idea about the cultural contexts and reception of the novels.

The second chapter is entitled Challenging the Myth of American Exceptionalism in the Utopian novel *Paradise* and the Dystopian novel *The Road*. First, analyzes the different elements of Slotkin's theory that are reflected in both novels in terms of criticizing the myth of American exceptionalism in relation to the historical contexts of 9/11 and Iraq Invasion

2003. Second, it studies both novels stylistically through analyzing the language and rhetoric in relation to Bush's speech depending on Critical Discourse Analysis theory.

Chapter One: Utopia, Dystopia and American Exceptionalism

Morrison's *Paradise* and McCarthy's *The Road* are the most important utopian and dystopian novels because they tackle contemporary themes like: The Myth of American exceptionalism. Moreover, the theory of Regeneration through Violence by Richard Slotkin discusses this myth in relation to violence that shapes the American character. In order to understand the theme tackled in the novels it is necessary to take a look at the authors' biography as well as the historical contexts in which the works were produced.

In this chapter we will deal with Slotkin's theory that criticizes the theme of American exceptionalism in which it is represented in utopian and dystopian genres because these novels (*Paradise* and *The Road*) may have a parallel to the historical context of 9/11 and Iraq Invasion 2003. In addition, we will use Critical Discourse analysis in which we will examine the rhetoric of both novels. Furthermore, we will introduce both novels in relation to different cultural contexts and receptions.

1. Theory of Regeneration through Violence

Regeneration through Violence published in 1973, is the first part of Richard Slotkin's trilogy on the mythology of American Violence. In his trilogy, Slotkin emphasizes on the role that violence played in shaping the American Mythology. Moreover, Slotkin claims that the founding fathers were the ones who tore it violently from the merciless wilderness (4). This led "The Myth of Regeneration through Violence" to become "the structuring metaphor of the American experience" (Slotkin 5). Slotkin's trilogy concentrates on the criticism of American Exceptionalism because violence continues to be the focus of American perception of itself and the world around it (Slotkin 3).

1.1.Slotkin's Trilogy

1.1.1. Regeneration through Violence : The Mythology of the American Frontier , 1600-1860

In this part, Slotkin claims that one of the most important characteristics of the American identity is the relationship between the Americans and the Indians. It is represented in the fear of the puritans from the Indians and the Wilderness which resulted in violent environment. It is depicted in the Captivity and the Hunter -Hero narratives (5). For example, The Hunter - hero goes in the wilderness in search for regeneration and for self-renewal in the wilderness through violence and destruction (Slotkin 5). In essence, Slotkin reveals the significant characteristics of these narratives (Wilderness, regeneration and self-renewal) and the role they play in shaping the American identity through violence until the present day.

1.1.2. The Fatal Environment : The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization , 1800 -1890

In this part, Richard Slotkin continues to study the American myth and its evolution. Slotkin argues that "The myth of the frontier is arguably the longest – lived of American myths, with origins in the colonial period and powerful continuing presence in contemporary culture " (15). So, the mainstay of this theory is the importance of the myth of the frontier because the formation of the national identity and character depends totally on the maintenance of the frontier (Slotkin, 3). In this respect, Slotkin and Frederick Jackson Turner agree on the importance of the frontier in creating the national myth. However, Slotkin takes into account the violence practiced on the frontier (4).

To conclude in this part, Slotkin traces the evolution of the myth through many narratives. Moreover, he stresses the importance of the American myths in the history of The United States with the belief that this development is achieved through the intervention of the civilization in the wilderness and through conquering the native people.

1.1.3. The Gunfighter Nation : The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America

In his final volume, Slotkin suggests that “The exchange of an old, domestic, agrarian frontier for a new frontier of world power and industrial development had been a central trope of American political and historical debates” (3). Hence, the frontier myth and the myth of American exceptionalism have a great impact on the American politics of the Twentieth century from Roosevelt to Regan and Bush.

Moreover, Slotkin relates the myth of the American frontier with American engagements in the Caribbean, the Southeast Asia and in the Vietnam War (3) because the myth continues to develop and arose out of a history of violence (11). Furthermore, Slotkin argues that after the close of the frontier, the myth of the frontier continued in the form of other representations that were shaped in the industrial proletariat at home and for imperialism abroad (290). In essence, Slotkin claims that the American frontier is a crucial element in the American history but he adds that violence is rooted in this mythology.

1.2. The Criticism of the Theory

Many critics rejected the work of Slotkin. Like Dawn Lander Gherman who argues that Slotkin’s basic claim embodies love that is based on killing as its expression. In other words, she claims that “The mystique of hunting is depicted through the metaphore of marriage between the slayer and the slain” (210).Gherman explains that Slotkin alluded to the relationship between violence and sexuality interpreted into love. Furthermore, *Regeneration through Violence* has a reference to the psychological Theory of Freud (Id and Jung’s anima). For instance, the Indian is the id, thus it should be removed. The female is the anima, that is to say, the id and the anima symbolize the libido and the superego of the white male hero (Gherman 210).

The object that combines the id illustrates the Indian or anima which illustrates the female as a victim murdered by the American hero. This kind of hunter characters signifies the ego, monsters, Indians and women are companions with the ego (The American hero). These victims do not resist, but they are timid adapted to their murderers. Furthermore, Gherman suggests that Slotkin's work gives a false belief that violence accomplishes what peaceful love could not: Indian and white man allied (211).

In other respects, Gherman claims that Slotkin approves the way the American hero violated the Indians. Still, Slotkin celebrates the heroic hunter ideal who symbolizes violence and domination over the female (211-212). For example, in the captivity narratives the women are the victims in the wilderness. Gherman proposes that by associating white women with civilization and by asserting their victimization by Indians. Slotkin indicates that the Indian was eradicated for saving the white women. Along these lines, he connects racism to the white female and excuse the white male as well (212).

In his study of Slotkin's work, Leo Marx asserts that Turner was right in defining that the frontier experience influenced the culture of settlers. However, the result of this experience was not through democracy as Turner stated but through violence. In that matter, the European experience in the New World was an inverted period. Marx claims that the gap in Slotkin's work is that he generalizes the same explanation of violence on all behaviours in America. Leo Marx questions the relationship between the frontier experience and American involvement in Vietnam and what that has to do with wars in other nations (365). In juxtaposing Slotkin with Nash Smith, Marx argues that both of them used nearly the same notions of myth. Nonetheless, Smith's analysis of the myth was used through the theory of Society and the Theory of Consciousness (366).

In the review of Slotkin's work, Smith observes that Slotkin used the concept of myth in different mixtures, from "myth artifact", "myth -structure" to "myth literature" and "consumatory myth" to "legend" and "archetype" connects to the confusion that restricts Slotkin from explaining his aims precisely (74-75). But, Slotkin and Smith agree in "the archetypal enemy of the American hero, is the Red Indian, and to some degree all groups or nations which threaten the Americans are seen in terms derived from American early myths" (558). In other words, both of Slotkin and Smith agree on the Indian as being the foe of the Americans and all others who jeopardize the security of America.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis Theory

Fairclough claims that: "I shall use the term discourse to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part"(24). To put it simply, Fairclough states that discourse is a wider term than a text. Whereas, Critical Discourse Analysis is a discipline in linguistics that is related to the study and analysis of written and spoken texts to show "the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias" (Van Dijk 15). Fairclough describes CDA as:

discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices , events and texts , and wider social and cultural structures , relations and processes ; to investigate how such practices , events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power ; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony .(135)

CDA examines how these discourses depend on specific types of context (social, political and historical).

2.1.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is based on critical analysis that makes it differ from other forms of discourse analysis in which Fairclough states that: “Critical implies showing connections and causes which are hidden; it also implies intervention, for example providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change” (9). It is very important to give individuals real meaning of the discourse that may be based on logic for the individuals to stop questioning.

Van Dijk contributes to establish CDA through many articles and books in which he considers: “many articles and books that establish CDA as a direction of research, and that focus on various dimensions of power” (qtd .in Horvath 2). Van Dijk’s examines the analysis of structures at various levels of description which means besides the grammatical , phonological , morphological and semantic level but also “higher level properties ” such as coherence, overall themes and topics of news stories and the whole schematic forms and rhetorical dimensions of texts(2).

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis and Ideology

According to Van Dijk, discourse analysis is like an ideology analysis, he claims that “ ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies ”(17). In his analysis of ideologies Dijk’s approach is divided into three parts: Social analysis, cognitive analysis and discourse analysis (30). While the social analysis examines “the overall societal structures”, (the context), the discourse analysis is based on (syntax, lexicon, topics, etc.). The cognitive analysis is what makes Dijk’s approach different from other approaches. For Van Dijk it is the socialcognition that relates between society and discourse (30).

He represents social cognition as “the system of mental representations and processes of group members” (18). In this way, for Van Dijk, “ideologies ... are the overall, abstract mental systems that organize ... socially shared attitudes” (18). Thus, ideologies “indirectly influence the personal cognition of group members” in their social actions and interactions (19). These mental representations of individuals in social interactions are called “models” (19).

“Models control how people act, speak or write or how they understand the social practices of others” (2). According to Van Dijk, mental representations “are often articulated along Us versus Them dimensions, in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their own group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms” (22). Van Dijk stated some elements in order to follow when analysing a discourse related to this ideological dichotomy (61):

Examining the context of the discourse: historical, political or social background of a conflict and its main participants, Analyzing groups, power relations and conflicts involved. Identifying positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them, Making explicit the presupposed and the implied, Examining all formal structure: lexical choice and syntactic structure, in a way that helps to (de)emphasize polarized group opinions. (61)

3. Violence and The myth of American exceptionalism

3.1. Origins

American Exceptionalism is a term used by the founding fathers as John Winthrop who defined The United States as an exceptional place with a special mission in the world (Bell 46 – 47). Bell agrees that “in the United States there has been the belief, so strong since the beginning of the republic, in an American exceptionalism. From the start there had been the self-consciousness of a destiny that marked this country as being different from others...” (48). This belief was held by the Americans because they considered themselves as chosen people who have a special destiny.

However, the first time the term was introduced by Alexis de Tocqueville in his work *Democracy in America* (1835-1840), where he states that “The position of Americans was quite exceptional” (42). Tocqueville does not focus on how the Americans are special, but rather on their unique political system in comparison to the French one.

The concept of American exceptionalism began to portray the American nation in more general terms. As a result, new exceptionalist narratives emerged which are: religious, political and economic in essence. For instance, the economic aspect of American exceptionalism is expressed in individualism as a condition for success. The myth of self-made man who starts from scratch to riches achieves the promise of success based on freedom and equality. Paul argues that this myth includes the immigrant myth as well through attracting immigrants through utopian narratives of the American dream, for getting better life in The United States (qtd. in Calabersi, 16). However, these myths were highly criticized including the myth of American exceptionalism.

3.2. American “Specialness” Criticism

Many opposers were against the idea of using American exceptionalism as a myth of imperialism rather than a myth of a divine providence. These opponents considered the government as a promised land that is corrupted by its military administrations like Howard Zinn. Hence, the anti-war movements sought to purify the government from corruption (Jackson, 3).

Howard Zinn writes in the June / July 2005 issue of the Boston Review:

The ideology of American exceptionalism according to the Americans is using their belief of the United States as a Divine Providence to bring civilization, democracy and liberty to the rest of the world, “by violence if necessary is not new”. This concept is rooted in the early colonial period by the governor John Winthrop when he uttered the word that would be used later by Ronald Regan. Winthrop named Massachussettes Bay Colony “a city on a hill”. However, Ronald Regan called it a “shining city on a hill. (4)

The United States under the mythology of American exceptionalism became responsible for spreading democracy and peace because they consider themselves superior. However, they will use violence in achieving their goals in the United States and in frontiers overseas.

3.2.1. American Exceptionalism Criticism in Politics

3.2.1.1. American exceptionalism and the Attacks of 11 September, 2001

The belief in America as a leading country reached the political spectrum. The use of American exceptionalism through language and imagery is popular in politics but it is not without its criticism. In the article of Zinn, he tackles American exceptionalism as an imperialist mythology that is centered in the wars of aggression and expansion. He states:

The terrible attacks of September 11 gave a new impetus to the idea that the United States was uniquely responsible for the security of the world defending us all against terrorism as it once did against communism. President George W. Bush carried the idea of American exceptionalism to its limits by putting forth in his national-security strategy the principles of unilateral war (4-5).

Zinn proposes that through the belief in American exceptionalism policy makers misuse this myth in wars of aggression and violence. Zinn affirms that the myth of American exceptionalism is the driving force behind all American wars and imperialism in which it is represented in Bush administration and its motivation to war. Hence, Zinn is not trying only to criticize the political and religious right in America but he is endeavoring to confront the everlasting traditions of American imperialism and violence (4-5).

The Attacks of 9/11 brought a drastic change in the United States and internationally in terms of Iraq invasion. They made the Americans afraid of what may happen next so they were ready to fight for the safety of their nation. Most of U.S head of states and congress did not approve on the military intervention of Iraq because they believed that Iraq has nothing to do with the attacks, like Dennis Kucinich MA, Representative (D-OH) stated in a website: “We have seen there has been nothing but a trail of lies that led the US into its involvement in Iraq . That Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11”. Kucinich MA announced that the Attacks of 9/11 did not have any relation with the Iraq. Bush and his administration used it as a pretext for invading Iraq.

3.2.1.2. American Exceptionalism and Iraq Invasion 2003

After the attacks of 9/11 the response of Bush’s administration was very harsh. It was manifested in the notion of Global War onTerror. Bush Started war on Iraq together with his administration, they justified the war on Iraq that that the President Saddam Hussein possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in which he was going to supply Al Qaeda with (Bloom 183). Moreover, the Bush Doctrine was a reaction to the attacks as well. Bush asserted this in series of speeches in which they were so profoundly historical because they dealt with the myth of American exceptionalism that Bush used to justify his imperialistic orientation. In his exceptionalistic rhetoric, Bush exerted the most power in using historical

frameworks that were centered on America as an exceptional place with a special mission in the world (Barnett 3).

In his Speech State of the Union Address 29 January 2002, Bush was very selective in his words just to show America as the good side and Iraq as the Evil one, he wanted to justify his actions towards Iraq invasion (Barnett 15). This speech was full with ideas of American exceptionalism with America as being a global leader through its missionary rhetoric (Barnett 3). For example, Bush announced that America “will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and unchanging for all people everywhere” (Bush 112).

According Michael Foley, “President Bush applied pressure in precisely the way that previous presidents had done in the past. He connected events to the touchstone of American identity and thereby, maximized the potential for social cohesion and national purpose” (Foley 89), Bush used the rhetoric of American exceptionalism in order to convince people that he is doing the right thing.

Another speech entitled Speech at West Point Military Academy, 1 June 2002. It was very important and effective in the continuity of Global War On Terror (GWOT) because Former President Bush dedicated his word to the soldiers who came to fight for his GWOT. Bush acknowledged as much in his own exceptionalist language: “The United States Military Academy is the guardian of values that have shaped the soldiers who have shaped the world” (Bush 125). These were references to America’s duty in the world to spread freedom and fight evil in order to justify his war on terror and to strengthen his policies (Barnett 14).

Bush continues to relate the security of America with the peace of the world “we will not leave the safety of America and the peace of the planet at the mercy of few mad terrorists and tyrants” (Bush 129). As a result, the American presidents have long justified their

intervention in wars as their responsibility. Former President Bush is one of them in Iraq Invasion 2003 (Barnett 3).

3.2.2. American Exceptionalism in Literature

Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville were among the first American writers to challenge the myth of American exceptionalism. Both writers rebelled against this myth through their aesthetics. Broek states that “Aesthetically, what Hawthorne and Melville sought was to break open old myths and symbols, many of which had become grounded in the myth of American Exceptionalism, to discover what emerged into the light, what might be found behind the “veil” (Broek 1). Both writers tried to reveal the violent nature of American exceptionalism through their novels in which language played a major role in deciphering the old myths including the myth of American exceptionalism.

John Cant in his book *Cormac McCarthy and the Myth of American Exceptionalism* tackles the criticism of the myth of American Exceptionalism as a myth of wars of aggression, militarism and imperialism. Cant argues that the novel of McCarthy *The Road* has an implicit criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism in relation to Iraq war 2003 when it was confirmed that there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. Thus, Cant started to question this myth and the Bush administration. Other writers challenged the myth of American exceptionalism in their works including Toni Morrison and Cormac McCarthy in their utopian and dystopian genres.

4. Utopia of Morrison’s *Paradise*

4.1. About Toni Morrison

Toni Morrison is an African American novelist, editor, and the winner of Noble Prize in literature in 1993. Her real name is Choe Anthony Wofford, born on February 18.1931, Lorain.Ohio, U.S.). She was very linked with African-American culture, songs, and rituals.

She attended Howard University (B.A, 1953), and Cornell University (M.A, 1955). Morrison went to Syracuse, New York, and started working in Random House Company as an editor. Morrison was the only African-American woman who got a job as a senior editor in the company. This condition gave her an attention to be a novelist. Morrison was honored by the president in 2001, in which she was given a National Arts and Humanities Award (Good reads).

Additionally, Morrison had many literary works including *The Bluest Eye* (1970); the story is about an African American girl who wants blue eyes. It was very popular book and was chosen to be an Oprah Winfrey Book. *Song of Solomon* (1977), received a National Book Critics Circle Award in an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award. *Beloved* is a story about life after slavery, it is Morrison's masterpiece together with *Paradise* (1997). The main theme of Morrison's novels is the Black American experience in an unjust society in which the protagonist and other characters struggle to find themselves and their cultural identity. (Britannica).

4.2. About *Paradise*

Toni Morrison's novels are said to be political. Morrison's seventh novel, *Paradise*, published in 1997, is not different. Jami L. Carlacio maintains that Morrison's work has been an ongoing commitment to redefine (African American) personhood with the intention of ultimately producing a new consciousness regarding race. Beyond race consciousness, Morrison's writing is indeed "a catalyst, a vibrant intellectual site, for interrogating some of the most pressing concerns and contradictions of our world today" (Peterson 261). Morrison then makes visible the invisible Africanist presence in literature of the United States.

Morrison has dealt with the Complexity of African American identity in relation to its historical and social context. As such Morrison's work has been a continual deconstruction of the African American identity as other. However, when, in *Paradise*, African Americans

embody the same discriminatory values as the dominant culture, Morrison in effect seems to be deconstructing human identity itself - thus addressing the universal individual. Moreover, Mae G. Henderson points out that the process of constructing identity, rather than discovering identity, is central to Morrison's artistic vision (Davidson 363). *Paradise* will similarly portray the constructed nature of human identity.

Paradise tells the story of the lives and interactions between residents of an all-blacktown, Ruby, and its neighbours, a group of women who live outside of town in what is known as the "Convent." Patricia Best, the town's self-appointed historian, describes the beautiful, tall, and graceful people of Ruby as eight-rocks (8-R), because of the blue-black color of their skin that resembles "a deep level in the coal mines" (Morrison, 193).

4.3. About Utopia

Utopia is derived from a Greek word that means "no place" or a "good place" (Baccolini and Moylan, 75). This notion is a dream for many because it is an imaginary world free from social, economic and political problems. The seeds of this genre grow around 380BC when Plato wrote his *Republic* that paved the way to others to write about utopian novels. However, this genre was introduced by Thomas More's *Utopia* in 1518.

Oxford English Dictionary defines utopia as "an imagined or hypothetical place, system or state of existence in which everything is perfect, especially in respect of social structure, laws, and politics". Utopia is unreal world where everything in society (economy, politics) is ideal.

Wilhem VossKamp claims that utopian literature "relate implicitly or explicitly critically to the contemporary societal situation within which they are produced" (264). It is necessary to know that utopias are "more directly connected with historical context than other texts" (VossKamp, 264). In other words, utopia was a result of undesirable events that occurred in early modern societies in which writers wanted to dismantle from these old-

fashioned traditions and they sought for better alternatives through imagination (Vieira, 7). The novels of our study Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* represent these ideas (Conflicts and the discontent with modern societies).

5. Dystopia of McCarthy's *The Road*

5.1. About Cormac McCarthy

Cormac McCarthy originally Charles McCarthy Jr. is an American author and a playwright born in July 20, 1933 in Providence, Rhode Island. He was the eldest son of six children. His family moved to Knoxville, Tennessee in 1937. When he graduated from higher school, he went to the University of Tennessee but he left to join the U.S. Air Force, where he served for four years.

McCarthy is known for his stylistic complex novels. He won the Ingram – Merille Award for his creative writing in both *A Drowning Incident* and *Wake for Susan* where he published them in the student literary magazine (Goodreads). In addition McCarthy had many literary works including his first book, *The Orchard Keeper* in 1965, and *Outer Dark* was published in the following years, these two novels are considered to be the darkest and the most complex novels. In 1985, *Blood Meridian*, his masterpiece in which the story is about 14 years old boy, who joins a gang of Indian hunters along the U.S- Mexico border. Through this work McCarthy could explore the nature of good and evil.

During 21st century, McCarthy started to include the mainstream consciousness in many works like: *No Country For Old Man* (2005), which was turned into an Oscar- winning film two years later and *The Road* an apocalyptic story that won the Pulitzer Prize. In 2013, *Child of God* and *Scott's the Counselor* both novels were transformed into movie theatres. Moreover, McCarthy has won a Rockefeller Foundation Grant and MacArthur Foundation Grant. (Cormac McCarthy Biography).

5.2. About *The Road*

The Road tells a story about a father and his son who go on a journey where they struggle against freezing temperatures and savages in order to reach the Coast. Moreover, The Road describes a world of the fears of the current American subconscious. This novel belongs to the dystopian literature because McCarthy creates a dystopia in which he describes the upheavals that came after September 11th attacks, the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina, and the Environmental Crisis.

At first, The Road deals with the theme of Post-apocalyptic vision in which McCarthy portrays the darkest side of the human nature like: violence, selfishness by considering The Road as a journey through physical and spiritual darkness in which the characters and readers are progressed by the physical and philosophical contexts (Cant, 7). According to Emily Lane, McCarthy uses a journey and an apocalyptic vision to reveal the violent corner of the human nature and to dismantle the American myth that is supposed to have sympathy for humans (Lane, 3).

5.3. About Dystopia

Dystopia came to be the counterpart of utopia where things have gone wrong. The general definition of dystopia from Oxford English Dictionary is “an imaginary place or condition in which everything is bad as possible”. Dystopia is the opposite of utopia in which societies are in the worst life conditions.

This change may be due to different reasons, chiefly the reason when a citizen refuses to join the collectivism or when a government is corrupt or hungry for power. As a result, both of utopia and dystopia overlap in some characteristics (the journey, the unreal world). However, there are differences in terms of the endings. The utopian novels end in a positive way unlike the dystopian ones which end in a negative way as Maria Versam declared in her work *Concrete Dystopia: Slavery and Its Others*:

Whereas...utopia is manifestation of desire and hope for a better world and an 'un-alienated order 'that upsets the status quo,...dystopia delineates the crushing of hope and the displacement of desire for the purpose of upholding that status quo. (209)

Dystopia became more important from 1960s. As a result utopian literature started to fade. However, the hope for a perfect society is still underneath the terrible dystopian narratives. Therefore, utopia still exists but "in the disguise of dystopias" (Mohr 3). Utopia and Dystopia are "histories of the present" (Gordin et al, 1). Utopia allows individuals to live in an "imaginary, yet positive" (1) environment in which they are free to express their opinions and to set alternatives for a better social order.

In *Paradise* Toni Morrison tries to create a utopia due to the historical context that dominated the period of racism and segregation. Hence Morrison depicts an isolated utopia where there is racial justice and freedom. On the other hand, Dystopia is "usually inspired by a dreadful socio-political reality", and most of times misrepresented as utopia (Fokkema, 20). Moreover ,dystopia is depicted as gloomy and ambiguous .It is like a journey to the unknown in a world full of danger and chaos , the writer (McCarthy) is trying to warn from coming problems in the future if people would not react " in the here and now" (2). Fokkema is alerting people from issues if they do not react in the right time.

Therefore, the utopian work of Toni Morrison *Paradise* and the dystopian one of Cormac McCarthy *The Road* are reflections of socioeconomic and political issues of the United States. Eventhough they are different genres, they are very compatible for our study. It is also because both writers tackle the most continuous topic in the United States which is American Exceptionalism.

6. Cultural Contexts and Reception

The novel *Paradise* by Toni Morrison (1997) and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (2006) are interpreted by many scholars and critics in different contexts like Richard L. Schur who relates Morrison's *Paradise* with Critical Race Theory in which the novel tackles the themes of racism, slavery and utopia in the post-civil rights movements by identifying its place within contemporary analysis about African American culture. George Monbiot connects McCarthy's *The Road* with Ecological Theory that discusses the themes of environmental crisis and Hurricane Katrina.

6.1. Paradise and Critical Race Theory

Since the novel *Paradise* was published in 1990s, it tackled the themes of racism and African American rights in Post- Civil Rights Movements. As Richard L.Schur states in his work *Locating Paradise in the post-Civil Rights Era*: "I place Toni Morrison and *Paradise* in particular in an ongoing conversation about the statue of rights in the United States. During the 1990s this discussion moved increasingly to the psychic effects of racial hierarchy" (23). Schur is directly relating the novel with the struggles of Post- Civil Rights Movement.

According to James Baldwin, Toni Morrison use of the theory of Critical Race theory is quintessential for the novel because this theory sought to "uncover the racial practices in the United States " and Toni Morrison in her literature covered the most important political issues chiefly racism through using Critical Race Theory (14).This theory continues to be the essence of the novel of Toni Morrison, as Charles Lawrence in his *The Id ,The Ego , and Equal Protection : Reckoning with the Unconscious Racism* points out that even after the successful Civil Rights Movement there is still unconscious racism among whites, thus the bad stereotypes about blacks are still there but subtle (323).

In his article Lawrence begins with illustrating of “how a good, liberal, white person” still helping in extending the racist stereotypes of blacks in subtle manners but in effective ways (323). Morrison’s novel vividly manifestes the idea of race, hence Morrison through her novel tries to transform the racist house which is the United States and imagines “The concrete thrill of borderlessness” (Morrison, 9). Morrison is depicting race as a border or a limit that people have in mind towards African Americans and the rest of the minorities.

Furthermore, Schur reads *Paradise* as an anti-racist conflict from the civil rights movements to post-civil rights movement Critical Race Theory, claiming that *Paradise* tries to “uncover the ongoing dynamics of racialized power ,and its embeddedness in practices and values which have been shoren of any explicit, formal manifestation of racism ” (280) . Therefore, Schur highlights the importance of the novel and the Critical Race Theory in revealing that racism still exists in Post Civil Rights era.

6.2. The Road and the Ecological Theory

Written in 2006, Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* is heralded as a great work of the Western culture; this may explain the huge number of readers and critics (Cant, 7). McCarthy tries to compose a dystopia from the conflicts of his historical context as: The Environmental Crisis and Hurricane Katrina. Furthermore, John Cant explains that McCarthy tries to achieve “The grand narrative” but “it evolves it within *its* broader cultural context” and identifies it “as a product of changing historical circumenstances” (266), Cant implies that the novel is applicable in different historical contexts.

In this respect, Environmental activist and colmunist for the British newspaper *The Guardian*, George Monbiot called *The Road* “The most important environmental book ever written” in his 2007 review of the novel (29). Monbiot adds in a column in October 2006 that the problem of Climate change is “The moral question of the century” (29). Monbiot shows that most of *The Road*’s imagery that suggests the shrinking of the biosphere.

For instance, the writer stresses on the importance of the memory of the man before and after the mysterious event, in which he hears the birds for the last time, “their half –muted crankings miles above where they circled the earth as senselessly as insects trooping the rim of a bowl” (McCarthy, 53). He clarifies that McCarthy “merely speculates about the consequences” of the disappearance of the birds (Monbiot, 29).

He later determines that if “ the people of the rich world ”fail in managing the planet because of the “ hardening of interest ” and “shutting down of concern ” the situation would worsen , that is reflected in McCarthy’s man’s destruction of essence values as his journey collapses(29).Eventually, the colmunist Monbiot discusses the environmental crisis of *The Road* inside and outside the United States .

American Exceptionalism was a myth of divine providence. However, it comes to be a myth of violence and imperialism. Richard Slotkin in his theory *Regeneration through Violence* explores the reality of this myth from the beginning until now. The utopian and dystopian novels are applicable in different historical contexts. On one hand, utopian novel *Paradise* discusses the themes of racism and segregation in relation to Critical Race Theory during the Civil Rights Movement. On the other hand, the dystopian novel *The Road* tackles the themes of Hurricane Katrina and the environmental crisis in relation to the ecological theory. However, after the 9/11 attacks, the novels were perceived in different way in which they become novels that criticize the myth of American exceptionalism in relation to wars like Iraq Invasion 2003.

Chapter Two: Challenging the Myth of American Exceptionalism in Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and in McCarthy's *The Road*

The utopian novel *Paradise* and the dystopian novel *The Road* tackle American exceptionalism criticism in relation to 9/11 Attacks and Iraq Invasion 2003. Each writer depicts them according to his personal perspective and his own historical conditions. Hence, we project this criticism by using the theory of Regeneration through Violence by Richard Slotkin and Critical Discourse Analysis theory on the novels.

In this chapter we will shed light on the most important elements of this theory that is related to the Myth of American exceptionalism, Slotkin harshly criticized this myth. He states that behind this colorful exterior there is a surge of violence. In his three volumes he discussed this myth as a myth of violence from the early settlements till the recent times. These elements are: Violence and the Frontier, The American Hero, Guns and Weapons and The American Wars that are perverted in the utopia of Toni Morrison *Paradise* and in the dystopia of Cormac McCarthy *The Road*. In addition we will use the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the language of both novels in relation to the American exceptionalism.

1. The Elements of Regeneration through Violence Theory

1.1. Violence and The Frontier

According to Slotkin the mythologies of the frontier and American exceptionalism are associated with violence since the colonial days until the present days (1). In other words, Slotkin states that: "It is not necessarily the amount or sort of violence that characterizes American history but the mythic significance that has been a sign to the kinds of violence experienced, as well as the forms of symbolic violence which is imagined or invented" (13).

In order to understand the full meaning of violence, it is necessary to delve in the history of violence as being given a mythic importance in the history of The United States and in the creation of its national character. Thus, we will analyse the way the violence and the frontier are discussed in the novels *Paradise* and *The Road*.

On one hand, *Paradise* tells a story of a group of men who attack a house of a group of roamer women in the Convent and determined to shoot them all. Morrison starts her novel with a clear indication about violence she writes, “They shoot the white girl first” (Morrison, 3). The theme of frontier and violence is so powerful in *Paradise*.

Therefore, Slotkin’s paradigm tells a lot about the novel (Poor 12) in which he claims that the journey of invading other frontiers is characterized with moving from the known to the unknown that shaped the early American colonists (Slotkin 304).

This may exist in the novel in which Morrison states

with the rest they can take their time . No need to hurry out here. They are seventeen miles from a town which has ninety miles between it and any other. Hiding places will be plentiful in the Convent, but there is time and the day has just begun” and in their journey to the Convent “They have never been in this deep in the Convent. Some of them have parked Chevrolets near its porch to pick up a string of peppers or have gone into the kitchen for a gallon of barbecue sauce ; but only a few have seen the halls , the schoolroom , the bedrooms .(Morrison 3)

This paragraph shows and identifies the characteristics of the American frontier that represent the geographic isolation, lawlessness and violence through time (Der Geld 75).

Moreover, in her novel Morrison indicates to the mission of Ruby men of rebuilding Haven like the mission of the puritans to build their own city on a hill. She writes

Young and newly married they were anything but fools. Long before the war, Haven residents were leaving and those who had not packed up were planning to. The twins stared at their dwindling postwar future and it was not hard to persuade other home boys to repeat what the Old Fathers had done. (Morrison 16)

Furthermore, Katrine Dalsgard debates the novels’ exploration of the myth of American exceptionalism from Puritanism, Colonialism and Empire building. Moreover, from her

reading to Paradise , Dalsgard defines and limites the concept of exceptionalism to the puritan ideology in which “The puritans’ exceptionalism ... developed into a central American literary tradition” in which Katrine relates the founding of Haven and Ruby to the puritan mission of building the city upon a hill (Dalsgard 77).

In the novel, the men of Ruby justified their invasion of the Convent through presenting women of that society as sinful and they should be purified even through killing them. “So when nine men decided to meet there, they had to run everybody off the place with shotguns” (Morrison 11) and the men of Ruby want to “stampede or kill” the women inside (Morrison 3). The men of Ruby want to regenerate the self-exceptionalist of the town and their fortunes.

The men of the town justified their attacks on the Convent because they believed they were responsible for the purification of the Convent and saving Ruby. This idea is represented in Morrison’s novel she writes

They have never forgotten the message or the specifics of any story especially the controlling one told to them by their grandfather – the man who put the words in the Oven’s black mouth. A story that explained why the founders of Haven nor their descendents could tolerate anybody but themselves. (Morrison 13)

This idea is held by the men of Ruby because they believed in their superiority over others especially women. They believed that they are “Smart, strong, and eager to work their own land, they believed they were more than prepared they were destined” (Morrison 14).

Moreover, “The Old Fathers recited the stories of that journey: the signs of God gave to guide them” (Morrison 14). They believed in the myth of American exceptionalism. Therefore, Morrison portrays how Americans use their mythology of exceptionalism to spread and expand their frontier through creating new lands in new towns at the expense of the other through violence. The novel is more practical for understanding the techniques of the Neo-conservative power and useful for justifying Bush invasion of Iraq (Der Geld 76).

In his speech Bush states that “America’s faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea” and how democracy “was taking roots in many nations” (Bush 1). This may be a parallel to the men of Ruby who justified their invasion through purification and spreading moral values in the Convent. Moreover, after the attacks of September 11th 2001, he claimed that the attacks threatened America’s “way of life” and their very freedom” (Barnett 9). This happened when the men of Ruby attacked the women because they considered them as a jeopardy on their life, their wives and their children.

On the other hand, *The Road* tells a story about a man and his son on a journey from the known to the unknown, the man had to reach the coast in the South but he had no idea where is that coast exactly, it is true that he had the map: “The boy stood in the road holding the map. They listened but they could hear nothing” (McCarthy 114). However , they do not know their destination exactly , McCarthy writes : “ The tattered oilcompany roadmap had once been taped together but now it was just sorted into leaves and numbered with crayon in the corners for their assembly” (McCarthy 20) in this way the map did not assist the father and his son in the road and the woods .

Furthermore, Joseph Campbell puts it: “The regions of the unknown (desert, deep sea, alien land, ect.) are fields for the projection of unconscious content ... in forms suggesting threats of violence” (72).The unknown places present danger and fear that dominates the area, this is very similar in Richard Slotkin’s *Regeneration Through Violence* in which Slotkin observes the noteworthy similarities between the passage from the known to the unknown worlds in the monomyth and the experience of the colonists in early American history (304-305).

Besides, if one looks through the history of revolutions and wars, he would see how people use narratives to justify their involvements in violent conflicts. Davis and Slotkin

agree in the narrative of the Western hero, but Davis argues that the archetype of the hero can be juxtaposed in the Western areas because this is the only place where “aggressive self-reliance could be interpreted as a constructive and wholly natural force” (31). The actions of the Western hero in the wilderness are often justified as a self defence and natural. In the novel the man used the narratives to justify his violent actions against others were represented in stories told by the father: “Old stories of courage and justice as he remembered them” (McCarthy 20).

Furthermore, according to Gray, the first colonists who settled in America were in search of the Promised Land, exactly for the father in the novel he did the same. He and his son were travelling South in reversal of the “liberatory flight from the Old to the new as in the classic American Western. It is a turning back from the North to the South, across an unobstructed space that triggers not a sense of freedom but a feeling of empty immensity” (161). The journey of the father and his son comes in a dystopian reversal of the classic American Western. In the novel the father always believed that the road and the woods are not safe places because he believes that evil and danger dominated the place “This was not a safe place” (McCarthy 2) and they will face that evil and the others on the road with their goodness.

According to Kneale, another narrative that may contain a mythic quality is the narrative of the father to his son in which they must keep going because they are “carrying the fire” (McCarthy 65). Gray defines fire as an allusion to God and explains it as “the sense of an innate human vitality ...the spark of life in a world that otherwise seems irretrievably lost and dead” (270). However, fire can be a symbol of civilizations.

Ryan Odell Estes claims that although Slotkin did not write straightly on McCarthy’s work , Slotkin book of violence has much to say about McCarthy’s work as an “anti-mythic

writer who reveals mythic usage”(4). Further, Estes believes that McCarthy used a myth and a mantra that the man keeps saying to his son that they are “carrying the fire” in order to keep him inspired in the face of darkness. However, Estes highlights that fire contains within its binaries in McCarthy’s work, as both “violent and destructive”, yet it also reveals “enlightenment and moral calculus” (4). These two binaries may exist in the novel as a violent and a peaceful fire.

The novels evoke many myths that express violence; Richard Slotkin deals with them as his major elements. With the frontier and violence, the myth of the American hero he started to develop in his trilogy over years to include the elements of Guns, Weapons and the American wars.

1.2. The Myth of The American Hero

The American hero mythology first took shape in the genre of colonial puritan writing. “The hero of such narratives was the captive or victim of cruel Savages and his heroic quest was aimed at religious conversion and salvation” (Slotkin 45). Hence, the hero is supposed to achieve his heroic actions through purifying the savages even through using violence.

In *Paradise*, the American hero may be represented in the men of Ruby who attack the women of the Convent under the name of purification. For instance, “The chill intensifies as the men spread deeper into the mention taking their time looking, listening, alert to the female malice that here” (Morrison 4). According to the men of Ruby, the women in the Convent were sinful and they needed purification through violence.

As stated above, Slotkin claims that the hero is not limited by a specific time or place, Der Geld agrees with him in terms of using time to serve the needs of the men of the Ruby.

According to her, “Time conveys the men’s authority and confidence that they will not be caught, or, given the handcuffs and guns they carry the law” (75).

This may have a parallel to the speech of Bush called The National Security Strategy of The United States of America September 2002, he uttered that

We will take the actions necessary to ensure that our efforts to meet our global security commitments and protect Americans are not impaired by the potential of investigations , inquiry , or persecutions by the International Criminal Court (ICC) , who jurisdiction does not extend to Americans and which we do not accept. (Bush 31)

Americans and the men of Ruby are free to commit crimes and they will not be punished including the policy makers in the country and that is due to their strong belief in the myth of American exceptionalism.

The American hero constantly justifies his unhuman actions through stating that he is chosen by God. In the novel this is indicated through the devotion of the men of Ruby to the history of Haven. The men followed the steps of their Old Fathers and that is what made their mission acceptable. The Oven may represent their myth , by writing on the Oven “ We Are the Furrow of His Brow ”(Morrison 298), the men used the rhetoric to place themselves as companions with God and their violence is justified through the belief that “ God was at their side” (Morrison 18). This rhetoric helped the men of the Ruby to justify their actions and their authority on women because it has one interpretation (Allen 50). Consequently

They couldn’t misread or misspeak that , so they had to hurry up and fix its slide before it was too late – which it might already be , for the same young people had changed its words again . No longer were they calling themselves Be the Furrow of His Brow. The graffiti on the hood of the Oven now was “ We Are the Furrow of His Brow. (Morrison 298)

The actions of the men of Ruby were justified under one united perception that the women of the Convent are sinful and wicked. The Old men and the Young men are the responsible ones for changing the situation of the women because they are the allies of God (Allen 50-51). One

of the men of Ruby says: “Nobody, I mean nobody, is going to change the Oven ... Nobody is going to mess with a thing our grandfathers built. They made each and every brick one at a time with their own hands” (Morrison 85). The Oven may represent the myth of American exceptionalism that is rooted in the puritan belief that the Americans are the chosen people and no one can deny or change this fact.

Besides, this also happened in Inaugural Address January 20, 2001 speech by Bush when he justifies his war on Iraq that he and United States were “ guided by power larger than ourselves , who creates us equal , in His image” and Bush’s mission is “to protect this nation and its people”(Bush 2). Correspondingly, Morrison states: “Gentlemen. Whoa!” He held up his hands and, towering over the seated men, put to good use his sermon- making voice. “We are men here; men of God” (Morrison 59). By casting themselves as God’s chosen protectors of the town and their mission is to deliver the message of God in terms of spreading democracy and freedom.

The myth of the American hero is also known as the Hunter myth. The frontiersmen, the father and his son are trying to survive in the wilderness and from the attacks of the others. Slotkin claims that the new hero was the frontiersman who occupied the line between savagery and civilization. Furthermore, he argues that the Hunter myth presents a justification for the evolution by which the wilderness was to be “expropriated” and “exploited” (554). From the theory and the elements of Slotkin we may juxtapose the hunter myth on the father who may represent the Former President Bush according to both Slotkin and McCarthy because they criticize the Myth of American exceptionalism. The wilderness that Slotkin mentions may be represented in the novel of McCarthy as the road and the woods “Barren, silent, godless” (McCarthy 1) in which McCarthy resembles slotkin in the description of the wilderness.

According to Slotkin, another characteristic of this element “The American Hero” in 1960s is the gunfighter hero. It is the central character. Nonetheless; Slotkin indicates that this character is not limited by a specific time or place. It is supposed to fulfill a specific mission in resolving conflicts in many settings.

The gunfighter hero may exist in the novel. For instance, the man is anonymous. McCarthy does not include the setting or place. He does not inform about the exact location of characters and. Time is unknown too. The man “thought the month was October but he wasn’t sure. He had kept a calendar for years” (McCarthy 1). However, he uses weapons in order to justify this by claiming that he knows “how the world works” (401-402). Moreover, this character is destined by God to protect the world. The character is using the myths and the storytelling to justify the violent actions and to make his actions meaningful to others.

For example, when the father killed a “roadrat” who was about to slaughter the boy he explains this that they are the good guys and it is “My job is to take care of you. I was appointed to do that by God. I will kill anyone who touches you. Do you understand?” (McCarthy 38). By casting himself as God’s chosen protector of his son, the father creates a narrative of “Us versus Them” to justify his violence. Bush may applied the same belief as being God’s chosen people and errand to practice his violent actions through using the attacks of 9/11 to wage a war on Iraq because those attacks threatened the security of the United States.

Robert Fisk claims that through using the ideas of Chomsky, Bush’s speech starts by intimidating the Americans by terrorism in order to arouse patriotism in the country. However, “it was not a speech at all. The bad guys are really bad but they are going to get their comeuppance because the good guys are going to win”. Fisk points out that the other elements of the speech were “woefully dishonest” and Bush claimed that the terrorists want to

overthrow governments, but the only ones who were doing that in Afghanistan and Iraq are the Americans (97). This claim is very powerful that criticized Bush's foreign policy and the myth of American exceptionalism.

Finally, the myth of The American Hero is constantly changing from the colonial days until the present time, it is characterised with chosenness and further violence throughout struggling in order to accomplish his mission in the world, even through using violence if necessary in the name of goodness.

1.3. Guns and Weapons

The element of Guns and Weapons as Slotkin argues "is not the accessibility of guns but also the ethic embodied in American history, which teaches the people how, when, and whom violence can be used" (The Fall Into Guns). Slotkin refers to the importance of guns in the mythic significance and they used the myth to justify their use of guns and weapons in allegedly movements of spreading peace and democracy.

Der Geld may prove with the theory of Slotkin in which he claims that violence is the underpinning of the American character and the self-exceptionalist image in which Morrison claims that despite the time that the men have they could not get with violence because it is underpinned in their characters. This is evident in way the opening scene unfolds. With placing a description of The Convent with the the present moment of armed men roaming the house (Der Geld 80), Morrison writes:

The Ornate bathroom fixtures, which sickened the nuns , were replaced with good plain spigots , but the princely tubs and sinks , which could not be inexpensively removed , remain coolly corrupt . The embezzler's joy that could be demolished was, particularly in the dining room ,which the nuns converted to a schoolroom...Now armed men search rooms where macramé baskets float next to Flemish candelabra.(Morrison 4)

Therefore, Slotkin explains this idea through claiming that “The killer tries to validate himself and place himself in relation to meaningful events in the past” (33). They justify their unhuman acts through claiming that they are protecting themselves as slotkin asserts that “The gun began to be marketed as a tool of self-protection” (The Fall Into Guns).

For example Morrison mentions weapons that are used by men several times in the novel. She writes “They are nine, over twice the number of the women they are obliged to stampede or kill and they have the paraphernalia for either requirement: rope, a palm leaf cross, handcuffs, Mace and sunglasses, along with clean, handsome guns”. (Morrison 3). In the novel, the men the town of Ruby are supposed to be on a mission of purification, however, they use guns and weapons in doing so.

The men of Ruby take their guns with them everywhere, “Their guns are not pointing at anything, just held slackly against their thighs” (Morrison 13) and “they had to run everybody off the place with shotguns” (Morrison 13). Like Slotkin who claims that they are obsessed with guns.

Slotkin states that America supports the mystique of guns, and weapons are seen as a kind of a productive violence. Hence, he criticizes the Americans who believe that they should possess guns under the Second Amendment Right (The Fall Into Guns). In his conversation with De Vega, Slotkin shows that United States surpasses all other countries in interpersonal violence because guns are elementary in the American culture. The United States is very permissive in the possession of guns. Besides, Slotkin believes that the Americans are obsessed with weapons because they are linked to the national myth of conquering the Old West .They considers them as a symbol of civilization (An Interview with).

In *The Road* violence is closely related to physical and spiritual salvation or redemption of the father and his son. The father uses mythic imagery and narratives in order to justify this violence. This violence is used through the weapon of the father that he uses in order to protect his son, “He held the pistol at his waist and held the boy by the hand”(McCarthy 66). The man is obsessed with carrying the gun everywhere in the repetition of the word “Pistol” in the novel. For instance, the man was shocked when the boy lost the pistol he said:

Where’s the pistol?

The boy froze. He looked terrified.

Christ, the man said. (McCarthy 122).

The man was upset because he wanted to secure the pistol all the time in order to protect his son, even through killing others like he killed the roadrat.

The mythic significance of guns is very important in the United States and many Americans are professional in weaponry. For example, the man: “had already dropped to the ground and he swung with him and leveled the pistol and fired from a two-handed position balanced on both knees at a distant of six feet” (McCarthy 33). The man is very skillful in using guns because of their importance in the American culture.

When the man and his son were eating, “The pistol lying to hand like another like dining implement” (McCarthy 111). In another situation when the man was looking for guns in the house, McCarthy states: “He found a box of .45 ACP cartridges and three boxes of .30-30 rifle shells. What he didn’t find was a gun. He took the battery lantern and walked over the floor and he checked the walls for any hidden compartment”. However, the man was convinced that “there was not a gun and there wasn’t going to be one” (McCarthy 72). This reveals the importance of guns in the novel.

Ultimately, Slotkin claims that even through using the mythic narratives of the frontier as the most powerful mythology in the American history there violence beneath this usage (3). Hence, Slotkin may prove the theme discussed in the novel guns and weapons in which the man is trying to protect his son but that would be done through violence. As it is argued the stereotypical “Cowboys and Indians” takes the form of survival and resistance and “Wars of extermination” between the two that must end in the killing of one of the sides (12).

1.4. The American Wars

In the lecture entitled “The War Bargain: Military Conflict and the Democratization of American Citizenship”, Slotkin discusses the involvement of the US in Twentieth-century clashes that mobilized the thoughts about American nationhood. He notes that in the late 18th and 19th centuries most of the political characters were characterizing America as white, an Anglo Saxon and protestant country that progressed through the conquest of other “savage” countries. These countries are Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq (qtd .in Cvrtila 36).

1.4.1. The Vietnam War

The American troops in Vietnam usually alluded to Vietnam as “Indian country” and their missions were considered as a game of “Cowboys and Indians”. Slotkin mentions that Kennedy’s ambassador to Vietnam justified military intervention by the necessity of the removal of the “Indians” away from the “fort” (3). The myth of the frontier still exists outside America.

Lyndon Johnson adopted this rhetoric when he asked the American troops in Vietnam to “bring the coonskin home” (496).The American role in Vietnam was a saviour who rescues the “settlers” from “Indians”. Slotkin claims that he could not distinguish the two (547). Hence, the overthrow of the Vietnam and the frontier myth started to be questionable (626).

In his interview with Moyers Slotkin states that the newest myth is the good war myth. This idea came from the Second World War when the United States defeated the Soviet Union. This idea continued in wars allegedly that would liberate Asia and Europe using the American firearms. First, the war on Afghanistan was considered as a “righteous” war in which the Americans have the right to destroy not to liberate the enemy because it threatened the American core values (Guns and Weapons).

Peter Widdowson traces the novel’s engagement with the American imperialism and wars. He argues that “The novel is a fictional intervention in contemporary American historiography” (318). Moreover, Morrison links the war inside and outside the U.S. This is represented in the novel when Soane feels like a “fool” because she believed that her sons in Vietnam would be

safer than anywhere in Oklahoma outside Ruby . Safer in the army than in Chicago , when Easter wanted to go . Safer than Birmingham , than Montgomery , Selma than Watts . Safer than Money, Mississippi , in 1955 and Jackson , Mississippi , in 1963 ... She thought war was safer than any city in the United States . (Morrison 100-101)

Safety and security did not exist inside the United States during the Civil Rights Movement and did not exist in the frontiers overseas especially in Vietnam because of the American wars.

In her utopia *Paradise*, the element of the American wars is referred to both the Vietnam and the Iraq War. As stated above, Slotkin relates the myth of American exceptionalism to the imperialism and to wars overseas. In which , *Paradise* tackles the issues of contemporary America through highlighting the most important events like the American war in Iraq , “a war that is often justified in terms of both defence and America’s unique and solitary role in world affairs ” (Der Geld 77). Their wars in overseas are justified as a self-defence and as a solution regaining their exceptionalist self image.

For that reason the men of Ruby attacked the women of the Convent because they threatened their way of life, Morrison writes: “His saliva is bitter and although he knows this place is diseased ... What he wonders, could do this to women? How can their plain brains think up such things: revolting sex, deceit and the sly torture of children?” (Morrison 8).

The women of the convent were a real threat to the men of the convent because of their illegal actions. As a result, the men attacked the women.

1.4.2. The Iraq War

In the interview “This side of Paradise” Morrison debates the way she tried to write about violence and utopia in the American framework. Talking about the original title of Paradise was “War” she declares

The novel wasn't about war as we know it , with all means , navies , and so on . I was interested in the kind of violent conflict that could happen as a result of effort to establish a Paradise . Our view of paradise is so limited : it requires you to think of yourself as the chosen people – chosen by God , that is . Which means your job is to isolate yourself from other people . That's the nature of paradise : it's really defined by who is not there as well as who is. (Morrison par 6)

In the contemporary political milieu, exceptionalism is again important in the American thought and culture, it used by Bush administration to justify the abhorred war on Iraq. The old title of the novel *Paradise* “War” is important to the exploration of the myth of American exceptionalism and violence important in the current situation (Der Geld 85).

Morrison agrees with Slotkin in terms of using mythologies in their invasions of other frontiers like Iraq. In “This Side Of Paradise”, Morrison states

Mythologizing can end up hurting more than helping . These people of Ruby have an extraordinary history and they were sound people , moral people , generous people . Yet when their earlier settlement collapsed and they tried to repeat it in Ruby ... well , the modern generation couldn't sustain what the Old Fathers had created , because of the ways in which the world had changed . The Ruby elders couldn't prevent certain anxieties about drugs , about politics . And their notions of women – particularly

about controlling women – left them very vulnerable , precisely because they had romanticized and mythologized their own history . It was frozen , in a sense. (Morrison 11)

In her interview, Morrison states that the first settlement of the Old Fathers collapsed so the only solution for regaining their exceptionalist self-image, the men of Ruby started attacking the women of the Convent. This may be a parallel to what happened after 9/11 when Bush wanted to invade Iraq in order to remain exceptional through using myths. However, he was highly criticized by Noam Chomsky who states that Iraq Invasion is “The worst crime of this century” in an interview with Abby Martin for teleSur’s *The Empire Files* who harshly criticized the American foreign policy in invading Iraq through the use of the myth of American exceptionalism.

For Slotkin, there is a reason behind the conquest of the frontier which is economic. In other words, the westward expansion was a result of the desire of exploiting the natural resources of the other frontiers overseas (43). Slotkin is criticizing the myth of American exceptionalism. In the novel , the oven “ features a mysterious slogan ” (*Der Geld* 80) that “ seemed at first to bless them ; later to confound them ; finally to announce that they had lost ”(Morrison 7). The men of the Ruby were supposed to help and purify the women. However , the men went there to regenerate their fortunes and to exploit the women .

In *The Road*, the use of the myth of American exceptionalism is reinforced through the use of the father repeated mantras as being “one of the good guys” and they “are carrying the fire” of goodness justifies for him the use of violence necessary to fulfill that mission. This maybe a projection on Bush’s administration and foreign policy after the Attacks of 9/11 and Iraq Invasion 2003. As Richard Slotkin argues in the September 28, 2001 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

When a society suffers a profound trauma , an event that upsets its fundamental ideas about what can and should happen and challenges the authority of its basic values , its people look to their myths for precedents , invoking past experience – embodied in their myths as a way of getting a handle on crisis. (qtd.in Der Geld 76)

The father’s engagement with the trauma of being the protector of his son from others through using mythologies especially the myth of American exceptionalism in order to justify his violence may prove that violence is the underpinning of the American history like Slotkin has argued. The father is constantly keep saying that they are the good guys and there are “bad guys” on the road who would kill and eat them (McCarthy 46).

This may be used in Bush’s foreign policy in invading Iraq after the attacks of 9/11, he used the myth of American exceptionalism to justify his violent actions not only against Iraq but on the so-called Axis of Evil which are the countries: Iran and North Korea. President Bush had tactfully put the disaster of 9/11 in ‘us versus them’ narrative, stressed by statements such as: “Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or justice to our enemies, justice will be done” (Lee 8).

Bush claimed that the terrorist attacks threatened the way of life of the Americans and their democracy and freedom and they will achieve justice even through violence .It is sarcastic that in the same speech Bush stated that America was “a country called to defend freedom ”but they will use violence in achieving justice (Lee 8).

Furthermore, in his book *Cormac McCarthy and the Myth of American Exceptionalism*, John Cant considers *The Road* as a Grand Narrative that discusses philosophical issues. The myth of American Exceptionalism is one of them in which Cant discusses this myth “within its broader cultural context” and explaining it as “a product of changing historical circumstances” (qtd.in Bloom 183). Therefore, Cant started to question the myth of

American Exceptionalism when it was confirmed that Weapons of Mass Destruction were never found in Iraq and Iraq did not have any relation with the attacks of 9/11.

Cant argues that the novel of McCarthy *The Road* have an implicit criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism. Correspondingly, the Bush administration initiated a program in order to establish “grand narratives (such as good guys versus bad guys) after the terrorist attacks, even with the disruption of postmodernism of these narratives (Keeble 108).

Ultimately, in his book *Cormac McCarthy and the Writing of American Spaces*, Andrew Keller Estes highlights the theme of Good Guys Versus Bad Guys in which the father shoots the man who wanted to kill his son, it seems to be self-defence but the boy starts to question the legitimacy of the actions of his father

You wanted to know what the bad guys looked like. Now you know. It may happen again. My job is to take care of you. I was appointed to do that by God. I will kill anyone who touches you. Do you understand?

Yes.

He sat there cowered in the blanket. After a while he looked up. Are we still the good guys? he said .

Yes. We're still the good guys.

And we always will be.

Yes. We always will be.

Okay. (McCarthy 38).

From a narratological point of view, Estes claims that there is a “hybridization” of points of view in the text and the father is the only one who shows his point of view in this dystopian novel. Still, the dreams and thoughts of the man are accessible unlike the boy. Readers start to question as the boy in their “goodguyness”. Estes highlights this point in which readers start to question as the boy did in the sense of “carrying the fire ”, this fire “implies a transmission of human culture and technology , an essential part of humanity in The

Road ” (206). Still, “the father’s is the only perspective readers have on which to base this assertion”. The reader is like the boy relying on the father for truth.

According to Estes, “If one steps outside the text of *The Road* to place within its cultural and historical context one quickly see parallels to the father’s Manichean (good guy / bad guy) ordering the world” with the first cultural debate with “the justness of war in Iraq ”(206) . In *The Road* the concept of good and bad are just points of view of the father and his son, they are good guys because the narrative is being told from their side only. Also, there is subjectivity in saying “We are the good guys”. Similarly, the former president George W. Bush called his enemies “axis of evil” and he considered the US as “the allies of good”.

However, this rhetoric was criticized inside and outside the US with considering this rhetoric “as being only a thin veil for self-interest”. Even though , the US is supposed to be “carrying the fire” to Iraq to spread its universal values of democracy and peace , “those fires could be just as easily those of cruise missiles or of the suicide bombers that rushed into the power vacuum created in the wake of the U.S invasion ”. Hence, the novel is classified into binaries of good and evil that directly relate to the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism (206-208).

This novel points out these binaries: “Ideas about natural / manmade, good / evil and technology and its cultural frame work echo and enrich the larger frame work of this book”. In his final analysis of the novel, Estes states *The Road* as a projection of the most important binaries in American literature and culture (206 -208).

2. Critical Discourse Analysis in Morrison's *Paradise* and McCarthy's *The Road*

Politics is a struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice through using language which plays an important role for every political action is prepared, accompanied, influenced and played by language. The discussion of the ideologies in relation to language is of paramount importance. According to Fairclough's assumptions in Critical Discourse Analysis, "ideologies reside in texts" that "it is not possible to 'read off' ideologies from text" and that "texts are open to diverse interpretations" (121).

Van Dijk argues that CDA focuses on the abuse of power mainly on dominance; he examines how power is used in discourse to control people's beliefs and actions to serve the interests of the powerful people at the expense of the powerless ones. This mind controlling "may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits and even a quite general consensus" leading to hegemony (Van Dijk 335). This means through using ideology, context control and mind control.

The dominant group can manipulate people through using language in relation to ideology because language is directly connected with ideology (Wodak 179). In essence, power and ideology affect the linguistic choices and vice – versa.

Critical Discourse Analysis theory will be applied in our study of the novels of Morrison's *Paradise* and McCarthy's *The Road* in which they criticize the myth of American exceptionalism as an ideology that justifies war and imperialism. Therefore, through CDA we will analyse the rhetoric used in the novels to show the effect of the ideology of American exceptionalism on the language used by the characters to justify their violence on others in relation to the historical contexts of 9/11 and Iraq Invasion 2003 and to one of the speeches of Bush.

2.1. Analysis and Discussion

2.1.1. Linguistic Projection of Good Vs Evil in *Paradise*

2.1.1.1. Vocabulary Items that projected Evil

The following words were used to project the women as evil:

1. Dirty (Morrison 7).
2. Corrupt (Morrison 4).
3. Filth (Morrison 1).
4. Malice, (Morrison 4).
5. Diseased (Morrison 8).
6. Evil (Morrison 16).

The use of “filth” created an impression that these women were against (the men of Ruby) interests and therefore must not to be tolerated. The mention of filth in example 3 was most likely to arouse anger inside fear. Contextually, “corrupt” was used to depict the sins of women and portray it as something that could jeopardise the existence of humanity in both towns (Ruby, The Convent). Also, the men of Ruby described the “malice” of the women in order to evoke feelings of anger and hatred. Thus, contextually the speaker (men of Ruby) highlights the concept of “malice” and projects it as something unpleasant.

In example 5 the word “diseased” was used to describe the horrible situation of the women and their town. Thus, only purification would solve these problems by eradicating the women and their sins. All other words (corrupt, dirty, filth, malice, diseased) highlight Van Dijk’s study on CDA, chiefly mind control and context control. This is clear in the notion that controlling people’s mind is a means to produce dominance and hegemony. The beliefs about the world are acquired through discourse because the recipients tend to accept beliefs from the authoritative, trustworthy sources such as scholars, experts, professionals (Nesler et al 1407).

From the novel analysis, it is evident that the men of Ruby believe in purification, freedom and non-violence. This belief is stated in the man ideas: “And they have never forgotten the message or the specifics of any story, especially the controlling one told them by their grandfather ... their descendants could tolerate anybody but themselves” (Morrison 13). Therefore, the use of such words “corrupt, dirty, filth, malice, diseased” indicate negativity because these words were coming from trustworthy and authoritative sources as claimed by their grandfathers of the town Ruby, however, the rest of the men of Ruby were manipulated in their to believe and accept the acts of the leading men. Hence, they have a negative opinion about these acts.

The vocabulary items are indicative of the context control because the speakers have taken advantage of the situation (the threat of the women), setting (time and place), participants present (the security of the men of Ruby) and mental representation goals, knowledge, attitudes, opinions and ideologies (Van Dijk 359) to manipulate the audience to believe that women are evil.

2.1.1.2. Vocabulary Items that projected Good

The following words project Good as a means of fighting and guarding against the acts of women:

7. Armed men (Morrison 4).
8. Free (Morrison 8)
9. Protected (Morrison 8)
10. Unique (Morrison 8).
11. Destined (Morrison 14).
12. Righteousness (Morrison 14).
13. Oven (Morrison 6).

These examples are used in the novel to ensure safety. The speaker, perhaps, mentioned these words to let his audience know that the actions they carried out were legal, unlike “the women” who were sinful and illegal. The words “armed men, destined and righteousness” denote an idea of resistance and their legitimate actions against women. These ideas contained in these vocabulary items that projected evil lend support to Van Dijk’s notion of power and control.

The men of Ruby under reference made use of such words to let their audience know that the “war” could be won only through the use of the ideology that is presented in “the oven” and the men are the responsible ones for “protecting” it because they were “unique” and “destined” to do that, these words denotes legitimacy, power and dominance over acts of sins, which is a way of manipulating the audience into accepting the measures carried out against evil (women).

2.1.2. Sentences that projected Evil in *Paradise*

14. No clothes in the closets, of course, since the women were no – fit dirty dresses and nothing you could honestly call shoes (Morrison 7).
15. How can their plain brains think up such things: revolting sex, deceit and sly torture of children? (Morrison 18).
16. What they see is the devil’s bedroom, bathroom and his nasty play pen (Morrison 17).

In these examples, the speaker specifically mentioned some of the acts of the women. He carefully selected some of the most horrific activities that the women did and described them as “atrocities”. He starts asking questions about the horrible situation of the women in order to ignite some sort of dislike and to justify their actions (men of Ruby). It can be deduced from example 15 that the speaker wanted to arouse the feeling of hatred to turn the

men of Ruby against the women through using such words to make sure that their reaction would be violent.

All of the examples are in line with Van Dijk's notion of context control. This is because the speakers strategically took advantage of the context (situation, setting and ongoing actions) to discuss the concept of Evil of women and to manipulate the people into accepting the measures being carried out against the women. This was all done through language that the men used to describe the women and their town.

2.1.3. Sentences that projected Good

17. That is why they are here in this convent. To make sure it never happens again (Morrison 5).
18. As new fathers, who had fought the world, they could not (would not) be less than the Old Fathers who had outfoxed it (Morrison 6).
19. Who had not let danger or natural evil keep them from cutting Haven out of mud and who knew enough to steal their triumph with that priority (Morrison 6).
20. The Old Fathers recited the stories of that journey: The signs of God gave to guide them (Morrison 14).
21. Smart, strong, and eager to work their own land, they believed they were more than prepared they were destined (Morrison 14).

The speaker made a careful selection of his words in those examples. He created a picture that, although it was the men of Ruby who were being abused, they were careful in their defence since they were people who believed in freedom and justice unlike the women in the Convent who sought to commit sins all the time. In example 20, the speaker justified the act of attacking the women through using the ideology of American exceptionalism and via repeating that God is in their side in the process of purification. They justified their actions on

women, painting a picture that these women were simply nefarious and they committed ruthless acts for no apparent reason.

The above examples mark mind control, “strong, destined”. This is because the belief in the ideology is very powerful in the language. In addition to the use of the ideology, context control could also be said to reflect in the examples because the speakers (men of Ruby) showed that they were in charge by deciding what to talk about, when, where and how to talk about the situation.

3. Linguistic Projection of Us Versus Them in *The Road*

3.1. Vocabulary Items that projected “Us”

1. Good (McCarthy 38).
2. The fire (McCarthy 65).
3. God (McCarthy 38).
4. Kill (McCarthy 38).
5. Appointed (McCarthy 38).

The term “good” was repeated in the novel several times in order to show that the man and his son as the moral and just people. The word “fire” contextually indicated enlightenment and good nature of the father and his son. Therefore, these words: Good, the fire tried to nullify any sense of doubt or uncertainty in the mind of the son and readers. The speaker invoked the word “God” in his speech in order to depict that God is in their side and to convince recipients with the legitimacy of their actions.

In doing so, the term “kill” was used as a justification for protection and justice. It is legal for the speaker to use the word “kill” for protection and taking life easily because they were the allies of God and they were appointed by him to achieve security and justice in the world. Along these lines, Van Dijk’s mental representations “are often articulated along Us versus Them dimensions, in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present

themselves or their own group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms” (22). These words represent the good qualities of “Us” (the man and his son) in the novel because the father always says that they are good and the others “Them” are bad.

3.2. Vocabulary Items that projected “Them”

6. Bad (McCarthy 46).

7. Kill (McCarthy 38).

8. Filthy (McCarthy 30).

The word “bad” was referred to others who were on the road, the speaker gave only his point of view about others to justify his violence against “Them”. Thus “kill” was used to arouse sentiments of hatred among others. These words: Bad, kill, filthy were used in purpose because the man in the story wanted to show his son through these words “them” as a brutal enemy.

3.3. Sentences that projected “Us”

9. My job is to take care of you. I was appointed to do that by God. I will kill anyone who touches you (McCarthy 38).

10. He sat there cowered in the blanket. After a while he looked up. Are we still the good guys? he said.

Yes we are still the good guys.

11. We are going to be okay Papa?

And nothing is going to happen to us.

Because we are carrying the fire. (McCarthy 41).

12. He banked the fire against the seam of rock where he'd build it and he strung the tarp behind them to reflect the heat and they sat warm in their refuge while he told the boy stories. Old stories of courage and justice as he remembered them (McCarthy 20).

In example 9, the speaker was very selective in his words through using the ideological element (American exceptionalism) to justify his unhuman actions and to show their goodness to convince people (son, readers) that their actions are legal. Thus, from the analysis, it was realised that the linguistic choices by the men was influenced by his ideology.

In example 10, the speaker kept repeating that “we are the good guys” that represented the ideological dichotomy “Us Versus Them” until the end of the novel to give a justification that his actions are lawful and safe.

In example 11, the speaker cleverly selected his words through using the ideology of American exceptionalism in which they are the chosen people by God. Thus, “nothing bad is going happen to us”. The examples above reflect Van Dijk’s concept of power as control. This is because the speaker used language to his advantages as he was of a higher authority than his audience were (son). He had more power and therefore took advantage of it to exercise his powers by manipulating and indirectly imposing the concept of “Us versus Them”.

Example 12 marked mind control. This is because the speaker manipulated and persuaded the listener into thinking that the violent acts were done for their best interests (the father and his son). Context control could also be said to reflected in the examples because the speakers showed that they are in charge by cleverly deciding what to talk about , when , where and how to talk about the situation at hand “he told the boy stories. Old stories of courage and justice” (McCarthy 20).

3.4. Sentences that project “Them”

13. There is a lot of them, those bad guys (McCarthy 46).

14. Some of them wearing canister masks. One in a biohazard suit. Stained and filthy (McCarthy 30).

15. He was lean, wiry, and rachitic. Dressed in a pair of filthy blue coveralls and a black bill cap with the logo of some vanished enterprise embroidered across the front of it (McCarthy 31).

In the example 14, the sentence depicts pure evil through using the terms “biohazard”, “stained” and “filthy” to make the audience (readers, son) disgusted from those people who represent evil. The other example indicates all the bad characteristics of the human beings. These examples are in line with Van Dijk’s notion of context control. This is because the speakers strategically took advantage of the context (situation, setting and ongoing actions) to discuss the concept of evil and to manipulate the people (son, readers) into accepting the measures being carried out against “Them” the bad guys.

4. George W.Bush Address to the Nation on September 11,2001

4.1. Cognitive Mechanism of Manipulation

In the speech, terrorism was projected as evil and there is a need to be eradicated. Anti-terrorism was projected as appropriate and lawful. Through various linguistic resources, terrorism and anti-terrorism will be projected. These linguistic resources were used by employing cognitive mechanisms of manipulation. The analysis of the speech revealed some cognitive mechanisms of manipulation. First, the means by which terrorism was projected is discussed, followed by how anti-terrorism was projected.

4.1.1. Terrorism

The projection of terrorism as evil was done through an appeal to highly emotional event which had a strong impact on personal mental models as is highlighted by examples below:

1. Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist attacks (Bush 2069).
2. Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror (Bush 2069).
3. Today our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature (Bush 2069).
4. I ask for your prayers for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened (Bush 2069).

In the examples above, very emotional, personal and mental models about September 11, 2001 Attacks were repeatedly employed to generalize the level of general beliefs, attitudes and ideologies. These ideologies are not personal but shared social representations of a group of people (Van Dijk 359). The actions were performed by terrorists. The speaker was obscurely forming the general belief that the United States' security was in danger and needed to be protected.

4.1.2. Anti-terrorism

In the speech, anti-terrorism was projected as lawful and appropriate in the following sentences:

5. Immediately following the first attack, I implemented our government's emergency response plans. Our military is powerful, and it's prepared (Bush 2069).
6. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice (Bush 2069).

It can be inferred from the examples that decisions had already been made concerning the agents responsible for security and the measures that had been put in place to ensure security. In this context, the speaker's decision did not appear as an imposition but it was related to the decision of the addressee which is manipulation (Rudyk 68). Anti-terrorism was

projected as lawful and appropriate because they ensured the freedom and security of the people.

Power and ideology influence the linguistic choices and vice versa. Fairclough states that “power is not just a matter of language, it is an ideology itself” (258). From the analysis, the linguistic choices by the Former President Bush were influenced by his ideology through the promotion of freedom like in the examples below:

7. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America (Bush 2069).
8. America was targeted for the attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world (Bush 2069).
9. None of us will never forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world (Bush 2069).

These examples manifest the ideology of American exceptionalism. Thus, the fight against terrorism is to protect and maintain America’s ideology. From this analysis, the ideology influences the language and vice-versa. This is done through manipulation and mind, context control.

The novels of Morrison and McCarthy criticize the rhetoric of the myth of American exceptionalism through their language. Van Dijk through his approach in CDA tried to show that the rhetoric in discourse is influenced by ideologies that are used to control the minds and the contexts of people. Hence, the novels revealed that the rhetoric was chiefly affected by the myth of American exceptionalism as a part of their criticism. They also used the language mainly in speeches to show that they are influenced by ideologies among them is the ideology of American exceptionalism because it is the most effective ideology in the history of the United States.

Therefore, the dominant groups in the novels *Paradise* (the men of Ruby) and *The Road* (the father) and the speech (Bush) used this ideology to manipulate the inferior groups (the women of the Convent) , (the son) and (the Americans) to control and to convince them that they are doing the right thing . This was all achieved through the powerful ideology “The Myth of American Exceptionalism”.

Morrison’s *Paradise* and McCarthy’s *The Road* tackle the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism through their different genres in order to show the violent nature of this myth. Through using the theories of Regeneration through Violence and Critical Discourse Analysis, the novels came to be as anti-mythic novels that criticise the myth of American exceptionalism in relation to 9/11 and Iraq Invasion 2003.

General Conclusion

This dissertation, which has relied on the theory of Regeneration through Violence by Richard Slotkin and Critical Discourse Analysis Theory, is an investigation into the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism in relation to the cultural and historical contexts of 9/11 and Iraq War 2003. This criticism of the myth is portrayed in two different literary works by two different authors in two different periods of time. These novels are: *Paradise* of Toni Morrison and the *The Road* of Cormac McCarthy. This dissertation began with many questions: How is the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism depicted in the utopian novel *Paradise* of Toni Morrison and the dystopian novel *The Road* of Cormac McCarthy? And how do they criticize American exceptionalism in relation to the Attacks of 11 September 2001 and Iraq War 2003? As well as how Morrison and McCarthy used the rhetoric and language to criticize American exceptionalism in relation to Bush's speech?

The analytical-comparative method has been applied to reach the main aim of this research which is to analyse the theme of the criticism of American exceptionalism and to show the way this theme is depicted in both novels and to compare the way this theme was discussed in the utopian and dystopian reversal. The novels have different interpretations because many scholars relate them to different cultural contexts and reception. On one hand, *Paradise* first was considered as a novel that deals with the themes of racism, gender and segregation. On the other hand *The Road* was perceived as a novel about dystopia and environmental concerns. However, through reading the two novels with taking into consideration the contemporary issues the meaning of the novels had received different interpretations that represented wars and imperialism.

After reading *Paradise* and *The Road* in relation to the historical context of 9/11 and relied on Slotkin's Theory that criticized the American myths including the myth of American

exceptionalism. We found that the novels criticize and challenge the myth of American exceptionalism as a myth that celebrates wars and violence. This criticism has been related to the way the war in Iraq was being justified by Bush administration through using the myth of American exceptionalism in terms of the defense then it changed into the need to spread democracy.

In *Paradise* the engagement of Morrison with utopia and Civil Rights Movement in America have a lot to say about what is happening in Post 9/11 America in which the country isolated itself from the outside and depended on the scapegoating of others to protect its exceptionalist image. This was represented in the novel when violence was practiced against the women at the Convent has much to say about the war in Iraq.

In *The Road* McCarthy's discussion of the dystopia and environmental concerns have a reference to the historical context of 9/11 and Iraq war because the work was published after these two events. This work criticized the myth of American exceptionalism that was used by policymakers like the Former President Bush. Thus, McCarthy challenged this myth through questioning its rhetoric that was used to justify the violence beneath this myth. This was represented in the novel when the father justified his violence to protect his son through using the rhetoric of goodguyness.

After analysing the novels stylistically (language, symbols) depending on Critical Discourse Analysis theory, we found that Toni Morrison and Cormac McCarthy used their language to challenge the myth of American exceptionalism. Both writers proved that the rhetoric of the discourse is influenced by this myth in relation to bush's speech that was highly influenced by this ideology as well. As a result, we can say that Toni Morrison and Cormac McCarthy are anti mythic-writers who challenge the old myths including the myth of American exceptionalism.

Through our investigation of the topic we reached the results that the novels *Paradise* and *The Road* can be read according to different cultural contexts and reception. Thus, readers can enlarge the scope of the themes of the novels depending on different theories like: Reader- response, feminism and existentialism.

Furthermore, the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism can be useful in initiating a critique of the current administration's exceptionalist policies and rhetoric starting from: George W. Bush to Barak Obama and Donald Trump.

Ultimately, this dissertation is limited in scope and content. Firstly, the limited scope of this study, challenging the myth of American exceptionalism, does not cover all the findings. Secondly, this study is limited to study the criticism of the myth of American exceptionalism in the utopian and dystopian genres relating them to the attacks of 9/11 and Iraq war under the administration of Bush.

Although this study was investigated through using a large scale of primary and secondary sources, one of the limitation of this dissertation may lay on the lack of similar studies on both novels that would enhance the research findings; Toni Morrison's *Paradise* for example, was viewed from other perspectives related to their genre which utopia that tackles: Feminism and Critical Race Theory. In addition, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* was also viewed from other perspectives including its dystopian genre that discussed ecological and existentialism theories. However, the theme of American exceptionalism in relation to wars and imperialism was not discussed in large scale.

الملخص

تدرس هذه المذكرة الاستثنائية الأمريكية في رواية الطوباوية الجنة لتوني موريسن و في رواية الديستوبيا الطريق لكورماك مكارثي اعتمادا على أسلوب التحليل المقارن . من المهم جدا معرفة أن الاستثنائية الأمريكية تظهر في عدة أوجه لكنها تظهر في الخطابات السياسية و زيادة على ذلك فإننا درسنا كل من الروايتين من اجل نقد هذه الخرافة مع تسليط الضوء على طبيعة العنف التي تبرر الحرب و الامبريالية .تمت دراسة الروايتان دراسة موضوعية مع ربطهما بعناصر نظرية سلوتكن : التجديد من خلال العنف التي تتضمن الحدود و العنف ،البطل الأمريكي،البنادق و الأسلحة ،و الحروب الأمريكية وعلاوة على ذلك ؛ اخذنا الدراسة التحليلية للأسلوب في الحسبان لإظهار كيفية تأثير هذه الخرافة على كتابة الروايتين والمفكرة السياسية في الدبلوماسية الخارجية للولايات المتحدة التي تمثلت في خطاب بوش بعد هجمات التاسع من سبتمبر التي أعطت المعنى الشرعي للغزو الأمريكي للعراق عام 2003.

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