EXPLORING POST-APOCALYPTIC HUMAN IDENTITY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL HUMANS AND TRADITIONAL HUMANITY IN CORMAC MCCARTHY'S *THE ROAD*

1 Waqas Yousaf
Lecturer, Minhaj University Lahore
waqas.eng@mul.edu.pk
2 Syed Abuzar Naqvi
Lecturer, Minhaj University Lahore
Abuzar.eng@mul.edu.pk
3 Ramiza Aslam
MPhil Scholar

Abstract

 This interdisciplinary study undertakes a comparative analysis of human identity in Cormac McCarthy's The Road, juxtaposing traditional humanity with the emerging concept of digital humans. Through a post humanist lens, this research examines how the novel's portrayal of human resilience, morality, and relationships in a world informs our understanding of identity in the face of technological advancements. The investigation is guided by three primary research objectives. It aims to analyze traditional human identities, as represented in The Road. It also aims to cover the possibilities of digital humans' challenge or reaffirm traditional notions of human identity, particularly in relation to embodiment, agency, and community.This study offers a nuanced exploration of the tensions and synergies between traditional and digital human identities. The research employs a qualitative methodology, combining close reading and thematic analysis of The Road with theoretical frameworks from posthumanism and digital humanities. This study contributes to the burgeoning discourse on digital humanity, shedding light on the evolving nature of humanity in the digital age. The findings provide valuable insights for scholars, theorists, and practitioners working at the intersection of technology, philosophy, and human identity. Ultimately, this research invites a critical reevaluation of what it means to be human in a world where technological advancements increasingly blur the lines between human and machine.

Introduction:

The concept of human identity has been a subject of continuous philosophical, sociological, and literary discourse, particularly in the wake of transformative technological advancements and global crises. In the realm of post-apocalyptic narratives, the question of what it means to be human becomes even more pronounced, as civilizations collapse, societies reconstruct themselves, and individuals struggle with survival in a world where traditional norms and structures have been destroy. The emergence of digital humans—synthetic entities, Cyborgs, artificial intelligences, and technologically enhanced beings—presents a compelling juxtaposition against traditional humanity, raising profound questions about the nature of consciousness, agency, morality, and social belonging. The interplay between these two categories—organic human beings and their digital or technologically modified counterparts—forms the crux of contemporary debates surrounding identity, autonomy, and the evolution of human civilization in a post-apocalyptic landscape.

This research explores the comparative dynamics of digital humans and traditional humanity within post-apocalyptic settings, examining how each category navigates survival, reconstructs identity, and engages with ethical and existential dilemmas. The post-apocalyptic genre, whether in literature, film, or digital media, frequently presents scenarios where the collapse of human civilization necessitates not only physical adaptation but also a redefinition of personal and collective identity (Jackson, 2015).

Within such gloomy landscapes, digital humans often emerge as either saviors or existential threats, embodying both the potential and perils of technological advancement. Meanwhile, traditional humans struggle to maintain their sense of self amidst devastation, sometimes embracing technological augmentation as a means of endurance, while at other times resisting it in an effort to preserve their organic essence. This tension between digital and traditional humanity is not merely a thematic exploration but a reflection of real-world anxieties surrounding artificial intelligence, transhumanism, and the future of human existence.

By engaging with post-apocalyptic literature and media, this research seeks to analyze how digital humans and traditional humans are depicted in relation to fundamental aspects of identity, such as memory, emotion, social connection, and ethical decision-making. Are digital humans capable of forming authentic relationships and experiencing emotions in a way that parallels or even surpasses their organic counterparts? Does the erosion of traditional human society accelerate the acceptance of digital consciousness as a valid form of identity, or does it reinforce the primacy of biological human experience? These questions are central to understanding the evolving discourse on what it means to be human in an era where technological advancements increasingly blur the boundaries between organic life and artificial intelligence.

Furthermore, this study delves into the ideological and philosophical underpinnings of post-apocalyptic narratives, interrogating the extent to which they critique or endorse the integration of digital entities into the human identity paradigm. Some narratives envision a future where digital and organic beings coexist harmoniously, while others present a dystopian struggle where one must inevitably dominate or assimilate the other. The notion of "post-human" existence also emerges as a crucial point of discussion, as the very definition of humanity becomes fluid in the face of artificial consciousness, cybernetic enhancements, and genetic modifications. Through a comparative analysis of selected post-apocalyptic texts, films, and theoretical perspectives, this research aims to provide an in-depth exploration of the evolving nature of human identity in an era where survival and adaptation are no longer limited to biological constraints (Splichalova, 2018).

In doing so, this study contributes to a broader understanding of the intersection between technology and humanity, shedding light on how post-apocalyptic narratives serve as a lens through which contemporary society negotiates its fears and aspirations concerning digital existence. As humanity stands on the precipice of unprecedented technological evolution, the exploration of digital humans versus traditional humanity within these speculative futures becomes more than a fictional exercise— it becomes a critical inquiry the very fabric of human identity itself.

Research Objective :

1: To examine how McCarthy portrays the erosion of traditional human identity in the post-apocalyptic world.

2: To analyze how the absence of digital technology in the novel affects the protagonist's sense of identity and humanity.

3: To investigate how the novel's portrayal of the relationship between humans and the natural world reflects the tension between digital and traditional human identity.

Research Questions:

1: How does Cormac McCarthy portray the erosion of traditional human identity in the post-apocalyptic world of The Road?

2: In what ways the absence of digital technology in The Road affect the protagonist's sense of identity and humanity?

3: How does the novel's portrayal of the relationship between humans and the natural world reflects the tension between digital and traditional human identity in The Road?

Literature Review:

The study of human identity in post-apocalyptic literature has been a critical area of scholarly inquiry, particularly in the context of survival, morality, and the evolving nature of human consciousness. Cormac McCarthy's The Road (2006) stands as a seminal work within the genre, offering a bleak yet profoundly moving exploration of humanity in the face of existential despair. The novel's depiction of a father and son struggling for survival in a desolate, post-apocalyptic landscape raises profound questions about what it means to be human when civilization collapses. Scholars have widely examined The Road in terms of its existential and moral dimensions, focusing on themes such as ethical survivalism, the endurance of love and hope, and the loss of cultural memory. However, an emerging discourse in posthumanist and transhumanist studies invites an analysis of the novel's portrayal of humanity in contrast to the rise of digital humans—synthetic beings, artificial intelligences, and cybernetic organisms—within broader post- apocalyptic fiction. This literature review explores existing scholarship on The Road and its relevance to the comparative study of traditional humanity and digital existence in post-apocalyptic settings.

McCarthy's novel has been extensively analyzed for its meditation on human resilience and moral integrity in the face of annihilation. Scholars such as Steven Frye (2013) have argued that The Road presents a deeply existentialist narrative, where the father and son's journey symbolizes the struggle to preserve ethical values in a world that has lost its moral compass. This aligns with traditional humanist readings of the novel, which emphasize the persistence of love, memory, and language as defining features of humanity. The stark contrast between the father and son—who represent the last vestiges of moral human beings—and the cannibalistic survivors or indifferent scavengers underscores the fragility of human identity in the absence of civilization (FERNANDES, 2024). However, as posthumanist theorists like N. Katherine Hayles (1999) suggest, human identity is increasingly being reshaped by technological advancements, challenging the binary distinction between the organic and the artificial. While The Road does not explicitly feature digital humans, its thematic preoccupations with memory, ethics, and survival resonate with broader discussions on how artificial intelligences and cybernetic beings might redefine humanity in similar apocalyptic settings. In short ,existing literature on The Road predominantly frames its exploration of human identity within existential and ethical frameworks, emphasizing the endurance of love, morality, and cultural memory in a world stripped of civilization (Hill & Arts, 2018,). However, posthumanist and transhumanist perspectives offer new avenues for analyzing the novel's themes in relation to digital humans, artificial intelligence, and the evolving nature of identity in post-apocalyptic fiction. By comparing McCarthy's work with other narratives that explicitly feature digital consciousness, scholars can engage in a broader discussion about what it truly means to be human in the face of technological and existential crises. This comparative approach not only deepens our understanding of The Road but also contributes to the ongoing discourse on human identity in an era where the boundaries between organic and artificial life are becoming increasingly blurred (Vihonen, 2018).

Research Gap

The study of human identity in post-apocalyptic literature has been widely explored, particularly through themes of survival, morality, and the fragility of civilization. Cormac McCarthy's The Road

has been the subject of extensive scholarly analysis, with researchers examining its existentialist themes, ethical dilemmas, and the endurance of love and hope in a world stripped of structure and meaning. Many studies have focused on the novel's portrayal of traditional human identity, emphasizing the father-son relationship as a testament to the persistence of moral values in a collapsed society. However, a significant gap exists in connecting The Road to the evolving discourse on digital humans and posthumanism, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence, cybernetic beings, and technologically augmented identities in post-apocalyptic settings.

While The Road does not explicitly feature digital humans, its themes resonate with broader questions about the evolution of identity in a world where technological advancement is reshaping the very definition of humanity. Post- apocalyptic literature often presents scenarios where artificial intelligence or cybernetic entities play a role in preserving or challenging human identity, yet little research has explored how The Road might be analyzed through this lens. Most studies focus on the novel's depiction of traditional human resilience, but few consider how its exploration of memory, morality, and survival could be juxtaposed with narratives where digital beings navigate similar existential dilemmas.

Furthermore, scholarship on posthumanism and transhumanism has primarily focused on works that explicitly feature artificial intelligence and digital consciousness, such as Blade Runner 2049, Westworld, or Ghost in the Shell. However, there is a lack of research bridging these discussions with texts like The Road, which, despite its human-centered narrative, raises fundamental questions about identity, agency, and the nature of survival. This gap suggests an opportunity to re-examine The Road within a broader framework of technological evolution and artificial consciousness, asking whether the traits that define humanity in the novel—love, morality, and memory—could extend to non-biological beings in similar post-apocalyptic scenarios.

Additionally, while studies on The Road have examined the role of cultural memory in sustaining human identity, they have not sufficiently addressed whether digital beings could assume a similar function. If artificial intelligence were to inherit the remnants of human civilization, would it merely store information, or could it carry cultural and ethical legacies in a meaningful way? This question remains underexplored, highlighting the need for a comparative analysis that considers how both traditional and digital humans might preserve or redefine identity in the aftermath of societal collapse. By addressing this research gap, this study aims to expand the conversation on The Road beyond its existing humanist interpretations, situating it within a larger discourse on posthumanism, artificial intelligence, and the future of identity in post-apocalyptic fiction. Through this comparative approach, the research will offer new insights into how narratives of survival and moral perseverance apply not only to organic humans but also to the potential evolution of digital beings in a world where traditional human existence is no longer the only form of sentient life.

Findings:

Cormac McCarthy's The Road presents a haunting vision of a post-apocalyptic world where traditional human identity erodes under the weight of extreme survivalism, moral decay, and environmental desolation. The novel dismantles the constructs of civilization, showing how the absence of societal structures, ethical frameworks, and cultural continuity leads to a profound crisis of identity. The father and son, as the novel's central figures, embody the fragile remnants of human essence, constantly navigating a world where conventional notions of morality, family, and even

language are disintegrating. Through McCarthy's sparse yet evocative prose, the narratives underscores how identity is not only shaped by individual consciousness but also by the external conditions that sustain human meaning. The road itself, a central motif in the novel, becomes both a literal and symbolic representation of this erosion—it is a path without direction, a remnant of a world that no longer exists, and a space where human identity is constantly tested.

One of the most evident markers of identity erosion in The Road is the breakdown of moral distinction. In a pre-apocalyptic world, ethics are largely dictated by social contracts and cultural institutions, but in McCarthy's wasteland, morality is reduced to a binary of survival versus annihilation. The father, though clinging to a moral compass, operates within a shifting ethical paradigm, constantly struggling to justify his actions. He repeatedly reassures his son that they are "the good

guys," yet this assertion becomes increasingly tenuous as their survival necessitates decisions that blur traditional moral boundaries. The man's

willingness to kill, steal, and deceive—actions once condemned—now become necessary for the continuation of life. This moral ambiguity is mirrored in the road itself, which offers no inherent direction or purpose. It is not a path leading to salvation but rather an endless journey through decay, forcing those who travel it to constantly redefine their sense of right and wrong. The boy, in contrast, represents a vestigial sense of morality, untainted by necessity, demonstrating that ethical identity may persist in some form despite environmental collapse. Language, a cornerstone of human identity and cultural transmission, also suffers degradation in The Road. McCarthy's prose mirrors the novel's bleak reality, employing stripped-down syntax, fragmented dialogue, and minimal punctuation, reflecting the collapse of linguistic order alongside societal decay. The characters speak in truncated, utilitarian phrases, and much of their communication is transactional rather than expressive. This linguistic deterioration signifies not only the erosion of human intellect and cultural continuity but also the loss of shared meaning. The father, aware of language's fragility, tries to preserve it for his son, telling him stories and reinforcing words like "carry the fire," a phrase that transcends mere survival and gestures toward an enduring human spirit. The road, as a setting, reinforces this loss. It is a landscape devoid of conversation, a space where human connection has been reduced to whispered exchanges between a dying father and his child. Yet, the scarcity of meaningful conversation between

the novel's scattered survivors suggests that language, much like morality, is on the brink of extinction.

Furthermore, the collapse of social structures severs individuals from collective identity. In the world of The Road, there is no longer a community to provide belonging, no institutions to instill values, and no history to anchor personal narratives. The father and son exist in a vacuum, their relationship reduced to the most primal form of human connection. The absence of names in the novel underscores this loss of individual and cultural identity; without a functioning society, personal identity becomes irrelevant. The few remaining survivors exist in a Hobbesian state of nature, where interactions are governed by violence and self- preservation rather than social roles or kinship bonds. The marauding cannibals, stripped of any semblance of ethical or cultural identity, embody the ultimate dehumanization, reducing human beings to mere flesh to be consumed. The road, in this sense, is not a route to civilization but a liminal space where people drift between survival and inhumanity, constantly negotiating their own moral limits.

Memory and nostalgia play a crucial role in highlighting the fragmentation of identity. The father frequently recalls the past—a world of abundance, familial warmth, and structure—but these

memories are more of a burden than a solace. His recollections, often triggered by mundane objects or landscapes, serve as painful reminders of loss rather than meaningful connections to the present. The boy, having been born into the desolation, lacks these memories, which makes him simultaneously more vulnerable and more adaptable. He does not grieve the past because he never experienced it, but this also means he lacks the framework to reconstruct identity as his father does. The road, once a symbol of movement, progress, and connection, now stretches through a world where history has become irrelevant. The novel suggests that as the old world fades from memory, so too does the human identity that was shaped by it. Despite the overwhelming loss, The Road does not entirely dismiss the endurance of human identity. The novel suggests that even in the bleakest conditions, some vestiges of humanity persist—most notably through love and moral choice. The father's devotion to his son, his insistence on keeping him safe, and his passing down of ethical values illustrates an attempt to preserve identity through relational bonds. The phrase "carrying the fire" functions as both a literal and

symbolic act of maintaining human dignity, signifying a refusal to succumb to total savagery. The road, despite its bleakness, also represents this endurance—it is a space of suffering, but it is also a space where the father teaches his son what it means to be human. The road itself may be empty and uncertain, but it remains a passage through which identity is tested, shaped, and ultimately handed down.

McCarthy's portrayal of identity erosion in The Road is thus a meditation on what it means to be human when all external markers of civilization disappear. Through the father and son's journey, the novel explores how identity is contingent upon morality, language, social structure, memory, and relationality. While the apocalypse strips away much of what once defined humanity, it also reveals the core of human resilience: the need to create meaning, to preserve morality, and to seek connection, even in the face of annihilation. The road itself, stretching endlessly through ruin, is not just a setting but a metaphor for this existential struggle—both a path toward inevitable extinction and a testament to the endurance of the human spirit.

In The Road by Cormac McCarthy, the absence of digital technology profoundly impacts the protagonist's sense of identity and humanity, forcing him to define himself not through external validation but through survival, morality, and his relationship with his son. In a post-apocalyptic world where all traces of modern civilization, including technology, communication, and recorded history, have

disappeared, the father's identity is no longer shaped by societal roles, professions, or digital documentation. Instead, his existence is reduced to the most fundamental aspects of human experience—his choices, his memories, and his ability to preserve life. The novel explores how, in the absence of technological and social frameworks, identity becomes a deeply personal and internal struggle, one that is constantly tested by the harsh realities of survival.

One of the most striking effects of the absence of digital technology is the erasure of historical and personal records. In modern society, digital archives, photographs, social media, and recorded history play a crucial role in shaping and preserving identity. People define themselves by their digital footprints—their online interactions, achievements, and relationships. However, in The Road, all such records are lost, leaving the father and son as two anonymous wanderers in a world where past identities hold no significance. This loss is emphasized when the father reminisces about his past life, recalling memories of his wife and a world that no longer exists. These memories, however, are fragile and subjective, fading over time, making it increasingly difficult for him to hold onto a coherent sense

of self. Unlike a world with digital technology, where identity is reinforced by external reminders, the father must rely solely on his own mind to remember who he was and what he stands for.

The lack of technology also removes any external validation of morality, forcing the father to define his own sense of ethics. In a digital society, moral values are often reinforced by laws, social norms, and the ability to communicate with others who share similar beliefs. In contrast, the father's morality in The Road is self- imposed, built on his commitment to protecting his son and maintaining the distinction between "good guys" and "bad guys." This is particularly evident in his refusal to resort to cannibalism, even when faced with starvation. The absence of technology means there is no legal system, no social media to expose wrongdoing, and no external pressures to conform to ethical behavior—his morality is purely an internal choice. This makes his commitment to goodness even more profound, as it is not influenced by societal expectations but rather by his personal belief in preserving some semblance of humanity in a world that has lost all structure. The road itself, serving as both a physical path and a metaphor for existential struggle, reinforces the idea that identity is shaped by action rather than external recognition. In the absence of digital technology, the father and son's journey is not documented or witnessed by anyone else, making their existence feel almost ephemeral. However, the father instills in his son the belief that they "carry the fire," a symbolic affirmation of their humanity and moral integrity. This phrase becomes a defining aspect of their identity, a way for them to distinguish

themselves from the lawless survivors who have abandoned all ethics. The father's insistence on this belief highlights how, in a world devoid of external validation, identity is shaped by internal conviction and the choices one makes.

Furthermore, the absence of digital communication heightens the sense of

isolation and deepens the father's responsibility for shaping his son's identity. In the modern world, technology allows people to connect, learn, and be influenced by a wide range of perspectives. However, in The Road, the boy's only source of moral and philosophical guidance is his father. This places immense pressure on the father, as he understands that his son's sense of self and humanity will be defined solely by their interactions. The boy's innocence and compassion, seen when he expresses sympathy for the weak and questions whether they can help others, contrast with the father's hardened survival instincts. This dynamic emphasizes the struggle between maintaining humanity and adapting to a brutal world. Without technology to provide alternative perspectives or reinforce moral codes, the boy's identity is formed entirely through his father's teachings and their shared experiences.

Memory, another central theme in The Road, also takes on a different significance in the absence of technology. In a digital world, people rely on photographs,

videos, and written records to preserve the past. However, in the father's world, memory is fragile and unreliable. He frequently recalls fragmented images of the past—his wife, his childhood, moments of beauty that contrast with the bleak

present. These memories serve as a link to his former identity, but they also highlight the transient nature of human existence. Without digital preservation, the past is constantly slipping away, making it harder for the father to hold onto a clear sense of self. This struggle is evident in his increasing detachment from the past, as he realizes that dwelling on what has been lost only makes survival more difficult.

Ultimately, the absence of digital technology in The Road forces identity and humanity to be defined through action, memory, and moral conviction rather than external validation. The father's sense of self is not reinforced by societal roles or digital records but by his choices and his commitment to protecting his son. The road itself becomes a space where identity is constantly tested, where the only proof of existence is survival and moral integrity. In a world without technology,
where history is erased and external validation is nonexistent, the father and son's humanity is measured not by what they have or how they are perceived, but by their actions and the beliefs they choose to uphold. Through this, McCarthy presents a haunting exploration of what it means to be human when all societal structures are stripped away, leaving only the raw essence of identity and morality.

The Road, Nature, and the Collapse of Human Identity

Cormac McCarthy's The Road presents a stark, post-apocalyptic world where the relationship between humans and nature has been irreversibly altered. The novel explores the consequences of environmental collapse, stripping the Earth of its natural beauty and functionality. In this barren landscape, survival becomes a
desperate struggle, and the absence of nature's regenerative power leaves humanity in existential despair. The father and son, the novel's protagonists, traverse a dead world devoid of greenery, wildlife, or any semblance of the life that once thrived. This environmental desolation serves as a reflection of the broader tension between traditional human identity—rooted in nature, interpersonal relationships, and community—and the emerging, often alienating digital identity that has come to define modern civilization.

In contemporary society, the shift from a traditional, nature-centered existence to a digitally driven one has caused a disconnect between humans and the natural world. McCarthy's novel, though not explicitly about digital transformation, serves as an allegory for the consequences of abandoning traditional modes of living in favor of artificial constructs. The man and the boy's journey through the gray, lifeless landscape symbolizes humanity's increasing detachment from nature, akin to how digital culture distances people from tangible, organic experiences. The characters cling to remnants of the old world—memories, stories, and moral
values—as a way to preserve their sense of self. This mirrors the way people today struggle to maintain authenticity and human connection in an era dominated by virtual interactions and artificial intelligence. One of the most striking aspects of The Road is its depiction of a world where nature has ceased to provide sustenance. The sky is perpetually covered in ash, the trees are either dead or falling, and the oceans no longer offer life. In a digital context, this can be seen as a metaphor for the loss of physical and emotional nourishment in a world increasingly mediated by screens and technology. Just as the novel's survivors must scavenge for scraps in a world that no longer produces natural food, modern individuals often seek meaning and connection in a digital realm that, while vast and ever-present, lacks the depth and authenticity of real- world experiences. The father's struggle to teach his son morality and "carry the fire" highlights the tension between maintaining traditional human values and adapting to a world that no longer supports them—a dilemma echoed in modern debates about the ethical implications of artificial intelligence, social media, and virtual reality. Additionally, the theme

of memory in The Road plays a crucial role in this analysis. The father frequently recalls moments from his past life, where nature was abundant and human civilization flourished. These memories serve as a psychological refuge but also as a painful reminder of what has been lost. In the context of digital transformation, this parallels the nostalgia many feel for a time before the internet dominated human interaction. The boy, in contrast, grows up in a world without firsthand experience of nature's former glory. He accepts the bleak landscape as his reality, just as younger generations today are growing up in a world where digital interactions often take precedence over face-to-face communication. The father's attempts to instill a sense of goodness and humanity in his son mirror the efforts of older generations to pass down traditional values in an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and algorithm-driven realities.

Furthermore, the novel's language and style reinforce this theme. McCarthy's prose is sparse, mirroring the emptiness of the world he describes. There are no quotation marks, minimal punctuation, and a raw, stripped-down syntax that reflects the degradation of civilization. This linguistic desolation can be likened to the fragmented, impersonal nature of digital communication— text messages, tweets, and online interactions often lack the depth and nuance of traditional face-to-face conversations. Just as the characters in The Road struggle to maintain meaningful dialogue in a world reduced to survival, modern individuals often find it difficult to engage in substantive communication amidst the noise of digital media.

The novel also explores the concept of trust in a world where traditional human bonds have been eroded. The father and son encounter few other survivors, and most of them are either dangerous or too fearful to engage. This breakdown of social trust can be compared to the way digital culture has altered human relationships—social media fosters both connection and division, and online interactions are often marked by anonymity, deception, and performativity. The road itself, an endless and uncertain path, symbolizes the journey of identity in a world where traditional markers of human connection have eroded. The boy's eventual encounter with a seemingly good family at the end of the novel suggests that, even in a world stripped of its natural and communal foundations, some remnants of genuine human connection can survive. This reflects the hope that, despite the encroachments of digital life, there remains the possibility of authentic relationships and ethical grounding.

In conclusion, The Road serves as a powerful meditation on the relationship between humans and the natural world, while also offering a profound commentary on the tension between traditional and digital human identity. The novel's depiction of environmental devastation, the erosion of social bonds, and the struggle to preserve morality in an indifferent world all serve as metaphors for the challenges of maintaining authenticity in the digital age. Through its bleak yet ultimately hopeful narrative, McCarthy's work challenges readers to reflect on what it means to be human in a world that is constantly shifting—whether due to environmental catastrophe or the ever-growing influence of digital technology.

References

Fernandes, C. (2024). *Analysing Select Dystopian and Utopian Narratives from a Posthumanist Perspective* (Doctoral dissertation, Goa University).

Hill, T., & Arts, L. (2018, April). Post-Apocalyptic Literature: Humanity's Survival Tool. In *The National Conference on Undergraduate Research*. http://libjournals. unca. edu/ncur/wpcontent/uploads/2021/03/2554-Hill-Tessa-FINAL. pdf.

Jackson, A. D. (2015). *A world-maker's will: the post-apocalypse and human power in Cormac McCarthy's The Road* (Doctoral dissertation).

Šplíchalová, T. (2018). *Conceptions of Humanity in Three Works of Post-Apocalyptic Fiction* (Doctoral dissertation, BA Thesis. Masaryk University, 2016. Web. 10 Mar).

Vihonen, T. (2018). "Perhaps in the world's destruction it would be possible at last to see how it was made"–The Post-Pastoral Postapocalypse of Cormac McCarthy's The Road.