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Crossing the Mexican-American Border in Cormac McCarthy's Work

Překročení mexicko-americké hranice v díle Cormaca McCarthyho

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Anotace:

Práce nejprve v teoretické části nastíní problematiku existence a historii vzniku mexicko-americké hranice na území státu Texas a poté představí autora Cormaca McCarthyho jako autora mexicko-amerického pomezí. Práce se ve svém jádru zaměří na objasnění pojmu hranice (Borderlands/ La Frontera) v literárním kontextu současné americké regionální literatury. Pojmem hranice se práce bude zabývat v rámci románové tvorby Cormaca McCarthyho (román Hranice – The Crossing a případně další díly zmíněné trilogie). S prostorovým pojmem hranice bude pracovat i kapitola věnovaná McCarthyho postapokalyptickému románu Cesta.

Klíčová slova: hranice, Mexicko-Americká hranice, Cormac McCarthy, regionální literatura, pohraničí, hraniční přechod

Abstract:

The thesis initially focuses on the origin and history of Mexican-American border, especially in the state of Texas, and its current situation. Cormac McCarthy is introduced as an author Mexican-American borderlands. Explanations of the terminology behind borderlands, border, and La Frontera from the literary point of view is given in the thesis core. Space of border in literature is explained through works of Cormac McCarthy, namely through the Border Trilogy. The thesis also consists of chapter dedicated to the novel The Road from aspects of its space description.

Key words: border, the Mexican-American border, Cormac McCarthy, regional literature, borderlands, border crossing

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Introduction

Borders are men-made lines separating two or more nations or other distinctive areas. The Mexican-American border is the most crossed border in the world. The region of Mexican-American borderlands is defined by binational economy, social and cultural entity of the region, and further by trade and its rich history. The border landscape is dominated by two deserts, The Sonora Desert and The Chihuahua Desert, the landscapes of deserts are in some parts, mainly in the state of Texas, interrupted by the banks of Rio Grande. What shapes today's border is its rich history. First settlements of this area are dated back to 10,000 years, especially around the area of Rio Grande. However, today's shape of the border originates in Mexican American War, with the final delineations made in 1853.

With this knowledge of the border, the thesis focus moves to its depiction in literature. In literature the setting of borderlands can be studied from the point of view of the regional and Southern literature. In literature borders and borderlands represent a territory where people of different cultures and nationalities meet. The contact with these people often brings hatred, exploitation, anger, as said by Anzaldúa in her *Borderlands/La Frontera*. The themes of borders and borderlands originated in the genre of Western and frontier myth, which set the foundations for the literature of the Southwest. Attributes of frontier myth grew out of ambiguity of the border itself, putting in confrontation the civilised and uncivilised world. In frontier mythology, Southwest is interpreted as a land of freedom and opportunity, where individuals display their courage, determination, ingenuity, loyalty, and kinship. These values set foundations to creation of the prototypical hero of this area – the cowboy. Storylines with cowboys were focusing on their ranch life, romances, and lead to creation of the Western.

The aspects of frontier myth, the Western and setting of borderlands is studied through the works of Cormac McCarthy. In his novels *Blood Meridian*, the *Border Trilogy* and to some extent even *The Road*, the notions of frontier myths and the Western are challenged. McCarthy uses the border as a line which should be crossed (or in *The Road* which should be travelled to), crossing of the border is in literature used as a metaphor of risk and empowerment. In the named McCarthy's novels, borders are often crossed to chase a dream and to find world of the past. The dream is signified in the frontier myth and its freedom and new opportunities, however McCarthy never shows fulfilment of these dreams, as the characters only idolized the world beyond the border.

As studied in the thesis, similar themes are represented in works of Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, Stella Pope Duarte and others. As shown, borders and their crossing never bring happiness and peace for the characters of mentioned works.

In the thesis McCarthy's works are introduced through his southern works represented in Southern gothic, which influenced McCarthy's first novels and *The Road*. Aspects of anxieties, fears, terrors, violence, brutality, elements typical for Southern gothic, are seen in McCarthy's work, along with the undeadness, element of Southern gothic depicting dead bodies, and dead-like figures.

Different section of McCarthy novels is introduced through the Western elements of his novels, with mentioning of the Westerns subgenres apparent in his works, namely anti-western, western of "end of the West", ecological western and modern western.

The fourth part of the thesis depicts McCarthy's works taking place along the Mexican-American borderlands, and introduces several interpretations of the area.

Last part of the thesis and the vital point of the thesis, depicts the borders crossings in his novels *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Crossings*, *Cities of the Plain*. The thesis is focusing of the two main characters of the trilogy John Grady Cole and Billy Parham and the motivation and symbolism behind the various border crossings they endure.

1. The Mexican-American Borderlands

Borderlands are inhabited areas located usually between two power centres and civilizations also in a sense of two different politico-economic regions. Both areas are in continual movement both change by the influence of each other. Borderlands cannot be understood only as places, moreover as social processes. In other words, borderlands are space around a border where state meets society. Borders and therefore borderlands have a social aspect (Zartman 2010).

The difference between border and borderland is seen in the creations of the two. Border is artificial, man-made boundary which usually divides two states and nations. Borders are political lines, often reinforced by natural distinctions of two nations and of geographical differences such as moats, mountain ridges, or water bodies. Whereas borderlands are defined by the people living on the edge of the two states and by people meeting inhabitants living on the edge of the other side of the border. Relationships between these people change gradually.

The language of borderlands is a mixture of the languages, and their respective dialects, spoken by the people inhabiting them. Borderlands are therefore junctures of cultures and languages. In addition, borderlands can be described as ‘(...) *liminal landscape of changing meanings on which distinct human cultures first encounter one another’s “Otherness” and appropriate, accommodate, or domesticate it through language.*’ (Crow 2003, p.49).

The two-thousand-mile boundary between the United States and Mexico shapes the economy, social and cultural entity of the region. The border region is defined by binational economy. The borderland transferred rapidly since the second half of the 19th century. It developed from cattle ranching and mining area to the attractive tourist industry filled area, that after second world war attracted great amount of international capital to its manufacturing and service sector. The border region is also characterised by the enormous movement of people who cross the border. Each year the border is legally crossed by 250 million of people, only about 1% of people cross the border illegally. The region is also characterised with rich cultural diversity. Originally the area was inhabited by indigenous population, later it was populated by Europeans, Africans, Native Americans from central Mexico, Asians and by people of mixed ethnicity. English and Spanish languages are mixed in this region, making bilingualism and multiculturalism a part of everyday life (Lorey, 1999). To summarise, the Mexican-American borderlands

are influenced by various factors: culture, languages, communication, ethnicity and economics including trade and history. Even though the physical border was politically established in 1853 through U.S. acquisition of the Gadsden Purchase the awareness of the psychological identity along the border cannot be dated (Zartman, 2010).

The border's landscape is dominated by two large deserts. The Sonora Desert extends south from California and Arizona, down to the Baja California peninsula and around the eastern edge of the Gulf of California into the state of Sonora located in Mexico. The Chihuahuan Desert stretches from south-eastern Arizona, southern New Mexico and western Texas onto Mexican states Chihuahua and Coahuila and then further south into central Mexico. Approximately about two thirds of the border's landscape is covered in desert (Anderson, Gerber 2008).

The largest concentration of population is in the western part of the border between twin cities San Diego and Tijuana. As Anderson and Geber (2008) mention in 2000 this part of the border was home to 4 million out of 12.2 million people who inhabited the borderlands. Both cities have the lowest poverty rates of the U.S. counties and Mexican municipios (municipios are administrative units below the level of the state) that touch the border. The main border crossing between the two cities is one of the busiest crossings in the world, the same can be said about crossing between cities El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

The most rural part of the border is located between states of New Mexico and Chihuahua. Due to bigger sparseness of population in this area and due to more direct international routes in other regions the least amount of border trade happens in New Mexico. The lower population density is explained by the dry and rocky character of the Chihuahuan Desert, despite that the region was inhabited for millennia. The desert landscape is interrupted by the banks of river Rio Grande (Anderson, Gerber 2008). The Rio Grande forms parts of the Mexico-American border. Already mentioned twin Cities El Paso and Ciudad Juárez sit on the river. El Paso-Juárez has five border crossings. Both cities are commercial centres for surrounding communities, furthermore they serve as a gateway for international trade and both cities have manufacturing sectors. Eastwards from both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez the borderland are poorer and more rural. Two-thirds of people living east to El Paso in the Texas part of the border do not speak English as their first language. As Anderson and Geber (2008) further state one-third speak English "less than well". In general, Spanish language dominates rural part of the Texas

border with many people living in poorer conditions in neighbourhoods called colonias. In Texas colonias serve as a synonym for neighbourhoods with lack of basic services such as sewerage, running clean water and electricity. Population sparsity grows further to the east. From there following the border further towards south there are the historic towns of Marfa and Presidio. In 19th century Presidio and its Mexican twin city Ojinaga became the crossing point to Chihuahua trail. South-east of Ojinaga lays last municipio in Chihuahua state, Manuel Benevidas. During history, this area had significance due to mining of copper, zinc, and lead, yet nowadays only small-scale farming remains in this area. Moving further east is natural ford of Rio Grande called Redford. Redford is known to serve as a formal crossing for the last 10,000 years, however the U.S. Border patrol closed the crossing after September 11, 2001. The area around Redford is surrounded by town with mining history, attracting tourists nowadays. Additionally, Big Bend National Park can be found in this part of the border. 118 miles of the border run through the park along its southern edge. North from the park towns Marathon and Alpine are located. They usually serve as a weekday destination for tourists from El Paso. This part of the border is characterised by sparse population, open space without paved roads occasionally interrupted by small towns including Dryden, Sanderson, Pumpville. The myths and stereotypes of the Old West initially originated from these west Texas towns.

As mentioned, the border in Texas follows the river Rio Grande, most of the area around Rio Grande and Rio Grande Valley is rich in history, with towns dating back to 1750s. Although rich in history, this part of the border region includes Starr County, which is considered the poorest county on the U.S. side of the border moreover one of the poorest in the whole of the U.S. Further downstream of the Rio Grande, towards the Gulf of Mexico, large metropolitan cities surround both sides of the river (Anderson, Gerber 2008).

1.1 History of the Mexican-American Border

Archaeological evidence dates the first settlements around the border back to 10,000 years, mainly in the area around Rio Grande. Rio Grande always served as a suitable transportation waterway. The river gave commercial advantages to the territory and enabled its early settlements.

First Europeans arrived at the borderlands in 1519 with expeditions of Alonzo Pineda and Diego Camargo. During the 17th century borderlands were affected by

Franciscan and Jesuits missionaries travelling to these areas to convert indigenous people (Anderson and Gerber, 2008).

Throughout the history the border had a shifting nature because of wars between the two nations (Zartman, 2010). Today's shape of the border originated in the Mexican American war, that began over a border dispute as a direct consequence of American expansionism driven from economic growth and changing social identity of the U.S. Expansion of the United States was guided by self-confidence in the supremacy of their culture, government, and civilization. The term *Manifest Destiny* is used to describe this aggressive confidence (Guardino, 2017). The war lasted through 1846 to 1848. It officially ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Anderson and Gerber 2008). Mexico's loss of the war led to renouncement of its claim to Texas and other territories that later became states of the U.S. – California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and parts of Colorado and Wyoming (Guardino, 2017) with more than 75 000 of Mexicans living in these areas (Zartman, 2010).

This outcome of the war left impact on both sides. America gained new land with immense agricultural resources. Another benefit for Americans was an opened road to Asia through Pacific ports. After the war, in 1849, discovery of gold, silver, copper, lead, and other minerals on the won territory was great asset to Americans, this discovery is marked as a beginning of California Gold Rush. However, the new territories also brought issues the U.S., the question of who could take the advantages of the new land were one of the reasons behind the Civil War. In Mexico the Mexico-American war lead to civil war as well, after the loss of the territories the question of how to make Mexico more unified and prosperous was raised by liberals and conservatives, which was a start of the conflict between the two political parties. As the conflict graduated, violent coups of revolutions conservatives tried to implant monarchy in Mexico with help from European troops. After the war Mexico became a democratic society, nevertheless ensured social peace through a pragmatic authoritarianism (Guardino, 2017).

The final delineations were made in 1853, since this year the border remained the same, after these delineations the borderlands were moderately populated. People could cross both states with minimal resistance (Zartman, 2010). Only after the final delineations, the influence of the Mexico-American war endured in Mexico and these influences headed to Mexican Civil War (Guardino, 2017).

In the beginning of the 20th century, during 1907-1910 the borderlands were changing under the consequences of Mexican Revolution. Many Mexican families

migrated across the border to escape the conflict. During the 1920s some parts of Texas, mainly El Paso experienced notable change in economy and agricultural production. This growth of El Paso was also affected by the impact of World War I on the rest of the U.S., which suffered declines in agricultural production (Lorey, 1999). The growth of El Paso resulted in increasing migration, both legal and illegal. Illegal migration was therefore regulated by the U.S. Border Patrol since 1924 (Anderson and Gerber, 2008).

1.2 Contemporary Situation Along the Mexican-American Border

The U.S.-Mexico border is viewed as one of the most contrasting borders in the world in areas such as culture and social economy. These contrasts go back to colonial times, with British colonies on one side and Spanish colonies on the other side. The current situation on the U.S.-Mexico border is impacted by North American Free Trade Agreement known as NAFTA. Borderlands between these two states are characterised by nature and nurture of NAFTA, globalizations alongside major issues such as land tenure, cultural identity, migration, drug trafficking (narcotrafico), tourism, terrorism and transborder perception. This region is also complex because of culture, communications, ethnicity, trade, and history. Furthermore, the border identity is developed by the boundary of economy between the two nations in question. The border is inhabited mostly by people of Mexican or U.S. nationality, those two major groups can be further divided into Anglos, indígenas, mestizos, African American, Hispanics, Chicanos and others.

Since NAFTA unemployment rates are up 200 % in comparison to the rest of the U.S., which makes certain people living along the borders in poor conditions. Not every part of the borderland is the same. There are differences between the border fronting on Texas and the border fronting on California. While Mexican culture and Spanish language dominate the eastern part of the border, western part of the border region is represented by “Anglo” future (Zartman, 2010).

Migration and movement are significant for the border. Many so called *borderlanders* or *fronterizos* move back and forth between the U.S. and Mexico, with their children growing up in bilingual environment. Across the border population slowly grows, in the last fifty years the number increased by approximately 10 million of people. Population growth is affecting quality of life in both negative and positive aspects. Paved streets allowing residents to travel between their home, work, school and so forth, improved access to education, shopping and entertainment are considered as some of the

benefits. On the other hand, with increasing population comes noise, traffic jams, congestion, and disappearing land to name just a few of the negatives (Anderson and Gerber, 2008). Population is often increased by Mexicans migrating to the United States searching for work, some only pass through the borderlands traveling further north, but many settle in the area. Population growth continues to be a major issue in urban areas. The growth of Mexican population around the border began after the Mexican Revolution, when people came to escape the violence on the Mexican side of the border (Zartman, 2010). However, environmentally the border region cannot withstand the increasing population along the border. In Texas the increasing migration, both legal and illegal, has brought traffic congestion, environmental degradation, rise in crime, ethnic strife etc. (Lorey, 1999). One of the pressing issues appears to be in the availability of water, mainly of potable water. The growing population connects to growing consumption of water in a region with limited and uncertain supply. However, disputes over the water are not brought up to attention only in recent years, they began arising during the nineteenth century, as a result of frontiers push due to *Manifest Destiny*. The wildlife habitat of the borderlands is threatened by the increasing population as well. These ecological problems are above else result of the “border-wars”.

The U.S.-Mexico border is currently most trafficked and crossed border in the world. The border is daily crossed by people working in the U.S., people visiting relatives, tourists, shoppers, and businesspeople. People crossing the U.S. Mexico border heavily contribute to Mexico’s GNP (gross national product), in fact two of the three major sources of Mexican GNP relate to the borderlands. Mexico strongly depends on tourists crossing daily into the republic. Tourism on the border increases as it offers relatively easy access for the border to be crossed (Zartman, 2010).

2. Borderlands as a Part of Regional and Southern Literature

The borderlands are area reflected in parts of American regional literature. Regional literature has come from a diverse set of geographical locations, it is concerned with the connection between the place and the local people. Works of regional literature help readers to understand local lives, ideas, and traditions. Regional literature elaborates the meaning of place and the people who inhabit it. Focus of this type of writing goes towards the place and towards the social and cultural differences. Mainly regional writing deals with local and regional concerns. Due to these reoccurring motifs regional literature was in history criticised for being staid and formulaic.

The origin of regional literature as we know it today begins in 19th century. Firstly, regional writing spread in local venues such as newspapers and penny press publications. In the beginning regional writing consisted of tall tales, broad dialects sketches and frontier stories. With the raise of popularity of these stories regional writing become more refined and less humorous. Regional writing shared some stylistic features across the chosen settings – it usually depicted an incident in the life of a village or a town, it showed the dialect of an area, local thinking, it also often featured old characters who were unable to regenerate or reproduce, therefore the place is threatened by the modernity of the outside world. Various regional works represented certain binaries, for example nation and region, primitive world and civilised world, rural setting and urban setting, childhood and adulthood, nature and culture, community, and individualism (Foote, 2003). These binaries are featured in contemporary regional literature as well. Regional writers helped to introduce the local differences, identities, people to the nation (Crow, 2003).

One of the most distinct regions has been the American South. Throughout history, American South is represented as a place differing from mainstream American culture. The place is often depicted as more exotic, more mythical, more romantic, more anachronistic, and more brutal than the rest of the country (Robinson, 2003). Southern literature is rooted in a consciousness of the place, the place usually being a small town or the countryside. The literature shows southern life in these settled places, with characters tightly connected to Southern communities. In Southern literature celebrated characters are those who do not leave the community but blend into it while maintaining their individuality and dignity, therefore they are not completely included in the community. Character who breaks free from the community is seen as a potential

psychopath rather than a hero. A person excluded from the community is alone, isolated, abandoned by family (Brinkmeyer, 2007).

During the 1920s and 1930s the view of regional distinction changed. Before that time, the space was more characterised by the north-south distinction with North standing opposite to everything Southern. However, during 1920s number of authors shifted from north-south view to east-west orientation (Crow, 2003).

Classification of the regions is not always apparent. The space of the literary fiction often collides. Mainly in contemporary Southern literature the space changes and varies. Contemporary authors tend to abandon and revise old forms of Southern literature, shifting the setting of their works towards the West (Brinkmeyer, 2007).

Mainly the literature of Southwest takes into account the setting of the borderlands. In literature borderlands are rarely described as comfortable areas to live in, with hate, rage and abuse being some of the main motifs. Kolodny (2003, p. 45) further states: "*The views of national borders have impact on development of literature. In literature borders are not seen as boundary or line but often as a territory of previously distinguished societies. Borderlands work as a territory in which distinct people meet, people encounter new territory based on which they undergo a change. The literature of borderlands is thus identified as dialogue between cultures languages their engagement with one another.*" In Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* borderlands are two merge worlds creating a third country. While border is a dividing line, borderlands can be seen as vague and undetermined places in constant state of transitions created by boundaries. Prominent aspects of the border being hatred, exploitation, and anger (Anzaldúa, 2007).

Borderlands are referred to as places of instability, with ethical, political, cultural, and national questions being negotiated (Schimanski and Wolfe, 2007). Nonetheless, literature of borderlands shows multilingual, polyvocal, intertextual, and multicultural areas created by different configurations of indigenous people, immigrants, emigrant who came in contact over time on a particular landscape (Kolodny, 2003).

Border as a literary concept began prominent thanks to Anzaldúa's notable novel *Borderland/La Frontera*. Since the novel, the image of border has functioned as a point of discussion on the breakdown of monolithic structures. These notions set a beginning to border theory. As Castillo, Socorro (2002) state the perception of the border from the U.S. point of view and from the Mexican side's point of view quite differs. The Mexican point of view mainly focuses on the literature published within the region, while the U.S.

perspective focuses more on abstract and theoretical concerns – the border is seen as a textual and theoretical border rather than geographical one, whereas on the Mexican side the geopolitical and geographical questions never disappears. The border is rather perceived as a metaphor of a place of multiculturalism, which defies any boundaries. Other differences between the two points of view go into the category of political realms. As the border literature from U.S. dominates the space, Mexican literature falls into the subordinate place.

2.1 Border Theory and Border Aesthetics

In literature one of the focal points of studying borders and borderlands is through border theory and border poetics. Border theory describes borders as processes rather than fixed unchanging phenomena. Furthermore, border theory is focusing on how to perceive a border. Some authors tend to exclude symbolic and conceptual borders from the border studies, contrarily, different authors perceive both theoretical (geographical) borders and abstract (conceptual, symbolic) borders into the same field of study (Shimanski and Wolfe, 2007). Border theory suggests that borders cannot limit themselves to absolute lines, the space between the two sides of the border creates new landscape for interpretation and meaning. Even the crossing from one of these spaces to another, creates a space of its own. Borderlands are not created by two differing sides, which are divided by a fence or a line on a map, rather they are a place of reconciliation, cooperation, and coexistence.

Part of the border theory considers liminality and liminal space in its description of the two sides of the borders. The term *liminal* signifies borders as in-between spaces characterised by ambiguity, hybridity, indeterminacy, thus stating that borders can bring subversion and change. Liminality of borders, therefore, does not separate the two states and cultures, but rather creates a third space (Johansen, 2018).

In the last years works depicting cultural expressions of border and its crossing appeared in fields of literature, film, art installations etc. Through representation of borders, questions of identity, belonging, community, nation and narration, sexuality, ethnicity, and cultural studies are raised.

Border aesthetics are concentrating with several aspects which are connected to borders. Aesthetics of border's ecology is focusing on the relationship between borders and nature as borders are formed on natural models, models that either challenge an obstacle or respect for those who cross the border. Further, borders are surrounded by

imaginary, by people's perception of the borders. This imaginary often puts against each other the motifs of old and new. Imaginary of borders focuses on the interpretation of borders in its idiomatic and metaphoric meanings. Another studied aesthetic of borders is in/visibility, focusing on the visual and the audial depictions of the border. The in/visibility puts in contrast what is seen and what cannot be seen in relations to border. Often politics of the borders are compared to invisibility. What is seen is represented by lines on the maps, migrant people, fences, walls etc. Fourth border aesthetics described palimpsest, those describe how concepts of palimpsest and symbolic layering influence borderlands, focusing mostly on the changes of regimes and a political atmosphere along the borders, expressed through symbolism of space. Aesthetics of sovereignty focuses on the relationship between the sovereign and the border. Lastly, the aesthetics of waiting is introduced. This aesthetics discusses that border are not only spaces where crossings happen, but rather they are spaces that create a symbolic state of abeyance, a waiting. This aesthetic argues that border can also be spaces causing a standstill, or a delay (Shimansky and Wolfe, 2017).

To summarize, Shimansky and Wolfe (2017) state that borders are places influenced by their relationships with nature, by things both visible and invisible, by perception of those who inhabited them or cross them, by sovereignty and by the process of waiting.

2.2 Frontier Myth and Western

The beginnings of mentions of borders in literature can be found in frontier myths. As it was already mentioned regional literature started in periodicals. Periodicals edited by William Gilmore Simms were focusing history, poetry, criticism, drama, essays, stories etc. including series of popular border romances about life on the frontier (Inge, 2014). Furthermore, frontier life and its realistic portrayal was part of work of August Baldwin Longstreet. His works are considered to be first expression of American realism (Crow, 2003). Next to periodicals, the beginnings of the motif of borders in American literature can be also seen in Antebellum Era of Southern literature, particularly in the literature of Southwest. Literature of Southwest frequently illustrates truthful portrayal of frontier life. The literature is full of indigenous characters, characters with remarkable personalities, links to world of fantasy and distortions (Crow, 2003).

Frontier mythology set foundations to literature of the Southwest. Attributes of frontier mythology are images, values, and archetypes that grew out of the ambiguity of

the border itself, mainly out of the confrontation of the civilised and uncivilised world. The civilization is connected to the past and to Europe and European society, its laws, institutions, manners, industrial development, class distinction, culture, and restrictions. The civilization is affected by the wilderness offering the personal freedom. In the wilderness individuals test themselves against nature with the premise of not being confronted with social responsibility and compromises of community. In frontier mythology Southwest is interpreted as a land of freedom and opportunity, where individuals manage to exhibit courage, determination, ingenuity, and loyalty among others – values that Anglo myths admire. Mentioned values can be found in another product of the space of the borderlands and frontier, mainly the part in Texas - in an indigenous American hero, the cowboy.

The cowboy is one of the most recognizable figures originated from the frontier myth, representing the symbol of frontier freedom and independence. After the Civil War, most of the land and homes in Texas were in disarray, with cattle roaming the land. Veterans of the war began to round up the cattle starting the trail drives that are the heart of cowboy legends. The era of cowboy life ended when barbed wires, opening of railroads and economic downturns ended the golden days of trail driving. Cowboys firstly appear in literature towards the end of nineteenth century in dime novels. Some authors based the novels on their experiences on ranches in Texas and Arizona. With the beginning of twentieth century the interest in cowboys and frontier values increased. Those published works set the basis of the stories in ranch life, romance, murders, gunplay, and lead to creation of one of the most recognizable American genres – the Western.

Fiction about cowboys and frontier life continued to be major genre with writers from Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in the second half of twentieth century. One of the prominent authors of western in this time period was Larry McMurtry with important works as *Hoseman, Pass By* (1961), *In a Narrow Grave* (1968) and *Duane's Depressed* (1999). Another important author is Robert Flynn, who wrote westerns mostly in 1970s and 1980s. Flynn often depicts mythical setting of west Texas, for example in novels *Wanderer Springs* (1988) or more recent novel *Country* (2001). Nowadays, the most important writer focusing on the past of cowboy life is Cormac McCarthy. His works embody traditional Western story in a strong revision. McCarthy uses metaphor of the border to introduce the idea that world is not black and white, good or evil but a mix of both.

Mexican American literature is influenced by the border as well, the beginnings go to *corridos*, Mexican folk ballads created along the border usually recounting battles between Mexican Americans and Texas Rangers, and celebrating courage of Mexicans who stood up against the oppression of rangers. One of the folklorists who collected *corridos* was Américo Paredes.

Important Mexican American author writing about the area of southwest is Rudolfo Anaya with work as *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), bestselling novel of Mexican American literature. Other important authors include Dagoberto Gilb's (*The Magic of Blood*) and Denise Chávez (*Face of an Angel*). Lastly, Sandra Cisneros in her later works also turned the narrative towards the Southwest in *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991).

Furthermore, southwest literature was influenced by other important elements of frontier paradigms, namely the myth of progress and the primitive-pastoral myth. This myth proclaims that being outdoors leads to living moral lives. Primitive pastoral myth also often excludes women, which are often completely missing from the stories. The primitivism of older frontier literature often demonstrated sexism and racism in its old legends. To these elements of frontier mythology, ambivalence, primitivism, racism, and sexism another element connected to the border has to be added – violence. Violence of the area is examined by authors in various ways, mostly coming from the rich violent history, the literature often shows archetypal patterns of violence – the American hunter journeys into wilderness, where he meets violent confrontations (Busby, 2003).

The problem of literature of the Southwest is seen in the deep feelings of ambivalence, which are produced by the history of the area and by its geography. The vast space of the Southwest seems to negate borders, nonetheless the area cannot be isolated from awareness of the border. This ambivalence creates one of the major features of frontier literature – the act of being torn and pulled in several directions at once. To further explain this idea, Mark Busby (in Crow 2003, p.435) compares the ambivalence “(...) to first settlers who conquered nature while simultaneously felt at one with it.” In literature this ambivalence is represented in being drawn towards differences including civilization in contrast with wilderness, rural with urban, individuality with community, past with present, aggression with passivity. These contrasts in contemporary literature of the Southwest can lead to schism between the old and the new.

To summarize literature of the Southwest and border writings take inspiration from the two colliding cultures, from the frontier myth and from the genre of the Western and its

characteristic hero, the cowboy (Busby, 2003). By the close contact between the two languages along the border is influenced the language of border writing as well, as it frequently mixes the two languages spoken along the border. Through blend of cultures and languages authors of border writings usually give the reader the opportunity to see multidimensional perception, in other words to see the world of both sides of the border. The U.S.-Mexico border provides variety of characters which are often depicted in border writings. For example, these characters are, the border crossers, bicultural inhabitants of the border region, the immigration officers and people who bring crossers across the border (Hicks, 1991).

2.3 Border Crossings

People cross borders frequently, yet the processes and experiences vary depending on the border. Border crossings create distinct areas of transition and encounter between territories. Some border crossings provide environment where the diversity is celebrated and enjoyed, while other bring tension and antagonism to already troublesome zones (Diener and Hagen, 2012).

Multiple types of border crossings are recognised. Root (1996) recognises four types of border crossings. Firstly, border is determined to be a bridge between the two territories. The character stands on both territories. To further describe this idea Root (1996, p. xxi) uses a metaphor: “*One can bridge the border by having both feet in both groups.*” Focal point of the second approach to border crossing is the shifting of background and foreground as the character crosses between and among social context defined by race and ethnicity. The person crossing the border decodes the ambiguity between the two nations, societies and matches to it. In the words of Anzaldúa the third interpretation of border crossing can be named “mestiza” consciousness, is a type of crossing where the character sits on the border. The border is representing central reference point. The person dwells on recognizing the essential characters of human beings and is exploited to racism, gender discrimination, class oppression, and colonial domination. In the last type of the border crossings recognised by Roots, one creates a home in a part of the border for some period of time, while making forays to the other part or parts of the border. One therefore is surrounded by territory psychologically, socially, politically, environmentally supporting (Root 1996).

On the other hand, Shimanski distinguishes five dimensions in border-crossing narratives. Those four dimensions are textual, symbolic, temporal, epistemological and

topographical. Textual borders are borders set between the text and the world itself, in words of Shimanski (2006, p.55) symbolic borders set differences between “*the lived life of humans and other agents*”. Temporal borders, as the name suggests, are boundaries between two periods of time. Epistemological borders create difference between known and the unknown. For our thesis the most important borders in this distinction are topographical borders, which indicate the spatial dimension of all borders. Topographical borders function on different scales, micro-scale borders are the borders of body (skin) and macro-scale borders between nations or power blocs (Shimanski, 2006).

National borders mark the extent of state’s authority and cultural identity of the state’s citizens. Different ways mark the borders, from lines on maps, wire fences, topographical features like rivers or mountain ranges, to man made constructions as the Berlin Wall. In literature these borders usually have aesthetical function and crossing them symbolizes an important event. National borders create different set of borders often depicted in literature. Mostly racial borders, borders between social classes, periphery and centre, rural and industrial societies (Viljoen, 2014).

In literature border crossings are often used as a risky and empowering metaphors or to set the compositional mode of the story. Border crossing is seen as an obstacle which needs to be overlapped. Representation of border in literature differs. Borders are not narrowed to geographical explanation of the word, apart from dividing territories borders furthermore divide ego, genre, discipline etcetera. Every time any type of border is crossed cultural, political, and social issues are expected (Freedman, 1993).

Narratives of border-crossings deal with feelings of placelessness, with language, ethnicity, sexuality in hybridized dialogues of resistance and ambivalence (Shimanski and Wolfe, 2017).

2.4 Literature from the Mexico-American Border

As mentioned, borderland symbolizes place of unnatural boundary of constant state of transition, creating a landscape where violence leads to crime, drug trafficking and insecurity of justice system. These themes are often depicted in the borderland literature, mostly created by those living and growing up along the border. To name few, borderlands are represented in the novel of Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders* (2007), focusing on the city of Juárez and its border with Texas’s El Paso. The novel tells a story of Ivon Villa, lesbian professor living in LA, who comes back

home to adopt a baby from Mexican woman living across the border in Juárez, however Cecilia is killed in the desert and the baby is disembowelled. Soon after that, Ivon's sister is kidnapped and the main protagonist while searching for her discovers a horrifying conspiracy of the border patrol and authorities in Juárez related to mass murders of woman. Gaspar de Alba contextualizes the murders of women along the border, as the number of these women continues to rise since 1993. The victims are usually young women working as waitresses or in manufacture.

The same contextuality is used in works of Stella Pope Duarte. Her novel *If I Die in Juárez* (2008) traces the life of three young women who discover the abduction and murder of young women in Juárez. As source for her narrative Duarte used interviews with relatives of murdered women, giving the readers the experience of women living in Juárez and risking being abducted and murder. Both of these novels are a representation of *femicidio* dangers, which is a term related to murders of women, based on their gender. Reacting to these murders is also a novel *The Femicide Machine* (2012) by Sergio González Rodríguez, using the allegory of femicide-machine to explain the misogynistic violence and failure of Mexican authorities to address the *femicidio*.

Novels focusing on the city of Juárez, and its area also depict drug trafficking. In novel *Corazón de Keláshnikov: El amor en los tiempos del narco* (*Love in the times of the narco*) (2009) written by Alejandro Paés Varela the debate on the culture of violence and drug trafficking in Mexico is shown (Arrizón, 2018).

Border crossings and settings of borderlands are further represented in works of Sandra Cisneros. Cisneros represents borders as site of memory, extending into North America, as she was born in Chicago to Mexican father and a Mexican American mother. In her works Cisneros shows unity and division La Frontera brings to generation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Rich linguistic traditions, sacred mythology, remembrance of Mexican homeland is represented in her novels. Cisneros uses borderlands as a place of images that capture her cultural and linguistic realities. Cisneros examines her ancestral past in order to come to terms with her own hybrid identity. She deals with boundaries regarding to the border, namely society, gender, linguistic constraints, and race. These concerns occur from her need to consolidate, understand, and constantly translate two cultures. Her works are influenced by numerous migrations between Texas and Mexico (Rivera, 2009). Though, Cisneros never explicitly mentions Mexico-U.S. border, the border crossings she endured during her childhood are used as prominent theme, both real and metaphorical, in her works. Cisneros separates the border

from its strictly geographical concepts to explore Chicano/a identity. The border symbolizes the everyday experience of people who are not fully from Mexico, but not from the U.S. either. This border is either flexible, meaning that two cultures can coexist harmoniously within a single person, and other times, they are rigid with severe tension between them (Payant, 1999). These aspects can be seen in her novels *Caramelo Or Puro Cuento* (2003) and *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991) (Rivera, 2009).

Different approach to border narrative is seen in collection of stories *Crystal Frontier* (1995) by Carlos Fuentes, Mexico's internationally acclaimed fiction writer. Fuentes compares the border to wound that refuses to heal, as a space through which Americans and Mexicans reflect on each other, with focus mostly on Mexican people and the effect the border has on their lives, mostly in the economy department.

Ana Castillo's novel *The Guardians* (2008) approach to border writing is through people living in El Paso, who do not see any significance in the border, as they speak both Spanish and English, have backgrounds and families in Mexico and constantly cross the border. *The Guardians* also undermine the distinctions among legal and undocumented immigrants, two characters from the story siblings Regina and Rafa came to the U.S. undocumented, Regina is able to legalise her status by marriage. Rafa never legalised his status and while constantly crossing the border undocumented, crossing to U.S. for work and to Mexico to see his family, during one of his crossings he suddenly disappears. Castillo in her novel shows the consequence after the disappearance or death during the act of border crossings. Lives of characters in *The Guardians* are shaped by anti-immigrant sentiments and illegal border crossing done by smugglers, often functioning like cartels. Those who cross the border illegally, are not only expose to danger of illegal crossing but to danger of the cartels as well. Castillo in her novel is trying to show how important is border in lives of her characters, but she is also imagining how the life could be better without it.

Another novel focusing mainly on border crossings and its difficulties is *The River Flows North* (2009) written by Graciela Limón. In this novel the story takes place along the border near Sonora, Arizona. Undocumented immigrants try to cross to the U.S. through the desert experiencing its harsh conditions. In the words of Sadowski-Smith, Limón humanizes the immigrants through their personal stories, as undocumented immigrants are otherwise talked about as a faceless mass of people (Turnbull, n.d.).

3. Cormac McCarthy and His Novels

3.1 Brief Biography

Cormac McCarthy born as Charles Joseph McCarthy in 1933 in Providence, Rhode Island was raised in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he was introduced to the people and the places that would be vital part of his first works. The name Cormac is taken from Gaelic equivalent of Charles. During his childhood he was educated in Catholic schools, later in his life he studied at University of Tennessee in 1951, after the university he served in the U.S. Air Force through 1953-1956, with his return to university he discovered his literary talents and won the university's Ingram-Merrill Award for creative writing. His literary beginnings were published in the school's literary magazine, in particular two short stories *Wake for Susan* (1959) and *A Drowning Incident* (1960). Soon after he left the university without taking a degree and started to work on his first novel *The Orchard Keeper*, published in 1965, that depicts the story of Tennessee man and his two mentors (Frye, 2012). Even his first novel depicts McCarthy's sensitivity for old and disappearing ways of life, intimacy with nature, hunting, trapping, and bootlegging. Also featured is McCarthy's dark and bleak sensibility and lack of psychological exploration and justification (Hage, 2010).

Next novels followed with *Outer Dark* (1968) about an incest of two siblings resulting in a baby, *Outer Dark* further cantered around motifs of an arduous journey, that can be seen in his later works as well. Third novel *Child of God* (1974), about man's journey into depravity, is a grotesque tale in which main character, serial killer, lives with bodies of his victims in a cave. Next novel *Suttree* (1979), considered to be somewhat autobiographical, shows a story of a man who conquers his fixation with death.

His early novels received positive reviews. However, they were sold only sparsely (Frye, 2012). With his first works McCarthy was placed in the Southern Gothic tradition represented by William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor and showcased southern grotesque typical for these authors as well (Hage, 2010).

Before *Suttree*, in 1976 McCarthy moved from Tennessee to El Paso, Texas (Frye, 2012). His life in and borderlands influenced his upcoming works. McCarthy thoroughly researched the region and its history, he took various scouting trips to Mexico, mastered Spanish, which would become part of dialogues in his later works. During this period his novels were not sold by numbers, therefore McCarthy lived through awards and grants such as MacArthur Fellowship. Breakthrough came with his novel

Blood Meridian (1985). *Blood Meridian, or The Evening Redness in the West* started borderland immersion in his works, this fifth novel spurred his literary reputation. However, after its release *Blood Meridian* receive only a little recognition, it gained popularity and found its reader in following years. With this novel McCarthy established deep philosophical musings on history, God, and nature of being as a part of his Western novels. These aspects can be seen in his novel *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), which take place in the same borderland area as *Blood Meridian*, but only 100 years later. *All the Pretty Horses* and the following parts of Border Trilogy became commercially successful, winning a National Book Award and a National Book Critics Circle Award.

In 1990's McCarthy moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico where he wrote conclusion to Border Trilogy *Cities of the Plain* (1997). The novel brought together protagonist from previous parts of the trilogy and took place in New Mexico. *Cities of Plains* actually have origin in a screenplay written ten years prior the trilogy's first entry. In the late 90's McCarthy's novels started to have potential for Hollywood film industry. In 2000 *All the Pretty Horses* were filmed. His later books followed this path as well, including his next novel *No Country for Old Men* (2005). The book also originated in a screenplay and dealt with similar geographical location to his previous works. Yet, the novel also portrays a new problem that consumed the location: drug trafficking. *No Country for Old Men* became McCarthy's most readable work to date. Two years after its release the novel was adapted into a film by Joel and Ethan Coen.

Soon after *No Country for Old Men* McCarthy wrote postapocalyptic novel *The Road* (2006). This novel is considered to be one of his gloomiest and most gruesome works. The *Road* describes another journey in McCarthy's narratives, this time through landscape destroyed by unknown catastrophe. *The Road* won McCarthy numerous awards including one of the most prestigious awards: Pulitzer Prize (Hage, 2010).

Throughout his career McCarthy also wrote two plays *The Stonemason: A Play in Five Acts* (1994) and *The Sunset Limited: A Novel in Dramatic Role* (2006). Both of these plays were played in Huston's theatre (Hage, 2010).

Cormac McCarthy currently lives with his third wife Jennifer Winkley and his son John, to whom his last novel *The Road* is dedicated, in New Mexico (Frye, 2012).

3.2 Cormac McCarthy's Writings

To understand McCarthy's writing it is important to look at his novels from the point of view of his setting, themes, motifs, and language. Many aspects of his works are same for

most of his novels. Generally, his prose tends to be rather dark, difficult, and disturbing. Defining trait of McCarthy's writing is common detail descriptions of violence and death. McCarthy himself stated, that authors who do not address the issue of death are not serious writers. The violence of his novels is introduced through his characters and subject matters. Some of the most violent characters are represented in *Child of God*, where the main character is murderous necrophiliac, and McCarthy does not omit detailed descriptions of his practises. The vastest portrayals of violence in his work are found in *Blood Meridian*, mainly with the character of Judge Holden, who is by some critics described as the most frightening figure of American literature. McCarthy often puts human kindness, friendship, generosity, joys of food and drink, love of men for women, love between fathers and sons in contrast to the violence and disturbance of his work. Ambiguity in general is common element for his works. Mostly endings of McCarthy's novels are often unclear, suggestive, and ambiguous (Cremean, 2012).

Characterization of main protagonist is similar in his works as well. As Buráková (2015) states, McCarthy's novels represent male characters, who are on the move, without home and living on the margins of society. Buráková suggests calling these characters "nomadic". Characters show restricted interiority, limited empathy, inability to grow and lack of linguistic expressions. Characters of his novel do not define the description of hero, but they are not anti-heroic either, as the characters usually do not provide cultural, social, moral or ethic lessons for the community, and at the same time they do not tend to rebel against society. In the centre of McCarthy's characters is deep individualisation of mostly male characters who are at centre of each McCarthy's novel, with exception of *Outer Dark*, where one of the main characters is a woman Rinthy. The protagonists of his works represent violent world, in which the concepts of heroism and masculinity is reevaluated by the reader. Masculine violence is further used to critique the traditional qualities of American hero. Masculine violence of the characters also testes the borders of humanity, rising question of how far violence can be considered as human (Buráková, 2015). His characters often lack any morality, and their behaviour is frightening. If heroic characters appear in the story, who try to make their stand among the destruction, they are usually helpless against the destruction and chaos (Brinkmeyer, 2016).

Other concept connecting McCarthy's works is the usage of language. McCarthy is known for using both "high style" and "low style" of language, mixing formal and informal continuum. On one hand McCarthy is able to apply formal Victorian style of language and on the other he heavily uses slang, particularly in dialogues. In the works

of South and Southwest he uses slang of the area, making the dialogues harder to understand for readers from different regions and countries. Therefore, we can state, that McCarthy's language is rich and functions as one of the themes of his novels. Even in syntax McCarthy fuses elements of "low" and "high" style.

Since *Blood Meridian* he started to use Spanish language in his novels. Usage of Spanish can be explained as an effort to establish the experience of life along the borders, along with the disorientation Spanish language can bring to those who do not speak it. Spanish is additionally used to add mystery of the border's atmosphere and tone. Even in Spanish language McCarthy mixes formal and informal language, particularly by using Spanish slang used along the border.

Another reoccurring aspect of his work is repeating of certain phrase throughout a novel. The distinct phrase being "*They rode on*", which serves as a type of refrain in *Blood Meridian*, the *Border Trilogy* and even infrequently appears in *No Country for Old Men*. Novel *The Road* repeats similar phrase "*they went on*" and "*let's go*". All of these repetitive phrases are used to signify an existential reality of carrying in life no matter what. *The Road* introduces one more refrain "*okay*". "*Okay*" is used mostly in dialogues between the father and the son, symbolizing the need of continuation and hope for better tomorrows.

The most noticeable characteristic of McCarthy's writing is his rare use of punctuation. Only commas, periods, question marks, and sometimes apostrophes are applied. What is distinguishably always missing are quotation marks, exclamation points and semicolons. For mass majority of contractions apostrophe is omitted. In his earlier works McCarthy often did not capitalize the first letters of proper nouns. McCarthy himself stated that usage of "little marks" only blocks the page. Again, this writing choice only adds to the mystery and unity of his stories. Avoidance of punctuation marks makes dialogues indistinct from other parts of the novel.

Another notable element common for most of his novels is ambiguity. Endings of McCarthy's novels are often unclear, suggestive, and ambiguous. All of the stated similarities between his novels cohesively create the mystery of his narratives (Cremean, 2012).

3.3 Cormac McCarthy as an Author of the Southern Gothic

South and Southern literature is traditionally characterised by a strong sense of place, nostalgia for a lost past, a history of defeat. South is a region obsessed with boundaries,

crossroads, those can be territorial (borders, the Mason-Dixon line) or related to gender, social class, sexuality, and race. The South's history is violent and traumatic, on which the Southern gothic originates. Southern gothic is seen in McCarthy's first novels *The Orchard Keeper*, *Outer Dark*, *Child of God* and *Suttree* and his last novel *The Road*. The novels in between are western-themed (Bjerre, 2017).

Cormac McCarthy is proclaimed author of contemporary Southern gothic literature. McCarthy's Southern gothic, in words of Brinkmeyer (2016) shows imagination haunted by a frightening vision of destruction and waste, starting from origins of humanity to its apocalyptic future. Mostly his first novels showcase the typical tradition of Southern gothic known from works of William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor. O'Connor's influence is evidently seen in the use of grotesque take on the Southern gothic (Bjerre, 2017).

Southern gothic in Fisher's description (in Inge 2014, p. 145, 146) "(...) evokes anxieties, fears, terrors, often in tandem with violence, brutality, rampant sexual impulses, and death. All results from persecution, mainly for power, by persons who may be known but untouchable or unknown. In addition, natural, supernatural, or seemingly supernatural forces may cause these negative effects." Southern gothic usually focuses on individuals whose life is impacted by named forces. Rooted in the South's tensions and aberrations, Southern gothic works depict ruined and decaying plantations and mansions in the South after the Civil War. To some extent Southern gothic destroys the vision of idyllic South by relations to its historical events such as slavery, racism, and patriarchy. These historical realities are represented in the shape of ghosts or grotesque figures that draw attention to unsaid parts of Southern history (Bjerre, 2017).

Much of these aspects of Southern gothic can be seen in McCarthy's first novels and his last novel *The Road* along with the motifs of undeadness. Undeadness, as another aspect of Southern gothic literature, shows posthumous phenomena, such as funerary rites, practises of mourning, post-traumatic flashbacks, undead figures (ghosts, vampires, zombies etc.). Undead aspects of gothic signalise states of the in-between, boundary between life and death. Unburied, decaying corpses, sometimes still filled with some kind of life (for example the life can be symbolized by organisms living in the dead body, or by a physical afterlife of remembering the dead person) are often portrayed as one of the elements of a novel. In Cormac McCarthy's works, this undeadness is for example presented in the novel *The Road*. The surrounding of the novel is filled with the walking near-dead figures alongside repurposed corpses. The architectural structures of *The Road*

are filled with decapitated, deskinning, deboned, or else desecrated human bodies. Survivors of the apocalypse must live on reducing resources of canned goods or turn to cannibalism (Cross Turner, 2017).

Child of God serves as another example of an undeadness in McCarthy's novels. As already mentioned, the story of this novel is filled with serial killing, and necrophilia. The main protagonist's life spirals from exiled existence, to murderer and necrophiliac and lastly to a primal, animal-like state. McCarthy's third novel most resembles Flannery O'Connor's southern grotesque, starting with the Ballard's initial description "*a child of God much like yourself perhaps*" is a grotesque take on humanity itself (Bjerre, 2017). In this sense Ballard is on one hand represented as child of God, as all people are, on the other hand he is described as an inhuman creature, only slightly resembling human. However, the most Southern gothic aspect of *Child of God* is seen in the cave system Ballard inhabits. In Southern gothic caves are places occupied by monsters and their monstrosities, often compared to wombs. Here the symbolism of caves as wombs is clear, as Ballard is born again from the womblike caves.

In *Suttree* McCarthy puts the best human qualities (friendship, mercy, forgiveness etc.) in subversion to dark gothic deception, stating that one cannot exist without the other. The main protagonist Cornelius Suttree wanders around the McAnally Flats of Knoxville. He thinks of his stillborn twin brother, considering if he could exist somewhere in his words "in the limbo of the Christless righteous", while seeing himself in a terrestrial hell. On this concept the novel shows that even in this hell kindness and companionship can exist. Companionship is filled with gothic elements of decay, corruption, and ugliness.

As Cooper (2013, p. 50) summarises: "*Through grotesque images emerging from the southern gothic tradition that make familiar people and places strange, McCarthy's novels gesture toward the only familiar thing left: the humanity in the face of the most hideous other.*"

Further Brinkmeyer (2016) sees McCarthy's vision of gothic in multiple aspects, mostly referring to a long view of history. For example, McCarthy uses timeline of historical destruction. Characters wander through spaces of death and waste, mythical in dimension. To explain this idea Brinkmeyer (2016, p. 176) chooses an example from *Outer Dark* where he describes as "*(...) Holme walks a road that dead ends in a swamp whose description pushes toward framing the novel in a span from earthly creation to*

earthly annihilation (...).” Even in *Child of God* McCarthy frames a timeline stretching back to the origins of life, implying that humanity’s violence is eternal and unchangeable.

Another element of McCarthy’s gothic vision is added dimension. Added dimension can differ throughout works of Southern gothic, while Flannery O’Connor sees it in the divine mysteries, McCarthy sees dimension as the vast, empty reaches of time and space, represented by the desert wastelands. McCarthy’s vision of the gothic vision is fully depicted in *The Road* (Brinkmeyer 2016).

3.4 Cormac McCarthy as an Author of Western

Before *Blood Meridian* McCarthy was known among few readers and critics as a southern writer, a writer of dark and violent themes. Most of his southern works were compared to William Faulkner and Flannery O’Connor. With *Blood Meridian* and *All the Pretty Horses* McCarthy was no longer seen as a Southern author as his narratives shifted towards western (Parrish 2013). However, as Kollin (2001) suggests McCarthy’s western works are a product of regional hybridity, demonstrating the Western reliant on the contributions and concerns of Southern literature. McCarthy mixes the Western themes with the southern grotesque and a grim and bleak imaginary. The influence of the Southern literature in his western novels is most notable in *Blood Meridian*. With the Border Trilogy, McCarthy is relying on the idioms and conventions of the Western.

The Western themes are culminating in *No Country for Old Men*, a contemporary Western, where horses are switched for cars. McCarthy’s change of narrative towards Western brought option to expand the scope of aesthetic vision and space. McCarthy’s westerns are portraying Americans chasing their fates on a mythic western landscape (Parrish 2013).

As stated, the Western themes firstly appear in *Blood Meridian*, nevertheless the novel is rather put into a subgenre of anti-western as it does not follow a standard hero of the Western genre. Apart from classical Western, that opt for the settings of a region whose promises, and possibilities were lost in history, *Blood Meridian* is set on a land corrupted by Anglos since their arrival. Furthermore, the western landscape should bring out the best in the story’s hero and the worst in the villain, even resembling a prelapsarian garden. McCarthy west in the novel is on the other hand anti-Edenic, in the ownership of violence implemented by mercenary groups. McCarthy’s usage of violence in the novel complicates the traditions connected to western hero, as the setting offers nothing for

the heroism to be shown. Even the innocence of western hero is challenged, the Western often displays the American Adam as the most important frontier figure and symbol of innocence, however McCarthy takes the character of unnamed kid, seemingly innocent character, and transforms him into a savage, feral youth. The savage representation of the child works against a central theme in American literary history.

All the Pretty Horses fell into the genre of the Western more easily, specifically falling into the subgenre of “end of the West” Western. As the cattle ranching west is slowly fading away, the main protagonist is witnessing the world’s change. The novel centres around the realization that the cowboy life is over, and that the West cannot provide the conditions for this national hero. Apart from the Kid in previous novel, John Grady possesses the traits of Western hero – such as his skill with horses, he behaves as a proper gentleman. In this novel McCarthy creates a noble Western hero, but who is doomed by fate’s ties to the frontier and to the past.

The Crossing are concentrating on a different subgenre of the Western – the ecological Western. The second novel of the Border Trilogy is restoring the ecological vision to the Western genre, mostly by depictions of the she-wolf as she crosses border to be reunited with her own. This novel is also focusing on the life of the Western hero, the cowboy, but rather shows it as lonely and isolated, because Billy is never able to connect with the people he meets along the way.

The Western aspects of the last instalment of the trilogy highlight the frontier nostalgia and frontier myth, while still questioning the racial and masculinist tropes of traditional Westerns (Kollin, 2001).

4. Cormac McCarthy's Novels Depicting the Mexico-American Border

4.1 Blood Meridian

To concentrate on McCarthy's depiction of the borderlands and its area it is vital to start with his work *Blood Meridian* as it is his first take on the area of deserts of the Southwest borderlands, region that will become central point of his following works. Till *Blood Meridian* his novels were set in Tennessee with the novel McCarthy moves his narratives to the west. West in McCarthy's work is described as a vast wasteland, with little to no presence of humanity. West symbolizes nature in its purest and rawest form and landscapes lacking future. Various McCarthy's novels take place in a landscape portrayed as a hostile place where civilization and morality are barely discernible. However, at first glance the west seems as an infinite possibility for new beginnings, space for hope, rebirth, renewal, world clean of history. This hopeful vision is often quickly shattered, when characters discover the west's true nature and appraise that west cannot fulfil their dreams and desires. Protagonist moving to west with hope and purpose to renew themselves enter wasteland where moral question of right and wrong, of the ethical and spiritual are overshadowed by struggles of survival (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

Blood Meridian takes place in nineteenth century, hundred years before the setting of the Border Trilogy. The novel chronicles the closing of the frontier and the beginning of the end of cowboy life, for these aspects and for similar features it is considered a prologue to mentioned Border Trilogy (Hage, 2010).

The book focuses on the story of fourteen-year-old nameless boy called the Kid who wanders from Tennessee to south Mexico in the mid-19th century (Estes, 2013). He meets the Glanton Gang, infamous band of mercenary scalp hunters, who operated in the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico in the period following the Mexican-American War. The gang was firstly hired by the Mexican state of Chihuahua to eliminate Apache in the region (Hage, 2010). The Kid travels with them and later he meets Judge Holden and as the characters travel towards Mexico, the narration of the novel changes focuses mainly on the judge and on the leader of the mercenaries, Captain Glanton. Through their stories *Blood Meridian* is concerned with observations of physical world, environmental changes that follow closing of the frontier. The epilogue of the novel leaves us in 1878 with closure of the West frontier, slaughter and genocide of many Native American tribes and the introduction of the railroad (Estes, 2013).

Blood Meridian shows allusions and influence from different literary works, for example Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* where both books are focused on uncanny characters, namely Judge Holden who resembles Ahab. McCarthy further recalls Shakespeare, Faulkner, and Dostoyevsky. Additionally, the echo of *Divine Comedy* and *King James Bible* can be seen. This traditional influence is part of McCarthy's distinctive lyrical style. As in narration from multiple perspectives, that is found in Melville's and Dostoyevsky's work as well (Frye, 2012). Comparison to *Moby Dick* is based on facts, that both novels are epic in their scope, obsessed with an open space, with language and both explore vast unknown spaces, both novels explode the American dream of Manifest Destiny, racial domination and endless imperial expansion.

Blood Meridian begins with the Kid's crossing into the Mexico, movement through space and through time and culture are denoted by the crossing. In *Blood Meridian* Mexico is shown as a primitive version of the new world being displayed in the US. Nature in Mexico is described in its purest and rawest form. Through these descriptions McCarthy creates interactions of nature and culture. In the moment where the Kid is prepared to cross the border into Mexico for the first time he is warned of upcoming disaster and not long after the crossing one of his companions dies. As the Kid steps into Mexico, it becomes apparent that the howling wilderness of Mexico is a place of a sin and death with present active evil. However, the space of *Blood Meridian*, is not cruel on its own, as McCarthy typically breaks down boundaries between the human and natural world, both worlds collide and influence each other, in other words, space is not cruel on its own, but often in collision with human nature (Estes, 2013).

As the name *Blood Meridian* suggests blood flows everywhere in the story tying people together, although not in a sense of kinship but in a sense of killing, because as the story implies the only permanently made bond in the wasteland is that between the killer and the victim. Family bonds and feelings of community values, homes and history are only sparsely presented. Nevertheless, McCarthy still shows few towns and ranches where people live simple, civil family life, suggesting that order and beauty can possibly exist in the chaos of the space. McCarthy also puts these peaceful families in opposition to the lawless behaviour of the scalp hunter (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

Blood Meridian is the first McCarthy's novel where borderlands are used as tools to explore liminality, paradox, and contradiction. The Mexican-U.S. border utilizes the contradiction of a place that both allows and discourages contact between neighbouring countries and cultures. The culture of borderlands is also caught up with contradiction

itself where the civilization of the borderlands becomes a liminal hybrid of the two cultures (Hage, 2010). The fragility of these culturally constructed borders is shown as Brinkmeyer (2000, p. 44) states: “(...) *these borders merely validate humanity’s punny impositions upon a finally untamable and unfathomable world.*” *Blood Meridian’s* border does not only separate nations and cultures, but along with others sets boundary between civilized and uncivilized world, human and animal, and reason and madness. To conclude in the end *Blood Meridian* offers little to no hope for final salvation beyond the destruction of its narrative (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

4.2 All The Pretty Horses

Novel *All The Pretty Horses* is the first entry to McCarthy’s Border Trilogy, sets the beginning of stories where west is fussed with roads, fences, telephone lines and power, world differing from the nineteenth century of *Blood Meridian* (Brinkmeyer, 2000). Published in 1992, the novel made McCarthy acclaimed not just by the critics but also by the mass appeal of readers. The bigger popularity is explained by the shift towards more accessible narrative with more linear adventurous plot, with romance subplot, and fewer extended stories (Hage, 2010).

As said *Blood Meridian* serves as a kind of unofficial prologue to *All the Pretty Horses*, with Kid’s participation in the enterprise of Manifest Destiny and closing of the frontier affecting the events of *All the Pretty Horses*. The epilogue of *Blood Meridian* showcases the final slaughter of the buffalo, the destruction of Indian cultures and the introduction of railroads, that led to demise of the till now open frontier. The free movement of animals and people through the border was suddenly impossible due to barbed wire fences, roads, railroads that begun to be part of the landscape. The lack of free movement led to the disappearance of the cowboy lifestyle, one of the themes in *All the Pretty Horses* (Frye, 2012). The ending to traditional cowboy life is not the only threat exposed in the novel, as military-industrial complex and technological society are expanding. Another threat being revealed is nuclear annihilation, although this threat is further expanded in *The Crossing*. The fear of nuclear annihilation originates in the time of the book, as it is set after the World War II. The aspect of war is introduced quite quickly in the beginning of the novel, where John Grady’s father is reflecting on the war and its fundamental change on the West (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

The book is divided into four sections. First section focuses on John Grady Cole’s decision to leave Texas, his and Lacey Rawlins’ journey across the border and encounter

with Blevins. Second part concentrates on John's and Rawlins' time spend at Hacienda de Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción and his love with Alejandra. The third section centres around the brutal experience of their arrest, murder of Blevins, and their defence against the prison in Saltillo. The last part narrates the story after the release from prison, Cole's final encounter with Alejandra and his return to Texas (Frye, 2012).

The main protagonist of the novel John Grady Cole sees the ending of the cowboy era in the modernization of Texas, indicated by trains, cars, and oil industry. The end of the old times is symbolized by the death of John's grandfather. In moment of grief John Grady's thoughts are interrupted by the train coming from the east, another symbol for industrial progress which is expanding from the east to west of America. Symbolism of industrial progress through disturbance of feelings and nature is common for the whole Border Trilogy, e.g. in *The Crossing* atom bomb is described as a false sun (Estes, 2013).

After the death of Cole's grandfather, his mother decides to sell the ranch to oil company. To escape from the upcoming changes and after the realization that the land in Texas is lost to him, Cole and his friend Lacey Rawlins go to an epic journey into the deeper regions of Mexico. Similarly, to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* the journey is set to change the characters' innocence to experience. Both characters depict different ideas behind the journey, while Cole seems to take rather critical mindset and acts more sceptical and pragmatic, Rawlins sees them as to desperados on the run (Hage, 2010). As the characters ride through Mexico reader observes the differences between Mexico and the US. Mexico is lacking all of the features of modernity presented in the scenes from Texas. There are no train tracks, roads, cars, and radios in Mexico. Wilderness and intact landscapes substituted the industrialization of Texas (Estes, 2013). As Frye (2012) puts it in different words Cole and Rawlins are trying to find premodern social order in Mexico. The initial description of their journey shows the blend of old and new world, the blend is described through contrasts, for example they both travel by horse but still they tie the horses at gas station, or on one hand they eat in cafés and on the other they hunt on the plains. Additional contrasts between old and new are portrayed for example by highways on one hand and ranches on the other or by oil derricks and ancient traces cut by the Comanche (Frye, 2012).

The space of Mexico also allows the two characters to live their dreams as cowboys, however their dreams are shattered when they encounter the dark side of the wilderness. Their vision of Mexico shifts through the novel, the freedom is not ideal but lawless and open space does not bring wanted peace, rather embodies a threat, beyond

that nature becomes an actively evil presence. Before crossing the border, Cole and Rawlins contemplate “the white spaces” along the border as a paradise which is an open way to their dream of cowboy lifestyle. The same space is introduced later in the book again, this time not showcasing paradise anymore, but it is a place where Blevins execution happens, it is a place of their imprisonment. To summarize throughout the novel the landscape of borderlands and borders changes from symbol of paradise to a place where execution and imprisonment take place. Initially Cole longed for an escape into the nature, but the nature wilderness is lately described as a crueller version of life in modern Texas (Estes, 2013). The idea behind the crossing of the border is failed. The failure of the crossing is not only represented in *All the Pretty Horses* but in the whole trilogy (Arnold and Luce, 2001).

On their way to Mexico, they soon encounter young Jimmy Blevins riding on a stolen horse, departing from Blevins they find a way to a ranch of Don Héctor Rocha y Villarreal. John Grady Cole becomes a confidant of Don Héctor, at the same time Cole has a passionate affair with the rancher’s daughter, Alejandra. Later in the story John and Lacey are imprisoned in Saltillo, due to connection with Blevins who after their departure killed a man. In the prison the characters face violence and savagery. During this experience John Grady comes to adulthood while he is trying to make sense of a world where love, friendship, ethics and malevolence, betrayal, and antithesis in personal desire coexist (Frye, 2012).

The world of *All the Pretty Horses* (and the whole trilogy) is a vanishing world. World of changes which is also represented in the end of the novel, where John Grady Cole rides into the sunset and into “the world to come” (Arnold and Luce, 2001).

Another motif the novel is heavily focused on is the dream motif, since it is the defining feature of John’s character and his motive to cross the border comes from his dreams (Frey 2012). As Barrera (2016) further establishes the dream is broadly encompassed with spatial imagery of the southwest and with figurative imagery of borders and frontiers, meaning the dreams do not match with social and cultural backdrop of a Mexican landscape, history, and memory. The dreams are ruined by Mexican reality and indigeneity which are embedded in the wilderness of the landscape and stories of Mexican people. Based on this, it can be said that John Grady Cole and later in *The Crossing* Billy Parham are continuously haunted by unsettled, unresolved history of cultural and social issues and of collective violence implied by the various crossings into

Mexico. The motif of dream reappears in the next two entries of the trilogy, its effect and interpretations remain the same (Berrera, 2016).

4.3 The Crossing

The story of second novel of the Border Trilogy starts just years before the Second World War in New Mexico. The main character Billy Parham helps his father to trap a wolf that has been killing the livestock around their home. Billy finds the wolf and decides not to kill it but to bring it back into its native environment. The attempt is unsuccessful as the wolf is taken from him for dogfights. Upon the return home Billy finds that the whole family apart from his brother Boyd is dead. The brothers ride to Mexico with the goal to trace their parents stolen horses, eventually on their way the brothers are separated, and Boyd later dies in a gunfight. Throughout the rest of the novel Billy meanders from Mexico to U.S. and back searching for his place in the world. The final scene in the novel is focusing on Billy's witnessing of the Trinity Test, test of the atom bomb on July 16, 1945 (Estes, 2013).

The Crossing is set mostly along the Mexican-U.S. border. The Parham family lives close to the Mexican border, and they move smoothly through it, which later leads to encountering of tragedies. As Estes (2013, p. 157) puts it: "*The fact that the Parham family seems to move so effortlessly between the two counties, just as the boys move effortlessly between Spanish and English, belies the magnitude of the problem and symbolizes their ignorance (of the borders importance)*". The border, even though not taken into account by the family, treats everyone in the same harsh way. When Billy tries to bring the wolf back to Mexican mountains, he encounters the hacendado who takes the wolf from him, the hacendado accuses Billy of not respecting the country, of him thinking that he can behave as he pleases in Mexico. Upon this accusation Billy admits he does not think that, because he does not think about the country at all. Parallel between Billy's neglect of respecting borders and of the wolf who knows nothing about borders and boundaries can be seen here. The idea of not acknowledging the border is pushed even further in moment where the wolf's journey across the border leads to its death. The ignorance of the borders and the boundaries it sets does not make people and animals protected from its violent nature (Estes, 2013) and Billy's process of learning of the acceptance cost him any sense of place and home he once belonged to. Another similarity between Billy and the wolf appears in the story, Billy's attempt to save the she-wolf by

restoring order to its life by placing it in his home in Mexico reflects his later efforts to find his place in the world (Barrera, 2016).

The wolf's storyline ending also represents common theme for Border trilogy: conflict between the tame and the wild, where the dog is in the end killed by domesticated dogs (Estes, 2013). The wilderness is portrayed as a vanishing part of the world to make space for domesticated animals and cattle (Barrera, 2016). As already mentioned in the chapter dedicated to *All the Pretty Horses* even in *The Crossing* Mexico is described as wild and empty space, supposedly perfect place for making the American cowboy dream come true. Both novels further describe the unsuccessful attempt to fulfil the dream when confronted with the Mexican reality (Estes, 2013). Yet again, American side of the border is portrayed as an arid wasteland, where the frontier myth lost its power and Mexico is described as a mythic and exotic setting, which is discovered to be just a product of American fantasies. For Billy Mexico becomes a region where he loses connections to his home and his sense of reality, reality which was unknown to him until the crossing of the border. In allusions to John Grady Cole, Billy also sees paradise in Mexico's wilderness (Barrera, 2016).

The ending of *The Crossing* defines beginning of the new definition of the borders and its space with launching of the Trinity Test (Estes, 2013). The desolation which is brought by this moment shatters all the qualities Southwest once held, both in dreams and reality (Barrera 2016). The Trinity Test is one of the mentions of the World War II in the novel, the novel takes place in the time period of the war, although Billy Parham is ignorant of the war during his wanderings throughout Mexico, as he returns to the United States on his second trip, he sees the impact the war has on the landscapes he had left (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

The novel is again divided into four parts, in each part of the book the border is crossed. Billy first travels to Mexico to save the pregnant she-wolf. The second time Billy enters Mexico with his brother Boyd to find the stolen horses, the final two border crossings are done with Billy looking for his brother and then when he is searching for a place to bury Boyd's bones. The travels and crossings are tangled by stories of people Billy encounters (Barrera, 2016). Through these stories *The Crossing* focuses on the human experience of life, however not just Billy's life, but life of the others through our witnessing of it. These stories are set to contain our past and give meaning to our present. However, Billy's story is not restored until the final novel of the trilogy, where in his 70's he lives as a homeless man who have not yet found meaning to his life (Barrera, 2016).

As Hage (2010) states borders and crossings bring bracing mystery to the novel. The literal border between Mexico and the US is not the only border that is crossed. Figurative borders also occupy a paradoxical hinterland or twilight state between death and life, the world of dreams and waking, and the border between the old and the new. This liminality is showcased in the moment when Billy returns to America after the first crossing of the border. Billy crossed the border as a naïve boy with dreams and ideals, but he returns to America as a ragged, skinny, and weathered soul.

As indicated Billy meets various storytellers on his ways, one of the most symbolic and mystical meetings, and at the same time one of the meetings suggesting that more than just literal borders are crossed in the book, happens at the border during his first return to the U.S. The person he meets is an amiable guard named Gilchrist. The guard suggest that Billy should stay in Mexico, but Billy wants to cross the border. He asks Gilchrist for the loan of a half dollar coin for food, with promise of returning it. Before lending the coin, the guard flips it. This scene evokes certain similarity to Greek myth of Charon, the guardian figure of the river Styx. In the myths Charon guards the boundary between the dead and the living and requires coin before ferrying the dead to the underground. On his return to Mexico, this time with Boyd, Billy returns the coin, foreshadowing the death of his brother. The coin parallel returns in the fourth part of the book, where the main character gives silver coin to customs officer (*aduenero*). The officer represents another portal figure that grants ceremonial passage for Billy to the world of dead, as he soon after this exchange endures hardship trying to return Boyd's remains across the border (Hage, 2010).

Transitions and indications of borderlands between life and dead are not uncommon in the novel. An encounter with a blind man can be mentioned as an example as well. Based on his words, the man stands on the boundary between life and death but is not fully part of either. The blurry line between death and life is further shown in town of Namiquipa where Billy witnesses a wedding and a burial happening nearly simultaneously (Hage, 2010).

Another border crossing is further suggesting the end of cowboy life. As Billy crosses to New Mexico, he talks to a guard about hopes to join up with an outfit. While Billy is speaking of becoming a ranch hand, the guard misinterprets him thinking he wants to enlist as a soldier. This moment of the novel is crucial for the interpretations of the vanishing cowboy ages, as a cowboy is changing into a soldier. The west has changed

rapidly, and Billy becomes lost in the militarised new world. Billy tries to enlist into the army and enter this new world, but he is rejected due to health conditions.

The final depiction of the change in the West is the already mentioned Trinity Test. The novel ends with uncertainty and anxiety of the upcoming change this historical event will bring. The test ushers a new age dominated by military and nuclear annihilation (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

4.4 Cities of the Plain

Cities of the Plain bring conclusion to the proclaimed trilogy. With the final conclusion the differences between the entries and similarities are clearer. While *All the Pretty Horses* resembles romantic adventure story and bildungsroman, *The Crossing* pushes back any continuation of the first story, but rather repeats the narrative with new characters. Moreover, the story differs as it prioritizes metaphysical and theological meditations from the adventure-based story in *All the Pretty Horses*. In the last novel of the trilogy McCarthy brings together the two main protagonist of the previous novels. The narrative leads to collision between the romance of John's story and of Billy's melancholic fatalistic view of the world. John and Billy therefore act as complimentary characters (Arnold and Luce, 1999).

Cities of the Plain were published in 1998, but the origin of the novel started in a screenplay long before *All the Pretty Horses*. We can assume that the previous novels were written with an outline of the conclusion in mind. Themes of confrontation with the old and new world, the distinctions between Mexico and America, the destruction of natural world by modernity reaper likewise reappear in the last entry of the trilogy (Frye, 2012).

McCarthy revisits the two characters as they work at a ranch in New Mexico in 1952. The ranch is heading to extinction as other ranches in the three novels. In these moments, the theme of vanishing world is revisited. The two main protagonists often ponder about the neighbouring cities in the distance, cities as Hage (2010, p. 59) notes "*are lashed together in uneasy symbiosis and butted up against opposites sides of the border*". To these cities is the name of the novel referring to – namely to cities of El Paso in Texas and Juárez in Mexico (Hage, 2010). The name derives from the book of Genesis, where cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are described as destroyed cities of the plain (Frye, 2012). The vanishing world of the cowboy life, ranches and cities is an allusion to Native Americans heading toward obsolescence, Mexicans being pushed out of the land of

American Southwest. The civilization is caught up in this flow of inevitable bloody epochs which change the world (Hage, 2010). With *Cities of Plain* the theme of vanishing cowboy life in the Border Trilogy is coming to an end. It is not clear what the future holds, but the world of the two characters will inevitably change, still when John and Billy think of their future beside the cowboy life, they cannot think of anything, they are not able to see a future without this way of life. Briefly, they talk about wandering to Mexico again, but based on the previous experiences, they know it is only unrealistic dream, even in Mexico, they cannot find a place for them (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

Next to repeating themes of confrontation of the old world and the new, of Mexico and America and the destruction of the natural world by modernity, *Cities of Plains* introduce new themes to the trilogy. It depicts story of kindness between people of tragic personal relationships, story of people living in the past with their loved once, who had died (Hage, 2010).

John Grady Cole and Billy Parham work together on a McGovern's Cross Fours Ranch in Alamogordo, which is being threatened of annexation, because of government's expansion of missile testing. Every now and then they travel together to Juárez on casual forays, however without any aspect of adventure (Frye, 2012).

The setting of the novel, the space between Alamogordo military base and Mexican border is symbolic. The military base represents the unavoidable future, the border symbolizes the dream of Western independence and freedom. However, as already mentioned, this time the dream of freedom and independence beyond the border is not a possibility, as both characters now know it is only a dream. Mexico suddenly does not represent a land of unlimited freedom and land of new opportunities, but a place where the characters go for liquor and prostitutes, place as any other. Mexico, still is referred to as a alien and mysterious place, but not anymore for the main characters (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

The story ends abruptly jumping to the beginning of new millennia. John is dead and Billy, now an old man, is wandering, finding a shelter in random woman's home he meets kindness. What concludes the novel is the woman's grace and charity. Concluding, that in a lost world, world full of undergoing changes and in a world lost to science and modernity, gestures of kindness and goodness will precede as genuine and heroic act (Brinkmeyer, 2000).

4.5 The Road

Tenth and most recent McCarthy's novel *The Road* was published in 2006. The narrative of *The Road* focuses on a father and a son as they travel southwards in a post-apocalyptic America. After the unknown apocalypse, few people are left on the black and grey world the novel depicts. The humans in the novel are enslaving or cannibalizing each other and are slowly ground down by inhospitable environments. The two main unnamed characters are searching for a better life, however any hope for a better life seems unrealistic and unreachable. The father and the son represent "good guys" who are by the novel's words "carrying the fire" (Estes, 2010).

The Road is portraying a world only suggested in previous McCarthy's works, world where civilizations is at its end, where the life on the planet is dying. The world in the novel faded into an environment deprived of nature, culture, law, personal identity, government, economics, territorial borders, agriculture, literature, commerce, and art. Day by day the father and the son travel through scorched landscape of grey, an apocalyptic hellscape where even the air is poisonous (Frye, 2012). However, what arises questions is the setting of the novel, while in his previous works, setting is always apparent, in *The Road* the cities or the states are never directly named. Morgan (2008) believes the beginning of the novel takes place in Kentucky continuing to Tennessee, North and South Carolina. Nevertheless, the story still provides with imaginative constructions of the South, as his other works even *The Road* shows aspects of Southern literature, in interest in history and community and his attachment to place. The novel reclaims a sense of mythic space typical for Southern literature, especially with regards to myth of the frontier. It shows unsettled undomesticated landscapes, which are violent and bloody, similarly to McCarthy's western work. The father and the son also travel to unknown terrain (as John and Billy in *The Border Trilogy*) typical aspect of the mythic narrative of the frontier literature. Walsh (2008) poses question, if the presence of frontier myths is enough to recognize *The Road* as a work of southern literature. He argues, that one of the most symbolic themes of the novel is the South's represents place of salvation. The father believes that the environment in the South is healthier, in his beliefs the South's climate is slightly better and some humanity and life have prevailed there. These beliefs are rooted in pastoral and sublime memories from his childhood. In the novel the South functions as a physical frontier, goal, and imaginative refuge. Storytelling about the South is what keeps the two characters motivated to continue. In summary, *The Road* is deeply

rooted in the geocentric myths, myths of the frontier and narrative patterns, that are part of literature of the South (Walsh, 2008).

The Road is surrounded by an enigma, the readers and the main characters are unaware of details behind the catastrophe, what happened and why it happened. The character's previous life also remains undiscovered to readers. This enigma of what happened to the world, what happened to its survivors stimulates the narrative of the novel. In addition, as the beginning of the catastrophe remains uncertain, so does the aftermath and the ending of the novel. The victims of the apocalypse we meet are just poor witnesses to further illustrate the catastrophe.

What is the cause behind the apocalypse is much asked question by many readers. Turner (2017) speculates, that the cataclysmic event that ruined the earth was either accidental for example done by a meteor crash, humanly induced by some nuclear apocalypse or possibly even done by some divine figure.

5. The Border Crossings in Border Trilogy

In this part of the thesis, we would like to concentrate on chosen McCarthy's works *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Crossings*, *Cities of Plain* and their depictions of borders and especially border crossings. We would focus on the symbolism of the border setting and the notion of the crossing, how the crossing influenced the characters of the trilogy, namely the two main characters John Grady Cole and Billy Parham.

With each novel, we are studying the symbolism of the border crossing and the border, the motivation behind the crossing, the description of Mexico and we are interpreting how the vision of Mexico changes with the characters development.

In the Border Trilogy, the motif of dreams to find vanishing cowboy life in Mexico and the motif of vanishing west world is explored, mainly through crossings into Mexico, especially in *All the Pretty Horses* and *Cities of the Plain*. As well as themes of contrast between the U.S. and Mexico, between rural and urban life, between the old world and the new world. As the plot and details of the novel are given in the previous parts, here we are mainly focusing on the depiction of crossings and their interpretations.

5.1 All the Pretty Horses

In *All the Pretty Horses* the writings of the themes of the borders change. As in *Blood Meridian* the Kid, travels through the border to find his place in the world, he wanders to find something he could be part of. John Grady on the other hand, does not wander without purpose, the reason for his journey through the border is shown, through the death of his grandfather, as it can represent the death of the old west. John Grady with the knowledge, that the world he is a part of is ending, decides to challenge his dreams of finding this disappearing world elsewhere. The first novel of the border trilogy initially depicts the world behind the border as John Grady Cole travels to Concho River, looking to Mexico he describes a group of Comanche who travel through both states carrying the vision of wild west with them: “(...) *nation and ghost of nation passing in a soft chorale across that mineral waste to darkness bearing lost to all history and all remembrance like a grail the sum of their secular and transitory and violent lives* (APH in *The Border Trilogy*, 2018, p. 5).” In this, moment, the vision of John's wild west is seen, as he depicts is as a timeless space, without history, with violence, and with Indians. Which is the typical description of the wild west in terms of Westerns, but in McCarthy's novel this life setting slowly dying and it is beginning to change by the industrial progress.

Therefore, as John Grady and Rawlins decide to run to Mexico, to find a life where the myth of the wild west still exists. Mexico could almost resemble a promised land and even briefly after the passing Mexico is few times visioned as a paradise or Eldorado:

“What’s them lights? said Rawlins.¹

I’d make it Eldorado.” (Ibid, p. 33)

And few pages later Rawlins asks:

“Where do you reckon that paradise is at? said Rawlins.

John Grady had taken off his hat to let the wind cool his head. You cant tell what’s in a country like that till you’re down there in it, he said.

There’s damn sure a bunch of it, aint there.

John Grady nodded. That’s what I’m here for.” (Ibid, p. 61)

From both of these examples we can assume that the boys see Mexico as a place of new opportunities, where paradise might be, but its for them to discover it. The border is intended to be crossed, because without its crossing they would never be able to tell if the wanted paradise awaits in Mexico, if there really is a life where the dreams of cowboys can still exist. The motivation behind the crossing to Mexico is to find the old better life for them and their vision of a cowboy lifestyle. They soon realise that Mexico is far away from paradise or Eldorado, as they have to face its harsh environment and order.

They cross the border in Langtry, Texas. Looking at the Mexican mountains. *“Far to the south the mountains of Mexico drifted in and out of the uncertain light of a moving cloud cover like ghosts of mountains.”* (Ibid, p. 43) Mostly, when border is crossed in the trilogy, the nature is described as dark and cloudy.

As mentioned, John Grady Cole’s dream of travelling to Mexico is never fulfilled, as he has to endure the violence of Mexico and never find the cowboy life he longed for. As his love Alejandra declares she wont run with him, lonely John Grady returns to the U.S., crossing the border for the second time. *“He crossed the river just west of Langtry Texas in a softly falling rain. The wind in the north, the day cold. The cattle along the breaks of the river standing gray and still.”* (Ibid, p. 289) Even during this crossing, the nature is described in dark colours, this time reflecting John’s mood, as he knows there’s nothing waiting for him back in America, figuring he has no place to go to.

¹ referring to Mexico

Mexico in McCarthy's novels is timeless, as the characters returning to America, often do not recognize what time they spent in Mexico and what day is it. For John Grady it is the same and shortly after his crossing he learns it is the Thanksgiving.

In the final moments of the novel John meets with Rawlins again, as he wants to return him his horse. Talking to Rawlins he states the U.S. is not his country anymore.

"What are you going to do?"²

Head out.

Where to?

I dont know. (...) I think I'm goin to move on.

This is still good country.

Yeah. I know it is. But it aint my country." (Ibid, p. 303)

John went to Mexico with a vision of finding his place in the world, meaning to his life, the world he longs for cannot be find in the U.S. anymore, but as he discovers, this world is not waiting in Mexico either. Even though in first moments Mexico seemed as a place John was looking for, as he was working as a cowboy at the hacienda, found love, but eventually this was only temporary as the happiness cannot prevail. Crossing the border to Mexico, not only crashed John Grady Cole's visions and dreams, further it also took him the only chance of finding a place for him in the world, as he declares America is not his place either.

5.2 The Crossing

Every time a border is crossed in *The Crossing* it is somehow motivated. The international border is crossed various times in the book. First mention of the crossing is however not related to Billy, but to the wolf. I would like to highlight the importance of the wolf's crossing, as it is the setting point for all the following crossings. The wolf did not cross the border without motivation, as seen bellow, as we are going to try to proof a crossing of the border in *The Crossing* is never unmotivated.

"She was carrying her first litter and she had no way to know the trouble she was in. She was moving out of the country not because the game was gone but because the wolves were and she needed them." (TC in *The Border Trilogy* p. 331, 2018) In this expert the motivation behind the crossing is clear, as the wolf wants to find the lost members of

² asks Rawlins

her pack. Likewise, some of Billy's crossings, later in the story, are motivated by the need to find something lost to him – his parents' horses, his brother.

The first motivation behind Billy's crossing the border is to take the she-wolf back to Mexican mountains and set her loose. The goal behind the first crossing is never fulfilled as intended, as Billy encounters a man, who takes the wolf away from him and uses it for dog's fights. Somehow, foreshadowing of the unsuccessful crossing can be seen in Mexico's nature, as already studied Mexico in McCarthy's novels is often described as a place of wilderness and violence. The first crossing happens during the sunset, and the wild nature is turning black and blue. *"They crossed in that deep twilight a broad volcanic plain bounded within the rim of hills. The hills were a deep blue in the blue dusk and the round feet of the pony clopped flatly on the gravel of the desert floor. The night was falling down from the east and the darkness that passed over them came in a sudden breath of cold and stillness passed on."* (Ibid, p. 380) In these moments Billy first encounters the Mexico's wilderness, as further described: *"They rode through the pass in the dark and there he sat the horse and watched lightning to the south fat over the plains of Mexico. The wind was trashing softly through the trees and in the pass and in the wind were spits of sleet."* (Ibid, p. 380)

Billy is riding towards his goal, to the mountains for days, but the plains seem endless to him, and the goal is not closer: *"The country itself was changeless. He rode on and the high mountains to the southwest seemed no nearer at the day's end."* (Ibid, p. 396). Billy on his way gets attached to the wolf, this attachment is ended abruptly as the wolf is confiscated by authorities and put into a circus of sorts for dog fights. As mentioned in the previous chapter dedicated to The Crossing, Billy talks with the hacendado about his perception of the border.

"You think that this country is some country you can come here and do what you like.

I never thought that. I never thought about this country one way or the other.

Yes, said the hacendado.

We was just passin through, the boy said. We wasnt botherin nobody. Queríamos pasar, no más.

Pasar o traspasar?

The boy turned and spat into the dirt. He could feel the wolf lean against his leg. He said the tracks of the wolf had led out of Mexico. He said the wolf knew nothing of boundaries. The young don nodded as if in agreement but what he said was that whether

the wolf knew or did not know was irrelevant and if the wolf had crossed the boundary it was perhaps so much the worse for the wolf but the boundary stood without regard.” (Ibid, 427–428)

As seen here, the boy and the wolf, never had malicious intentions behind the crossing, both of them crossed without giving any thought to the boundary, they did not recall how it could change their lives, leading to the wolf’s death and to Billy’s nomadic life, as he never again had the family or home he could go back to. As the hacendado asks if they pass the border (pasar) or trespass it (traspasar) what brings question is the difference between the two in terms of the outcome. Nobody is nicer to the wolf and to Billy, just because they did not trespass the border and the border does not induce any differences between passing and trespassing as it always leads to something terrible happening no matter the way how the border is crossed. After this dialogue Billy offers to return the wolf to America, paying any fine the hacendado would want, but he answers is too late for that. In this moment we can suggest that any vision Billy had for the wolf’s life in Mexico is gone, as he knows the wolf cannot be saved in Mexico and the return to the U.S. is impossible.

After the wolf’s death Billy buries the wolf in the mountains, fulfilling his goal of returning the wolf back to where it came from. As Billy travels through the mountains, he is getting weak and thin as the harsh conditions of the cold and wind and lack of food are wearing him down, he therefore decides to go back home: *“In the morning he rode the horses through the border crossing at Douglas Arizona. The guard nodded to him and he nodded back. You look like maybe you stayed a little longer than what you intended, the guard said.”* (Ibid, p. 471). Billy only intended to put the wolf back into the mountains, but the circumstances made him stay for so long he does not even recognize how much time he spent in Mexico. As if the time in Mexico flows differently due to its mythical nature. The goal of going to Mexico, was not only unsuccessful, but also changed Billy’s visual appearance. Billy borrows a coin from the guard, promising he will eventually return it and continues his way home. The need behind the crossing was not satisfied again, as Billy returns to home and discovers his parents were killed and only reunites with his brother Boyd. Billy finds blooded mattress in his parents’ bedroom realizing what had happened, later he is questioned by a policeman in a police station:

“Where have you been son?

Mexico.

Mexico.

Yessir.

What cause you to run off?

I didnt run off. (...) [the sherrif] contemplated the ragged figure before him. Pale with road dust. Thin to emaciation. A rope holding up his trousers.

What were you doing in Mexico?

I dont know. I just went down there.

You just got a wild hair up you ass and there wouldn't nothin else do but for you to go off to Mexico. Is that what you're tellin me?

Yessir. I reckon.” (Ibid., p. 474–475)

As seen in this dialogue with the sheriff, Billy denotes any motivation behind his initial crossing to Mexico, even though, in words of the sheriff, it left him in a ragged state. As if the unsuccessful outcome of the journey made it meaningless.

Billy decides to find his brother Boyd and to go after the horses that were stolen from his family. As they are nearing the border to Mexico, the description of the nature changes from the first crossing, as in the first crossing the nature was described as bleak, cold and windy, now the only thing the boys see is a sunny colourful image of Mexico behind the borders.

“Boyd sat behind him with his thin legs dangling on the horse's flank and together they looked over the country to the south. The day was sunny and there was a wind blowing and there were ravens in the mountains riding the updrafts over southfacing slopes.

(...) You see the line yonder where the color changes? (Said Billy.)

Yeah.

That's Mexico.

It dont look like it's getting no closer.” (Ibid., p. 486)

Similarly, to previous crossing, where Billy recalls the journey to the mountains seemed endless, here Boyd mentions that Mexico appears far away, as the goals behind the traveling are far away. What always divides the characters from the goal is the long journey to and through Mexico, and because of the seemingly endless journey the goal never seems like something reachable. As they reach the border, Billy lefts the coin for the guard who borrowed it to him previously. The boys travel through Mexico, looking for the horses and later they managed to steal one of the six stolen horses back. As Boyd falls in love with a girl they together safe from a rape, they left Billy alone and leave together. Left without his brother, Billy again wants to find a place for him in this world.

As with the first crossing, Billy crossed with someone but is returning to America alone. At the border Billy is again recollecting he do not know what time he spent in Mexico, as if Mexico was a timeless place. When he crosses the border, the guard tells him: “*I guess you come back to sign up.*” (Ibid, p. 646), referring to the Second World War. Billy sees this as a new opportunity and as he has nowhere to go, he tries to enlist. However, it does not go to plan, as the army doctor discovers Billy has got a heart murmur. Billy crossed the border back to U.S. to find new opportunities, as he was unsuccessful in Mexico. However, America does not offer any place in this world for him either, as he is turned down by the army repeatedly. Throughout the war Billy wanders from ranch to ranch working there, not finding his place in the world anywhere. He decides to go back to Mexico, to maybe find something missing in his life, new opportunities, and his lost brother.

As he passes to Mexico, he is remembering the last time he had crossed the border here: “*He’d last passed through this port of entry seven years ago when he was thirteen and his father rode the horse he now rode and they had taken delivery of eight hundred head of cattle from two Americans rawhiding the back acres of an abandoned ranch in the mountains west of Ascensión. At that time there had been a café here but now there was none.*” (Ibid, p. 668). As mentioned, Billy is often described as someone who does not perceive the flow of time and is oblivious to certain things around him, as borders and the beginning of the war. However, in this moment of crossing the border, he lets himself remember the past, what is missing from it and how certain things can remain unchangeable (as he is riding the same horse seven years later) and some things do change (the missing café). The revisiting of this crossing port sets the whole tone for this journey to Mexico as Billy revisits places, he and the brother went to in order to find him.

Boyd soon learns about his brother’s death from the man called Quijada who gave him back the horse when Billy and Boyd were looking for it. Quijada referring Boyd’s death says:

“He should have gone home, he said.

Yes.³

Why didnt he?

I dont know. Maybe the girl.

The girl would not have gone home with him?

³ answers Billy

I suppose she would have. He didnt rightly have a home to go to.” (Ibid, p. 700)
During this dialogue, Billy is recalling that he and Boyd had no home to return to. Boyd decided to stay in Mexico, as it was a new opportunity for him, and initially the decision to cross the border turned out efficient for Boyd as he gained status of a hero among the people, found love and a place to stay, but all of this eventually led to his death. There was no home waiting for Boyd in Mexico. Even though Billy reclaims Boyd has no home in America either, he decides to take Boyd’s remains back there, as he belongs to the U.S. As Quijada and Billy are discussing whether a certain corrido is about Boyd, Quijada recalls:

“Even if the güerito in the song is your brother he is no longer your brother. He cannot be reclaimed.

I am to take him back with me.

It will not be permitted.

Who would I go to?

There is no one to go to.” (Ibid, p. 701)

Similarly, to the story with the she-wolf, where Billy had the intention to took it back to where it belongs, which led to terrible outcome for both of them. In this moment he is warned of retaking his brother back to the United States. As the wolf did not have the knowledge of boundaries or any nationality, he should be left where he was, not taken back by unnatural causes, as Boyd should be kept in the place where he dies, because death does not recognise boundaries. Billy asks Quijada:

“You think he belongs where he’s at?

I think the dead have no nationality.” (Ibid, p. 702) Would crossing the border lead to anything for Boyd? As Quijada further states: *“The world has no name, he said. The name of the cerros and the sierras and the deserts exist only on maps. We name them that we do not lose our way. Yet it was because the way was lost to us already that we have made those names. The world cannot be lost. We are the ones. And it is because these names and these coordinates are our own naming that they cannot save us. That they cannot find for us the way again. Your brother is in that place which the world has chosen for him. He is where he is supposed to be. And yet the place he has found is also his own choosing. That is a piece of luck not to be despised.” (Ibid, p. 702)* As Quijada declares, Boyd chose to be at the side of the border he died in, so therefore he should stay there, Billy should not obtain him back. Billy’s intentions might be good but playing a hero against the laws of nature and against wilderness of Mexico does not bring

a profitable outcome. Comparably to his brother, who became the hero of the corridos, but as the cowboy life is ending in Mexico, even here his actions result in his death.

Quijada's warning is adequate as Billy does not get Boyd's body without a price and is attacked by a bandolero, who wounded Billy's horse and wrecked his brother's bones. Later before Billy crosses the border for the last time in *The Crossing* Mexican man is telling him: "You look like you might have been down here a while, the man said.

I dont know. What does that look like?

Like you need to get back.

Well you probably right about that. This is my third trip. It's the only time I was ever down here that I got what I come after. But it sure as hell wasnt what I wanted." (Ibid, p. 731). As Billy is expressing in this moment not one of his crossings would be characterised as successful, the goals behind the crossings of the border were never profitable, even though they ought to bring new opportunities and chances to find what was lost to him. Although, as Quijada refers something cannot be brought back, just on our account that it belongs to the different part of the world, as the consequences of these actions can led to somebody's death.

If we would like to apply the ending of the novels to borders, it has to be said, the Trinity Test defies any borders, because if used the borders would never be able to stop atomic bomb.

To conclude crossings in the novel are always made under a certain motivation, usually with Billy's good intentions, yet good intentions are not enough when going against the laws of nature (bringing back a wolf who was looking for its pack), unmoral characters and the laws of Mexico (meeting the bandoleros). Due to the crossings to Mexico, Billy loss his brother, the wolf and a place he could call home. Both of the countries represent loses in Billy's life, as in Mexico Billy lost his brother and the wolf, in the United States, he lost his parents, sister, but also any opportunity for home, as he cannot find a place to work for a long time and he cannot enlist to an army either. As seen in frontier myth, the area of borderlands should bring new prospects, but this never applies to journey to the Mexico of characters in the Border Trilogy. If the crossings are somewhat successful (as in *The Crossing* where Billy finds his brothers bones) they are still connected to violence and death. Parallels between the two main characters of each novel can be seen here, as the decision to cross the border only made them endlessly wandering along the borderlands finding a place and sense of belonging.

As we further see with Billy's storyline in the *Cities of the Plain*, Billy's motivation behind traveling to Mexico change and he only goes there to visit a brothel, as there is nothing waiting for him in Mexico, not a new opportunity, not a lost family and not a place he could call home.

5.3 Cities of The Plain

It can be said that the crossings of the border slightly differ in the last novel of the trilogy. Billy in this novel, does not cross the border in particular goal in mind, as he did in *The Crossing*, and John does not cross the border to find the old cowboy life in Mexico either. Billy also lost any hope for Mexico serving as a refuge or a place of dreams and opportunities. The ranch the two characters are currently working on seems like a place they both were longing for, they can work here as cowboys, however as in the previous novels any fulfilment of their dreams is only temporary.

Both men cross the border into Juárez to visit a brothel. Billy does not expect any from the crossing, as his idealistic vision of Mexico is already ruined, on the other hand John Grady's romantic visions of Mexico remains as he immediately falls in love with Mexican prostitute, his romantic visions of Mexico are not ruined because of his previous experience. John's naiveté leads to his death, in extended it can even be stated, that the initially innocent reason behind crossing the border to Juárez ends with his death. John wants to marry the prostitute Magdalena, but her pimp Eduardo does not want to allow that. John eventually plots her escape. However, she never crosses the border, as she is killed by Eduardo. John and Eduardo engage in brutal knife fight, resulting in the death of both.

Even though crossing of the border seems initially harmful it leads to death of the main character of the trilogy. Furthermore, Magdalena is killed only for attempting the crossing. As stated before, the argument of crossings never being successful still remains even with the last novel of the trilogy, where even attempted border crossing leads to characters death.

6. Conclusion to McCarthy's Depiction of Border Crossings

As we discovered in previous chapters, McCarthy focuses on the part of the border between Texas or Arizona and Mexico, around the area of deserts of Southwest. This setting of McCarthy's work symbolizes nature in its purest forms, with landscape, as we realize through the reading of his novels, that lacks any future. However, at first glance crossing of the border symbolizes possibilities for new beginnings, space for hope, rebirth, world without history. With these images the character of chosen novels often try to travel to west and towards the border to find fulfilment for their dreams, home, their place in the world. Their vision of these images is quickly shattered when they meet the violence and harsh wilderness surrounding the borderlands and the people who live in it.

As revealed border crossings in McCarthy's Border Trilogy are always motivated, by the vision of finding the old order in the world, by finding lost families. The first crossings to Mexico are done with innocence, where the characters, as young boys are longing to find new opportunities or freedom in the Mexico's wilderness, aspects typical for frontier myth and the depiction of Mexico in the Western genre. In Mexico the boys met with violence and characters more bound to the traditions than the aspect of freedom the space could be offering.

Through the novels, we could also study the timelessness of Mexico. As both of the characters return to America without any notion of time and the time they spend in Mexico. This description of timelessness repeated in the Border Trilogy only supports the mythical portrayal of Mexico.

Crossing the border back to America is often motivated by shattered dreams and searching for the home they left. John Grady upon his return to America reflects, that by travelling to Mexico, he lost attachments to America, which is not his country anymore. Billy since his first return to America lost any home he ever had and lost a chance to find his place in the world as he never could find a long-term job or was never accepted for the army. The characters often still find reason to go back to America, however Billy takes more critical approach to it, realizing his goals behind the crossing to Mexico will never be fulfilled, on the other hand, John Grady with opportunity of finding love in Mexico is ready to sacrifice everything, still believing Mexico can bring him what he longs for.

Every novel offers similar aspects of border crossings, yet the aspects somewhat differ. To go back to the sometimes-called prologue of the Border Trilogy, *Blood*

Meridian shows the violence following the characters around the area of borderlands, and the hybridity of the two cultures. The main character meets the violence by journeying to Mexico. The ending of *Blood Meridian* is referring to closure of the West frontier, making it less possible to travel freely across it.

It could be stated that in *All the Pretty Horses* the first border crossing represents the journey we must endure to find the fulfilment for our dreams and realization that the dreams cannot be reached. John Grady and Rawlins are hoping to find the unchanging life in Mexico, to even travel back in time where the industrial progress is not present and where the traits of cowboys can be shown. Nevertheless, as they are introduced to Mexico's wilderness and society, they realise it cannot be found. *All the Pretty Horses* are also depicting common contrast in border writings, specifically contrast between the old and the new.

The Crossing shows multiple of border crossings, each of them being unsuccessful, as the motivation behind the crossing is never fulfilled. New aspect of border crossing is introduced here, how not respecting the border and crossing it without respect for the second country can lead to disasters. Through the crossings the main character is also trying to fulfil his dreams, same as John Grady, and find his place in the world. The ending of the second novel questions the new definition of the borders, as Billy is witnessing the test of the atomic bomb, human creation which, if used, is not stopped by the borders.

In *Cities of Plain* the border crossings are never done to fulfil dreams, as John Grady and Billy do not have any anymore. They occasionally travel to Mexico, but only to find prostitutes and distraction. *Cities of Plains* show shift from the depiction of borders in McCarthy's novels. With *Blood Meridian* showing the violent side, the first two instalments of the trilogy showing the crossing as a tool of initial hope for fulfilling dreams, but never resulting in anything positive. *Cities of Plain* are resulting in the end of the cowboy life, but now the characters know, the crossing of the border would not lead to finding it again, but even though the border crossings in *Cities of Plain* initially seem unimportant, it leads to John's death as he falls in love in Magdalena, prostate in Juárez.

What can be further recognisable in the novels is the seemingly timeless description of Mexico, as with the crossing the boys usually forget what time they spent in Mexico.

As mentioned in the chapter Border Crossings the border crossing does not have to be only geographical as even symbolic borders can be crossed in literature, with this in mind it can be argued that with the crossings to Mexico and back to American in the first two novels the boys also crossed the border between childhood and adulthood. Different characters of the novels, the wolf, Boyd and later even John Grady due to the geographical crossing of the border crossed the boundary between life and death.

Although *The Road* was not studied in the literary analysis as there are no border crossing happening in the novel I would like to briefly mention on its depiction of borders and the meaning towards traveling to the South as *The Road's* journey reflects the same motivation between John Grady's a Billy's travels to Mexico. In *The Road* we can see depiction of border writings in the novel by frontier myth, as the two main characters are similarly to John Grady hoping to travel to the South, where they could find freedom and new opportunities. The two characters are in their own words "carrying the fire", symbol of hope, but we can also see the symbolism of hope in the depictions of South. The road to the South is challenging, similarly to the crossing to Mexico in previous novels, as it is full of violence, and characters seemingly deprived of humanity. What raises the biggest question is the novels ending. After the father's death, the son is the only one remaining who travels towards the South, its only to our interpretation whether his dreams will be fulfilled or not, whether the better world is waiting in the South. In hindsight, previous novels always depicted the South, as place where dreams can exist, but they can never be fulfilled. Although, what differs in *The Road* is the open space for interpretations, as the travels in previous works are always finished not giving space for hope, but here we readers, as well as the son, can hope for the final salvation.

To summarize, McCarthy's works show various of border crossing, mostly motivated by the hope of finding a home in the world, finding old tradition or finding loved ones, however these crossings never lead to fulfilment of these hopes and the exotic, harmonious vision of the world beyond the border is quickly demolished. If the crossings are somewhat successful (as in *The Crossing* where Billy finds his brothers bones, or in the *Cities of Plain* where John finds his love) they are still later connected to violence and death, therefore any success behind the crossing is only temporary and cannot withstand for the characters to find home and the life they long for.

Conclusion

The main goal of the thesis was to discover the symbolism behind the setting of Mexican-American border and its border crossing in the works of Cormac McCarthy, namely in the *Border Trilogy* and *The Road*. As was discovered during the research for the thesis even novel *Blood Meridian* had to be taken into account as firstly shows the setting of borders in his works. Border crossings in the Border Trilogy were studied in more details through literary analysis.

To fully understand the settings of the novels, firstly, Mexican-American border and its history is introduced. The border is characterised from its geographical and social policy points of view. The geography is vastly influenced by the two deserts spreading along the border, and by its history, mostly characterised by wars between the U.S and Mexico.

With this basic knowledge of the border, the thesis further studies the notion of borders and its borderlands in regional literature and literature of the South, respective the Southwest. As stated, works of regional literature help readers to understand the local lives, ideas, differences, identities of the people, and traditions of picked area. Therefore, through regional literature readers can get a view of these aspects of life along the border.

Border as a setting and element of literature and arts in general is studied by the border theory and border aesthetics, explain mainly through the works of Shimansky and Wolfe. Border theory describes borders as processes undergoing constant change. Border theory also describes borders as liminal places, in this description the term liminal refers to the ambiguity of the in-between place along the borders. Border theory considers all of borders, therefore not just geographical and national borders, but also symbolic borders related to gender, race, nationality, identity etc. Lastly, border theory sees borders as places influenced by its nature, visible (wall, fence) and invisible notions (politic), by people who inhabited them and cross them, and by the process of waiting while crossing the border.

With this understanding of borders and their characterisation the thesis is further studying the beginnings of themes related to borders in American literature. With this goal, frontier myth and the Western is explored. First works, portraying the lives along the border were William Gilmore Simms's periodicals and August Baldwin Longstreet's novels. Frontier myth represents Southwest as a place of freedom and opportunity, creating a space where characteristic traits as courage, determination, loyalty are

celebrated. These values can be found in the archetype of the cowboy. The origins of cowboys are further studied, as most of the key characters in McCarthy's works depicting borderlands are cowboys. Cowboys firstly appeared in 19th century literature, as a result of the Civil War, veterans started work on ranches in Texas and Arizona.

Apart from cowboys, and frontier mythology, primitive-pastoral myth is introduced as another aspect of the border writings. The myth is criticised for its lack of representation of women, for its sexism, racism, and for these elements set foundation to one of the biggest themes of border writings – violence. Second major theme of border writings is ambivalence, implying that the setting of borders is created by contrasts, contrast of the old world and the new world, of the rural and urban, of individuality and community etc.

Mexican side of the literature of borderlands is examined only briefly. The beginnings of themes of borders are seen in *corridos*, Mexican ballads, encouraging Mexicans against Texas Rangers. Some authors of the area are introduced, although bigger attention is given to them in one of the following chapters of the thesis. Focusing mostly on contemporary authors who show similar aspects in their works to Cormac McCarthy. Authors such as Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Sandra Cisneros and Ana Castillo are introduced with brief mentions of their depiction of borders.

As the thesis is mainly focusing on symbols of crossing the border in McCarthy's novel, the aspect of border crossing is explained. The thesis introduces the multiple types of border crossings implied by Root, as she studies the crossing through the lens of characters who cross them. She recognised a crossing where the border is a bridge, and by crossing it the two territories are connected, character is a part of both worlds. With the second type of the crossing the character realizes the ambiguity and differences of both nations. Third type of crossing initially comes from Anzaldúa's "mestiza" consciousness, the character sits on the border, where is exploited to racism, gender discrimination, class oppression, and colonial domination. The last border crossing is characterised by foray in one part of the border, while creating home and life on the other.

We can also see border crossing by Shimanski's dimensions – textual, symbolic, temporal, and epistemological, which are further explained.

The third part of the thesis introduces Cormac McCarthy as an author of Southern gothic, modern Western and as an author of border writings. Firstly, brief biography and general aspects of his writing is introduced. In general McCarthy's writing is depicting violence and death, with often detailed descriptions of both. Characterizations of his

characters also shows similar aspects through his works. Characters are described as “nomadic”, meaning without home, they often act as anti-heroes. Through the characters McCarthy tests the borders of humanity and morality. McCarthy’s recognisable style of writing also relates to his usage of combination of “high” and “low” style and his visually apparent choice of omitting most of the punctuation marks.

In his works of Southern gothic, McCarthy shows imagination haunted by a frightening vision of destruction and waste, searching for origins of humanity and apocalyptic future. The depiction of Southern grotesque is also mentioned. Since *Blood Meridian* McCarthy’s narratives shifted towards western settings. McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian* is combining the aspects of Southern gothic with themes of the anti-western. the Border Trilogy represents the “end of the West” subgenre of Western and the ecological western. *No Country for Old Men* represents modern contemporary Western, where horses are switched for cars.

Last two parts of the thesis is discovering the notions of borders and border crossings in McCarthy’s novel. In particular *Blood Meridian*, *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Crossings*, *Cities of Plain* and *The Road* are studied through various literary sources to understand the border setting of the named novels. *Blood Meridian* uses borderland and border crossing as tools to express that the Mexico wilderness is not an evil place on its own, it is depicting evil only in contact with humanity, and also to explore liminality, paradox and contradiction. *All the Pretty Horses* show different types of border crossing, influenced by the final scene of *Blood Meridian*, here the border cannot be crossed freely, the lack of free movement is leading to the end of the cowboy lifestyle. Border crossings are in more detail analysed by interpretation of Border Trilogy, in it is discovered that the crossings in the first two books of the Border Trilogy are motivated by dreams of finding the vanishing world of cowboys in Mexico. The journey through the border, however, never leads to dreams fulfilment.

McCarthy in his novels further shows aspect typical for border writings as stated in previous chapter of the thesis. Aspects of violence, frontier myth, cowboys, hatred anger, multiculturalism, is apparent.

To conclude McCarthy the setting of borders to show a world, that is not black and white, not ideal and evil, but combinations of the two. Therefore, characters who are expecting to find ideal world beyond the border cannot be ever satisfied.

Resumé

Hlavním cílem diplomové práce bylo zaměření se na symboliku Mexicko-americké hranice a jejího překročení v díle Cormaca McCarthyho, konkrétně v trilogii *Hranice* a v románu *Cesta*. Jak bylo při psaní práce zjištěno i román *Krvavý poledník* se zabývá prostředím hranice, proto se tedy jedna z kapitol věnuje i jemu. Přechody hranice v díle Cormaca McCarthyho jsou zkoumány skrze románovou trilogii *Hranice*. Aby bylo možné plně porozumět prostředí mexicko-americké hranice v McCarthyho díle, v prvních kapitolách práce je nastíněna historie hranice a její současná problematika. Na hranici bylo nahlíženo z pohledu geografického a z pohledu sociálně politického. Geografická podoba hranice je ovlivněna pouštěmi, které se v dané oblasti nachází a bohatou historií, především válkami mezi Mexikem a Spojenými státy.

V další části se diplomová práce zaměřuje na pojetí hranice a pohraničí v americké regionální literatuře a v americké jižanské literatuře. Jak je zmíněno, regionální literatura pomáhá čtenářům porozumět životu, rozdílům, identitám obyvatel a tradicím daného místa. Skrze regionální literaturu můžeme porozumět životu v oblasti hranice.

Prostředí hranice and jejích reprezentací v literatuře zkoumá teorie hranic (border theory) a hraniční estetično (border aesthetic). Tato teorie nazírá na hranice, jako na procesy, na neustále se proměňující linie. Dále tato teorie také popisuje prostředí v okolí hranice, které je představeno jako mix obou kultur, jazyků a tradicí. *Border theory* se také zabývá hranicemi, které nejsou jen státními, ale bere v úvahu hranice mezi pohlavími, rasou, národností, identitou apod. V neposlední řadě teorie hranic vnímá hranice jako místo ovlivněná přírodou, viditelnými (zeď, plot) a neviditelnými (politika) faktory, lidmi, kteří na hranici a v jejím okolí žijí a kteří ji překračují, ale také procesem čekání, který je s překračováním hranic spojen.

Po seznámení se s hranicí a její charakteristikou, se diplomová práce dále zaměřuje na témata spojená s hranicí v americké literatuře. S tímto cílem, se následující kapitola zaměřuje na tzv. frontier myth (volně přeloženo jako hraniční mýtus) a žánr westernu. První práce zaměřující se na témata hranice byla periodika Williama Gilmorea Simmse a novely Augusta Baldwina Longstreeta. Frontier myth představuje jihuozápad jako svobodné místo, poskytující nové možnosti, kde vlastnosti jako kuráž, vytrvalost, loajalita jsou oslavovány. Tyto vlastnosti především najdeme v typické postavě amerických westernů, v kovboji. Dále se v práci na kovboje a jejich charakteristiku

zaměřujeme, jelikož jsou to časté postavy v McCarthyho díle z prostředí hranice. Kovbojové se poprvé objevují v 19. stoletím, během kterého veteráni Občanské války začali pracovat na texaských a arizonských rančích.

Kromě kovbojů a mýtů spojených s hranicí se v díle z prostředí hranice objevuje mýtus spojení se substituční strategií (v ang. pastoral myth). Tomuto mýtu je vyčítána chybějící reprezentace žen, sexismus, rasismus, z čehož vyplynul jeden z nejtypičtější námětů prostředí hranice – násilí. Druhým velkým námětem je ambivalence, která naznačuje, že prostředí hranice je tvořeno kontrasty mezi starým a novým světem, mezi venkovským a městským životem, mezi individuální osobností a společností atd.

V práci se na mexickou literaturu z pohraničí zaměřujeme jen okrajově, ale je zajímavé, že nachází svůj počátek jinde, a to v tzv. koridách, mexických baladách, ve kterých se prvně objevují kovbojové a problémy spojené s hranicí. Koridy primárně slouží k povzbuzení Mexičanů v konfliktech proti texaským rančerům. Větší pozornost mexické literatuře je věnována v jedné z následujících kapitol, zabývající se současnou literaturou z mexicko-americké hranice. Konkrétně jsou zmíněna díla Alicie Gaspar de Alby, Sandry Cisneros a Any Castillo.

Jelikož se práce především zaměřuje na překročení hranice v díle Cormaca McCarthyho, pojem překračování hranice je vysvětlen. Diplomová práce představuje několik typů překročení hranic na základě díla Marie Root. Ta představuje několik typů překročení hranice, především s ohledem na roli člověka během daného překročení. Nejprve rozeznává překračování hranice, které pro hrdinu díla slouží jako most k poznání nového, hrdina se tak stává součástí obou světů. Skrze druhý druh překročení hranice, si hlavní hrdina uvědomuje rozdíly, které existují mezi konkrétními dvěma národy. Třetí typ překročení hranice, není překročení v pravém slova smysl, hrdina zůstává na hranici a čelí násilí, rasismu, genderové diskriminaci, třídním rozdílům apod, které jsou s prostředím hranice spojeny. Poslední překročení hranice, které můžeme vidět v literatuře, je překračování přirozené, kdy hrdina má domov na jedné straně hranice a z nějakého důvodu potřebuje navštívit druhou stranu.

Shimanski rozděluje překračování hranic z jiného pohledu, a to z pohledu – textu, symbolů, času a epistemologie.

Od třetí části se diplomové práce už výhradně zaměřuje na Cormaca McCarthyho a jeho dílo. McCarthy je představen jako autor jižanské gotiky a moderních westernů. Nejprve je stručně nastíněn jeho životopis a představeny jsou i společné znaky pro jeho dílo. Souhrnně McCarthyho dílo zobrazuje násilí a smrt s detailními popisy obojího.

Charakterizace jeho postav je také podobná skrze jeho dílo, postavy jsou často bez domova, hledají své místo na světě a nepředstavují typické hrdiny. McCarthy používá své postavy pro objevování hranic lidství a morálky. McCarthyho styl psaní je často kombinací vysokého i nízkého stylu, nejvíce rozeznatelný element jeho psaní je především minimální používání interpunkčních znamének.

V díle inspirovaném jižanskou gotikou, McCarthy zobrazuje imaginaci pronásledovanou zkázou a zanedbaností. Také využívá jižanské grotesky. Od románu *Krvavý poledník* se dějová linie jeho románů přesouvá k západu a k žánru westernu, i když *Krvavý poledník* v sobě stále prolíná i jižanskou gotiku a je spíše anti-westernem. Trilogie Hranice zobrazuje žánr westernu týkající se konce života na západu, tak jak je pro western typický a zabývající se ekologickými aspekty. Román *Tahle země není pro starý* je představitelem moderního románu, kde jsou koně vyměněni za auta.

V posledních dvou částí se diplomová práce zaměřuje na pojetí hranice a překračování hranice ve vybraných McCarthyho románech, konkrétně zobrazuje díla – *Krvavý poledník*, *Všichni krásní koně*, *Hranice*, *Města na planině* a *Cesta*. *Krvavý poledník* využívá hranici a její přechod jako nástroj pro zobrazení Mexické nespoutané přírody, která není krutá sama o sobě, ale krutost se v ní objevuje pouze v kontaktu s lidmi. *Všichni krásní koně* zobrazují jiný přechod přes hranici, jelikož se hranice výrazně proměnila, jak už bylo zmíněno na konci *Krvavého poledníku*, hranice byla uzavřena a na jejím místě byl vystaven plot, hranice už tedy nemůže být překročena volně, což vede k zániků životního stylu kovbojů. V poslední části práce se zmačujeme na konkrétní interpretaci hraničních přechodů v trilogii Hranice. V práci zjišťujeme, že přechody v prvních dvou knihách trilogie jsou motivovány sny, za nalezení ztraceného života kovbojů v Mexiku. Nicméně cesta přes hranici nikdy nevede k naplnění těchto cílů.

McCarthy ve svém díle, zobrazuje typické aspekty pro literaturu hranice, a to násilí, *frontier myth*, kovboje, vztek, nenávisť atd.

Pro shrnutí, prostředí hranice je použito pro ukázání světa, který není černobílý, dobrý či zlý, ale je kombinací obojího. Proto, postavy jeho románů, které doufají, že za hranicí naleznou ideální svět, nemohou nikdy naplnit své sny, jelikož svět za hranicí je stejně neuspokojivý, jako ten, který opustili.

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