

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND
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UNIVERSITY OF AMMAR THELEDJI- LAGHOUAT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUGAES
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Altruism Versus Egoism in Kinship:
The Case of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*

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By:

Benarab Oussama Azzedine

Chairman: Mr. Mhamdi Nadir

Examiner: Mrs. Bedrina Sarah

Supervisor: Prof. Mohamed Afkir

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work for the special ones who believed in me, and I would like to show endless appreciation for their love and trust.

Acknowledgments

I would like to show my appreciation and thanks to my supervisor Prof. Mohamed Afkir for his trust, and continuous guidance during the process of the dissertation. His challenging perspective has contributed to the quality of the work. Best regards to the members of the jury, and special gratitude and thank to all my teachers

Abstract

An altruist has been a blessing for all but himself, while an egoist has loved nobody but himself. The study has taken McCarthy's *The Road* as a setting to investigate the ambiguous nature and difference between altruistic and egoistic characters on how and why they have behaved in certain ways towards each other in the novel. The objective of this study was to explain how altruism and egoism manifest, and highlighted the importance of kinship as a balancing factor between the two in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* by analyzing the unique and different behaviors of the main characters that are presented as a family. This study included an analysis of the functionality of the kinless characters in the midst of an apocalypse; furthermore, it attempted to clarify the shortcomings of conventional institutions that were present within the novel. The approach of this study was exploratory analytical where qualitative data was collected to use as tools to analyze the characters in the novel. The study made the case that altruism in *The Road* was manifested immensely in kinship through biological factors and religious ideologies with different degrees of justified egoism within the members of the family, whereas characters without kin that operated individually or in groups deemed to be selfish no matter the circumstances after the fall of human civilization in the novel. Therefore, Cormac McCarthy's realistic fiction novel showed that kinship is a necessity to ensure the existence of altruism. *The Road shows that* kinship is a strong protected zone that keeps its members trusting, loving, and connected to each other, and it is a moral duty to protect it. Altruism versus egoism is a vast and complicated topic that has to be discussed further in the future.

Keywords : Altruism ; egoism ; kinship ; *The Road*; realistic fiction.

Résumé:

Un altruiste a été une bénédiction pour tous sauf pour lui-même, tandis qu'un égoïste n'a aimé que lui-même. L'étude a pris *The Road* de McCarthy comme cadre pour enquêter sur la nature ambiguë et la différence entre les personnages altruistes et égoïstes sur comment et pourquoi ils se sont comportés de certaines manières les uns envers les autres dans le nouvel objectif de cette étude était d'expliquer comment l'altruisme et l'égoïsme se manifestent. , et a souligné l'importance de la parenté comme facteur d'équilibre entre les deux dans *The Road* de Cormac McCarthy en analysant les comportements uniques et différents des personnages principaux qui sont présentés comme une famille. Cette étude comprenait une analyse de la fonctionnalité des personnages sans parent au milieu d'une apocalypse ; en outre, il a tenté de clarifier les lacunes des institutions conventionnelles qui étaient présentes dans le roman. L'approche de cette étude était analytique exploratoire où des données qualitatives ont été recueillies pour être utilisées comme outils pour analyser les personnages du roman. L'étude a fait valoir que l'altruisme dans *The Road* se manifestait immensément dans la parenté à travers des facteurs biologiques et des idéologies religieuses avec différents degrés d'égoïsme justifié au sein des membres de la famille, alors que des personnages sans parenté qui opéraient individuellement ou en groupes considérés comme égoïstes, peu importe les circonstances après la chute de la civilisation humaine dans le roman. Par conséquent, le roman de fiction réaliste de Cormac McCarthy a montré que la parenté est une nécessité pour assurer l'existence de l'altruisme. *The Road* montre que la parenté est une zone protégée solide qui maintient ses membres confiants. L'altruisme contre l'égoïsme est un sujet vaste et compliqué qui doit être discuté plus avant à l'avenir.

الملخص:

كان الإيثار نعمة للجميع إلا نفسه ، في حين أن الأناني لم يحب أي شخص سوى نفسه. اتخذت كإطار للتحقيق في الطبيعة الغامضة والاختلاف بين الشخصيات The Road الدراسة مكارثي الإيثارية والأنانية حول كيفية ولماذا تصرفوا بطرق معينة تجاه بعضهم البعض في الهدف الجديد من هذه الدراسة هو شرح كيفية إظهار الإيثار والأنانية. ، وسلط الضوء على أهمية القرابة كعامل من خلال تحليل السلوكيات Cormac McCarthy's The Road موازنة بين الاثنين في الفريدة والمختلفة للشخصيات الرئيسية التي يتم تقديمها كعائلة. تضمنت هذه الدراسة تحليلاً لوظائف الشخصيات عديمة النسب في خضم نهاية العالم. علاوة على ذلك ، حاول توضيح أوجه القصور في المؤسسات التقليدية التي كانت موجودة داخل الرواية. كان منهج هذه الدراسة تحليلياً استكشافياً حيث تم جمع التاريخ النوعي لاستخدامه كأدوات لتحليل الشخصيات في الرواية. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن الإيثار في الطريق تجلى بشكل كبير في القرابة من خلال العوامل البيولوجية والأيدولوجيات الدينية بدرجات مختلفة من الأنانية المبررة داخل أفراد الأسرة ، في حين أن الشخصيات التي ليس لها قرابة تعمل بشكل فردي أو في مجموعات تعتبر أنانية بغض النظر عن أي شيء. ظروف ما بعد سقوط الحضارة الإنسانية في الرواية. لذلك ، أظهرت رواية الخيال الواقعي لكورماك مكارثي أن القرابة ضرورية لضمان وجود الإيثار. يُظهر الطريق أن القرابة منطقة محمية قوية تحافظ على ثقة أفرادها وحبهم واتصالهم ببعضهم البعض ، ومن الواجب الأخلاقي حمايتها. الإيثار مقابل الأنانية هو موضوع واسع ومعقد يجب مناقشته بشكل أكبر في المستقبل

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General Introduction

An altruist gives selfishly to who they are bonded to, disregarding strangers even if they needed help the most. There is a long-standing debate between thinkers and researchers from different fields on whether humans are altruists or egoists by nature. This debate has included the literary world as well where novelists were influenced by the concepts of altruism and egoism in the creation of their characters. Altruism is an act of goodness that benefits others without expecting anything in return, and this idea is similar to the theme of heroism found in the literature. While egoism's goal is to solely fulfill the needs and happiness of the individual that is mostly attached as a characteristic in villains and antagonists. Given the deep interconnectivity between the concepts that grew over time, it became difficult to clearly distinguish the line between the two concepts. Nowadays, characters in literature are not given an ideal side, instead, theories from psychology and biology are integrated to show more realistic human personalities. This allows the readers to reflect on the nature of characters whether altruistic, egoistic, or a mixture between the two.

Throughout history, and since the dark ages, families bounded by blood have been promoted in poems, novels, and playwrights; however, after introducing new social conventions, kinship extended its bonds to relations that are not necessarily blood-related. Kinship is the factor that motivated people to help others. Paul Clough argues in his journal that kinship present a person with moral reasoning that allows altruism to manifest in their actions. he explains how kinship is deeply embedded within western culture and literature. The selflessness of kinship presents miracle-like gifts to its members altruistically as each of them gives to the other without interest. In Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, the themes of altruism, egoism, and kinship, are heavily present, furthermore, they are influenced by different fields and theories that show constant clashes.

The complexity of altruism and egoism cause a challenge in giving a pinpointed definition to each side. During the 1850s, Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, defined

altruism in his *Système de Politique Positive* as the moral based action that is used to increase the pleasures and decrease the pain of others; however, critics have expressed that to perform an altruistic action, the benefactor's motivation must be from their self not from a conventional moral obligation. Henry Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics* drew the definition of egoism by linking the similarities it has with utilitarianism. He explained that while utilitarianism seeks the satisfaction of the majority, egoism's goal is to maximize the benefits of the individual only.

The definitions above have attempted to explain both altruism and egoism, but the problem is how they manifest in kinship within literature since politics, social conventions, religion, and other fields influence the concept. This study will narrowly analyze the concept of altruism and egoism within the scope of kinship through Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. The study will clarify the distinctions between different types of altruism and egoism, to categorize the nature of human actions. It will contain a thorough analysis of characters' altruistic and egoistic behaviors and a comparison between them. Furthermore, it will discuss the ideals of each side of the concepts.

This study aims to analyze the altruistic/egoistic behavior of characters in *The Road* to explain how groups and individuals act towards one another while considering the presence of kinship and the absence of a government that is used to ensure the rights of everyone. Furthermore, it clarifies the weakness within conventional laws in comparison with kinship bonds.

In the studies that previously dealt with altruism and egoism within the literary context, a journal titled *Love Yourself as Your Neighbor: The Limits of Altruism and the Ethics of Personal Benefit in Adam Bede*, by Ilana M Blumberg, dealt with the imbalance between altruism and egoism by focusing on characters in the story and showing how the suffering of others can be used as a selfish gain. Her findings constituted that people are like

a web that cannot exist alone and have to remain connected. The separation and imbalance between their motives represent a connection that shape a community. Another finding is a bachelor thesis by Cecilia Lidberg that dealt with Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* to how hope and goodness remain between the father and the boy and that religious belief no matter how small, it provides a significant motivator to sustain a better vision for the future. Both works dealt with altruism and egoism in the literary context, however kinship needs a further focus, hence, the study's major scope.

This study focuses on a central question: How important are kinships in maintaining a positive human society in case of an apocalypse, while government laws easily fall apart amidst chaos and destruction in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*?

Further sub-questions are listed below:

- 1- How are altruism, egoism, and kinship presented in the literary world?
- 2- How does altruism manifest within the family in *The Road*?
- 3- What are the drawbacks of egoistic social institutions in the novel?

This study argues that:

The Road portrays kinship as an indispensable pillar that maintains an altruistic society regardless of the cruel environment. The themes of altruism, egoism, and kinship within Cormac's literary novel are influenced by real theories in psychology, biology, and religion, where he embodied them within his main characters giving them unique and realistic personalities; in addition, The setting presented in the work attempts to show that egoistic based institutions fail to maintain a positive society.

There is a unique and daring style of Cormac McCarthy's literature, where he presents unfiltered realism settings in his works to enhance the richness of his characters. Cormac also shows the importance of realism in influencing the readers' point of view. The Significance of this study lies in how Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* shows the importance

of kinship in humanity through literature. His work brings light to the uniqueness and strength of family bonds by exposing them to the worst possible danger.

This study deals with altruism and egoism in kinship through the scope of realistic fiction to show as much relevance to reality. This research is exploratory analytical in which it focuses on Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road*. Qualitative data will be collected, analyzed, and compared taking into consideration the ideologies relevant to the study. Thus, a careful reading of quotations, philosophical theories, and points of view will be presented to understand altruism and egoism in kinship alongside its importance, manifestations, and aims in society.

This study will consist of three chapters. The first chapter will focus on exploring altruism, egoism, and kinship where a philosophical background on the first two concepts will be presented alongside argumentative ground to draw the distinctive line between them by using different fields that are relevant to the literary context. The second chapter will focus on Cormac McCarthy's major characters in the family where each character is analyzed according to altruistic or egoistic behavior; in addition, a comparison between the members will be focused on as it shows the nature of how kinship operates. The final chapter will dive into the ideologies of altruism and egoism where a deep analysis will be conducted to compare kinship and other types of systems and how egoism and altruism manifest within them.

**Chapter 1: Altruism,
Egoism, and Kinship
in a Literary Context**

Introduction

Altruism, egoism, and kinship show a variety of perspectives when it comes to the definition of each one. The concepts have been perceived through different scopes in various fields like, philosophy, biology and psychology. This chapter includes details about each concept in their strongest fields; in addition, it shows some of the clash point that occur between altruism and egoism. The purpose of this chapter is to use the explanations and ideas included within as tools for chapter two and three to analyze: the characters' behavior throughout the novel, their influence on each other, the motivation for their actions and reactions, and the ideologies that constructed their nature and personalities.

1.1. A Philosophical Background on Altruism and Egoism:

It is often noticed that people perform actions for the sake of others with the objective of benefiting or saving them even if it would expose the benefactor to danger or cost them something, while others would always seek their egoistic self-interest first in the actions they do to others. Debate spawned over the reasons why would a person behave in such ways. Are altruistic actions genuinely done to help others with no self-gain or is their behavior motivated by pure self-interest? Hobbes expressed the objective of every man is his own good (Hobbes 16)

During the twentieth century, egoism was the favored side in the debate concerning the motivation of human actions towards each other. Hobbes and other philosophical advocates including Nietzsche heavily supported that every human action is ultimately serving the best interest of the doer no matter the nature of the action. On the other side of the debate some few supporters, even though less in numbers, have defended altruism.

Rousseau, Hume, and Adam Smith presented the argument that human motivation can be at least genuinely altruistic sometimes.

The major ground of discussion between altruism and egoism has mostly been empirical; however, some competing arguments with an impact on the issue were by philosophers like Kant who introduced moral theory. Kant argued that the source of motivation for actions should not come from the person, instead these actions should be based on a sense of duty that results in morality (Kant 116). Nevertheless, the primary motivation for all actions is egoistic, where the person would illusively act altruistically. The fact remains that acting out of morality is selfish, because, the person's interest is to be moral and appear moral. Therefore, moral duty does not include altruism since self-interest is always a part of the motivation.

Philosophy in politics indulged in the issue where it suggested that people, governed by a conventional institution, would be prone to live amongst each other peacefully through ensuring protection, prosperity, and freedom for its individuals. This idea motivates citizens to engage in a civilized behavior and contribute to their society since the government would seek the best interest of its citizens at the end and everyone's self-interest is satisfied. Utilitarian figures have contributed in this idea, because, they believed that as long as the egoist's selfish gain is achieved through society, they would continue to function within it with conviction (Broad).

The opposers of egoism that support altruism argued back by claiming that morality does motivate altruistic actions, whereas egoism simply cannot exist in moral behavior. Altruism and morality have a compatibility relationship where they complete one another; in other words, morality serves as the fuel for the engine of altruism, and the latter cannot function without the former (Rachels 81).

1.2. Defining egoism and altruism

Providing fixed definitions to egoism and altruism can be contentious since each side has their radically different perspectives on what the two concepts represent and mean. In this chapter, the focus will be on the fields that are most relevant to Cormac McCarthy's novel, *The Road*.

As already mentioned in the section of *A Philosophical Background on Altruism and Egoism*, philosophers found a common ground that recognizes the ability of people to provide help for others. The issue, however, lies in answering the reason or the motivation of a person to act altruistically. Some of these thinkers believe of the possibility that a person's motivation can be altruistic, while egoists persist that every person's initial motive is to benefit themselves whether to a small or large degree before thinking about the others. These were the contributions of many authors: (Broad), (Feinberg), Sober and (Wilson), (Rachels), (Joyce), (Kitcher). Even though these thinkers expressed a few clash points in their different perspectives on altruism and egoism, they still share a great resemblance. Does this beg the question of what is the behavior that motivates the ultimate desire? and what is the distinction between the desire for others and the desire for the self lies? as for the first question, ultimate desires can be classified and interpreted in practical reasoning. Practical reasoning is the causal process where it gives birth to another desire in order to reach the ultimate desire. For example, a person wants to provide help to a friend of theirs as an ultimate desire, and the best way to help them is to travel sightseeing since both of them enjoy it. The desire of travelling rose to the process as a motivating desire to reach the ultimate desire to help the friend. Practical reasoning sustains the ultimate desire of the person by providing them with other desires. Not all desires are based on practical reasoning as ultimate desires can be

reached without additional ones. Ultimate desires through practical reasoning are behaviors done for their own sake whether the ultimate desire is selfish or self-less (Goldman).

The second question requires a broader and more detailed explanation in order to comprehend the distinction between altruistic and egoistic actions, however, general examples can suffice to pinpoint the differences between them. the desire to remove pain and suffering either mental or physical from others, the will to save someone's life, or the excitement of seeing happiness in others are clear cases of caring about the well-being of others. On the other hand, greed, seeking pleasures of one's self, become the center of fame are fundamentally selfish desires. Egoistic desires are based solely on the pleasure of one's self in avoiding any self-pain or suffering, as this greatly distinct altruism and egoism. While altruists would provide different degrees of sacrifice for the well-being of others, egoists avoid it at all costs.

1.3. Altruism Versus Egoism in Contemporary Literature

This section focuses on the influence of biology, psychology, and socio-politics theories when it comes to altruism and egoism in contemporary literature. Contemporary literature has risen after WW2 where scientific and philosophical concepts started to be included more often in literary works.

The inclusion of each field presented whether strong or weak will be based on its relevancy to Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. These fields have been chosen to optimize the analysis that is provided in the chapters that follow.

1.3.1. The Presence of Biological Altruism in the Non-fiction Genre

After WWI and WWII, writers explored the theories of Darwinism more closely into the literary world. it took different forms and genres, including science-fiction, and realist

novels. Biographies were the most prominent literary genre that has dealt with evolutionary biology.

The altruistic nature of animals inspired stories for children with altruistic lessons embedded within. *Dolphin Heroes*, for example, is a story about a group of dolphins exposing themselves to danger from a shark in order to save a human being. They surrounded the struggling person and started to swirl around to protect him (*Dolphin Heroes 1: Shark Rescue*). In biology, it is commonly observed that numerous organisms, excluding humans, have frequently demonstrated altruistic actions. These demonstrations that are done for others can result in death to those who give altruistically. The loss in this case is the ability to give birth and ensure the continuation of the animal's genes upon his children. The will to perform such actions require a great amount of sacrifice; however, animals are not like humans since the former acts through instinct alone. In order for altruism to correctly manifest, consciousness is a necessity, because the person would be aware of their actions and motives. Altruism has to be driven by one's desire to seek the safety of others instead to be guided by instinct. (Okasha)

The presence of biological altruism is not a strange concept in the animal kingdom, as multiple species with group social structures constantly act altruistically with each other to guarantee their survival. Vervet monkeys for example have a vocal indication strategy that helps alarm their group of a present danger in the area. Even though the screams of the monkey help the others flee, it exposes its location to the predator that could result in death. The altruistic costs to organisms are not necessarily life-threatening, as there are other forms. In the insect world, ants devote their lives to forging, protecting, and contributing to the queen for the sake of the survival of the nest but also would sacrifice their lives without any hesitation. Even though worker ants are not capable of giving offspring as they're sterile, they, nevertheless, contribute greatly to the reproduction of their queen. An additional

example is birds that are capable of caring for and feeding the young offspring in the absence of their parents (Darwin 166).

Biological Altruism showed its presence in literature via realist novels and biographies mostly. *The Price of Altruism* tells the story of George Price that embarked on the journey of scientific attempts to explain altruism. His tale of wanting to answer evolution's greatest riddle motivated him to explore the heights of the Manhattan Project to explain altruism amongst homelessness and despair. In the end, he committed suicide and offered thieves all of his possessions. His tragedy could be the greatest example of genuine altruism.

The existence of altruism is dependent on the side that natural selection favors. In the case of George Price, his overwhelming altruism was his downfall. He sought after changing the lives of the homeless people by giving away all of his possessions; however, these actions did not spark the change he wanted as the homeless people he helped remained the same. If natural selection supports the survival of selfish members of the group, it would mean that altruism cannot evolve within that group leaving egoistic individuals to thrive and give offspring. Therefore, natural selection favors the individual that acts for the sake of itself. Hence, the case of George Price sacrificing himself altruistically to hopeless egoists that would continue to take advantage of him until the end of his life.

Whether Altruistic animal stories or real biographies of kind scientists, group selection theory proved to be weak and it is rarely found in novels because it does not explain the sustainability of altruism. However, section (1.4. The Diversity of Kinship as a Literary Theme) will strengthen the image of altruism by showing how it is manifested in kinships.

1.3.2. The Prominence of Psychological Egoism in Characters

Previously, Egoism was traditionally linked with villainy in literature; however, after the rise of ethical egoism, it influenced the design and nature of characters within novels. The characters found in recent literature hold as many similarities as real human beings. Egoistic characters are no longer considered as necessarily evil as even the protagonists do have a selfish interest. The egoism within characters shows more realistic and believable personalities. The influence of psychological egoism on literature has broken the classical attachment of evil with egoism and altruism with goodness.

The doctrine of “psychological egoism” heavily argues that every human action is ultimately self-serving. It agrees with common sense that a person is capable of performing an action for the sake of others’ well-being, however, no matter the action, it is fundamentally selfish and egoistic. According to psychological egoism, humans do not actually care about the well-being of others, therefore, altruism does not exist. The only reason why some provide help is to gain something in return or avoid any form of pain or displeasure. Like the distinctions in the forms of altruism classifying what is altruistic and what is not as mentioned above, it is as important to distinguish psychological egoism by providing the strong and weak points in psychological egoism. The ideal view in psychological egoism suggests that every attempt of caring, giving, sacrificing for the other altruistically still contain a degree of self-serving motives that are attached to every action performed by any person. The problem is that psychological egoism claims that a person can only act for selfish reasons, while in fact motives can contain a degree of altruism as well as egoism. Therefore, it is impossible to refute the existence of altruism in actions, because egoism is not always the only motivation of performing an action (Hobbes) (Shaver).

1.3.3. Mixed motives versus Purity in the Scope of Realism

Realism as an intellectual and artistic movement was a reaction to the romantic exaggerations and fanciness in Romanticism. The purpose of realist novelists was show artistic style that was compatible with scientific and social theories. Realism was influenced by philosophical ideal instead of literary techniques including psychology. Characters in realist writings often came across conditions and problems that are similar. They find themselves in circumstances of harsh realities where authors would focus on the story according to the nature of the character.

Altruistic actions do not need self-sacrifice in order to consider them a form of altruism like the case of George Price where he wanted to show pure kindness by sacrificing himself for others. actions can remain altruistic even if they contain mixed motives. In the case of Sherlock Holmes objectives, he would go after criminals in order to keep the city of London safer. At the same time, his constant adventure for hunting criminals represents his self-interest, as it his passion to solve riddles and go after the most complicated cases. Regardless of his selfish motive, his goals still remain altruistically driven; in addition, this mixture between altruism and egoism show how realistic the character of sherlock Holmes.

One cannot claim that a fully pure altruistic actions are possible however, unless shown the egoistic part, it remains pure. The human being is not fully capable of understanding his motives given the cognitive complexity humans have. it is important to also distinguish between pure altruism and self-sacrifice, as the former does not contain a loss unlike the latter. For example, if a person isn't capable of attending a group trip due to a tight schedule so, they would recommend another person to join the trip. It is safe to say that this is an example of pure altruism (Kraut).

1.4. The Diversity of Kinship as a Literary Theme

The concept of group selection came as an attempt to explain altruism in natural selection as it was presented by Darwin. In *The Descent of Man (1871)*. Darwin discussed the source of altruism where self-sacrificial individual may be at a disadvantage but it would contribute greatly to the greater good of the group. Darwin summarized that when a person attempts to sacrifice his life rather leave his kin to perish, he would not be able to have kin of his own blood (Darwin 1881). Darwin's suggestion shows that altruism came into existing and evolving between species that operate in groups. However, this idea came to a dead end by the 1960's where G.C. Williams (1966) and J. Maynard Smith (1964) heavily argued that group selection is inherently weak and would only serve for a limited range of effect. Since recent novel literature rely on strong empirical theories, writers lessened their usage of group selection as a tool to show altruism as it has proved to be ineffective.

Group selection was refuted as an explanation of altruism in biology. During the 1960's Dawkins (1976) presented, "subversion from within". Even if altruist members provide the self-risk in exchange with group survival, they would be heavily exploited by the selfish members that will constantly take advantage of their colleagues' altruistic behavior until there are no altruist left within the group. Natural selection would omit group selection's altruism. Even if the group is consisted only of altruistic members, one selfish offspring will easily outrun them and pass his selfish offspring in the future generations. The probability of a selfish mutant arising is high. The 'subversion from within' came as a block that showed the limit in the theory of group selection as an explanation of altruism evolving.

Group selection was not the correct answer to the evolvement of altruistic behavior in natural selection, however, a new theory emerged during 1960's and 1970's originally presented by Hamilton (1964). Kin selection theory has shown that altruism can evolve

without the need of group selection. Where group selection relies on behaving altruistically towards everyone in the group, kin selection discriminates between group members. For example, altruistic group members will refrain from sharing their food with everyone in the pack, instead, their altruism will exclusively cover their own relatives and kin. The genes of kin selection will be passed to the future generations as well whereas the egoistic ones are limited due to the refusal of sharing with others. There is a common misconception that kin selection is considered as the sole influencer of altruism that caused by genes, however, kin selection does not deny social influence can cause altruism to exist as well (Avital and Jablonka).

The notion of kinship in biological altruism is widely accepted given its strong empirical and theoretical arguments. And the same is applied in literature, where writers would often rely on kinship as theme to demonstrate altruism. The theme of kinship has developed into various conceptions according to new social reforms. It is no longer defined by blood relation only. Its various forms also influenced how it is used as a them. the next two sections tackle the types of kinships that are also used in literature by explaining their nature.

1.4.1. Family of Orientation and Family of Procreation

The acceptance of Kinship as a contributor to the existence of altruism is not only biological; because, the concept itself has a long history within different fields. In this section, a distinction between blood related and non-blood related kins are brought to light in order to facilitate the full exploration and analysis of altruism in kinship. What is the difference between a family of orientation and a family of procreation since both are quite similar? And to what extent are they necessary to each other?

A family of orientation is where a child grows and develops, and when that child becomes an eligible responsible adult, they can seek having their own family. A family of orientation is usually a household containing two parents, while in other cases, it is found that other members of the family are also included; for example, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. The responsible members of the family provide altruistic action to their next of kin that consist of education, health, nutrition, and general guidance on how the world functions. After the next of kin is fully prepared and becomes an adult, they would seek at some point of life to create their own family. Usually, the way to achieve a procreative family is via marriage. This process is known as family of procreation.

The existence of both sides is necessary to ensure the continuation of kinship itself within humanity. In order for Kinship to remain present throughout generations, both family of orientation and family of procreation must be attached in a circle where each sides serves the other. Procreative parents with an offspring become an orientation to the children where the children would grow into creating another procreative family. However, there is an important side that has to be clarified concerning non-blood-related kins. If genes are not the only factor of kinship, then what are the other factors? This question is answered in section (1.4.1.1. Fictive Kin and Altruism)

1.4.1.1. Fictive Kin, Empathy, and Altruism

Fictive kin represent relationships that have no blood or legal ties between the people involved. The concept is applied when a person voluntarily includes another person within their life. It can take many shapes; for example, friends, close friends, acquaintances and even neighbors. This section explores voluntary kin and how it can be viewed positively and negatively depending on the mindset, history, or cultural background of the person. It also

answers the crucial question of how fictive kin can be related to altruism; in addition, it includes how empathy facilitates altruistic actions.

Fictive kin can be a weak tie between people as it does not contain a genetic or an institutionalized body to support it, however there are different views, mostly with the new generations, that consider it a strong bond and sometimes even stronger than blood. The reason why fictive kin can be an easily shattering relationship is because of its lack of support from a different source; for example, if a couple decides to marry under no law or religious declaration, that marriage bond is weak as the only existing tie between the two parties are mutual verbal consensus and it can be broken at any time. It is noticed as well that families would not fully trust the social zone of their offspring even if their bond seems strong. One of the biggest challenges for fictive kin to exist is to see people involved accepting the differences between each other, whether in race, culture, religion, or thought. On the other side, there is a different view that considers fictive kin as pure and has a stronger base. The duration of relationships in fictive kin is a major factor that demonstrates the success of voluntary kin. For example; two guys have known each other for more than seven years are more likely to behave with each other as if they're brothers tied by blood. In summary, fictive kin can attain almost unbreakable bonds; however, it is very tricky to make it successful.

As previously mentioned, Kinship preserves the existence and flourishing of altruism between its members; therefore, the same applies to fictive kin. no matter the nature of the kinship, its depth provides openings for altruistic actions to be taken towards others. A fully developed friendship that contain disputes, mutual responsibilities, support, and an abundance of communication is similar if not equal to a family. However, there are cases where depth is not a necessity to find altruistic actions being taken.

Empathy is an emotion we feel when someone else is in distress, and it sometimes result in the desire to help given that certain conditions are met. Batson engaged in studying scenarios in order to study the empathy drive to perform altruistic actions. for example, an experiment contained a process in which separated groups of people were given details about a person often referred to as “the target”. One group showed a high amount of empathy in addition to the will to provide help to the person after being told about the target’s painful medical procedures compared to subjects who were exposed to the target’s “movements” Krebs also showed that subjects tend to be more wanting to help others when the target that is facing difficulties is similar to them. Batson interprets this that people feel more empathy towards people with similarity to them. From Batson’s experimentation, it is safe to conclude that people with similar characteristics tend to help each other more in distress. This can be added to the bowl of fictive kin (Stotland).

1.4.2. Religion and Morality in Literature

Religion and morality have always existed within the realm of literature since the dark ages of the church. The belief and faith in God motivate people to act altruistically and avoid being egoistic by using morality as a façade. In literature, the image of religion is usually used as source of hope to cling onto in times of crisis. Regardless of the struggle that religious beliefs have gone through after the period of existentialism, it is still used in literature in different forms. Its current existence in literature is not to tell tales of heaven and hell, rather its used as a crisis beckon for those in suffering.

“If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest.” (Old Testament 22:25). Religion has hugely contributed in the attempt to motivate people to perform altruistic acts. As God has always

been described as the source of good will, charity, and forgiveness. However, it is an important reminder that actions performed need to be decided by will and not by an obligatory or forceful manner. If we consider a forced action of altruism, it would not be altruistic as it is not performed by will.

Religion is hugely intertwined with altruism as it supports people of faith to sometimes forget about one's self and focus on supporting others that share their faith. People with the same religious beliefs are often prone to perform altruistic actions compared to the general public as it does not necessarily force them to, instead, it teaches them the benefits of a society where altruism is present and manifested.

Conclusion

Most of the scholarly contribution in altruism, egoism, and kinship were in the fields of psychology, biology, and philosophy. These concepts influenced literary works not as a literary technique, but as a new perspective that brings literature closer to reality. This chapter concluded that altruism cannot be sustained through morality, instead it is generated through biological related families and other fictive kins that are not necessarily blood related; in addition, kinship is not only a biological trait, it is also supported by faith and religious beliefs that further contribute to altruistic motives. Egoism is always psychologically included in the person's mind with every action they take even if they do not realize it at first, a human mind is always seeking the best interest of the person in every action even if the motivation is to benefit others. In addition, most of actions contain a mixture between altruism and egoism and there is no pure altruistic actions. The following chapters analyze characters using: the traits of psychological egoism found in characters

explaining the nature of selfishness in individuals as well as in groups. It also includes how kinship and biology influence and motivate altruistic actions of the boy, the father, and the mother, including the religious beliefs that connect different kins. In addition, the mixture between altruistic and egoistic motives are used as a scope to compare the degrees on how altruism and egoism surpass each other in their manifestation according to the needs and objectives of the characters.

**Chapter 2: The
Manifestation of
Altruism and Egoism
Within the Family in
*The Road***

Introduction

With the explanations of the concepts of altruism egoism, and kinship provided in chapter one, this chapter, focuses on the members of the family that represent the major characters in the novel. Each of them is analyzed individually and compared to each other with the purpose of showing the common and different traits of their altruistic and egoistic motivations within their zone of kinship. The objective is to argue that regardless of the altruistic motives of the members, the nature of their actions can be viewed as altruistic or egoistic according to the scope they are perceived with. A comparison between them is included to clarify the different perspectives from the point of view of each member.

2.1. An Overview about McCarthy's *The Road* Plot

The Road takes place after an unknown devastating event that has nearly destroyed the entire earth. Almost everything is either dead or burnt. The sun's light is blocked by grey clouds and ashes. animals are extinct. Human civilization has fallen into ruins along with safety where people either travel in fear and scavenge for food or form cannibalistic groups. The man and the boy that remain without names in the novel are the protagonists that travel together south towards the coast following the road and using a map. They cross the dangerous road with a shopping carts, knapsacks and a pistol with two bullets inside of it. They suffer, hunger, fear, coldness, sickness, danger, and deep conflicts within themselves. The man and the boy search empty buildings for food. The boy is in a constant fear for his father's habitual bloody coughing along with his fear of others and at the same time the desire to help them, while the father goes back and forth between reality and dreams. His

dreams contain a certain comfort as they represent images from his past life before the apocalypse, at the same time, they heavily depress him, because they remind him of his dead wife. The wife was pregnant but committed suicide by herself after the boy is born. She failed to convince her husband that this world is not safe and it will eventually end in being raped and devoured by the cannibals.

The man and the boy witnessed and experienced different situations with people and events. Their first encounter with cannibals was where they came across a member of the human eating group. The cannibal dressed in casual clothes of modern times tries to persuade them to join the group and help the injured members while the father is pointing his gun at him. The situation ends up with the father shooting the man after he looked at the boy like a hungry animal. The second encounter was when they found an abandoned building with a locked basement searching for food. They found human prisoner who were kept as livestock for another group of bad guys, they ran away fleeing before that group returns. Searching for food was a consistent habit to be able to continue their path towards the south. On the regular basis scraps of left overs are found here and there on their way. There rare occasions where they were able to find food that is enough for days. For example, they found an underground shelter designed to protect from bombs that contained stocks of canned food, kitchen supplies, tools, clean water, and gas.

Cannibals were not the only kind of people they met. They came across lone travelers like a dying man that was struck by a lightning. They met Ely, an old man that can barely see, where the boy took pity and felt empathetic towards him. In fact, the boy felt empathetic towards every person or creature that his eyes sat upon except for the bad guys. Every encounter or dispute the father and the boy experience is rich with aspects of altruism, egoism, and a mixture between them.

After a long series of continuous suffering, they reached the coast and observed the sea. There was a major disappointment drawn upon them as they find it gray and lifeless like everything else. Nevertheless, the father did not give up because the boy is his warrant, a messenger of God if not God himself. They continue surviving until the man can no longer do that when his lungs give up and die. The boy spent three days beside the dead body of his father until he decides to apply what his father told him. Before the man died, he tells his boy that he has to continue no matter what. The boy meets a family of a father, a wife, a son, and a daughter where they decide to let him join them. In the end the mother expressed the same idea his father had, which is that the boy is the breath of God upon humanity.

The novel heavily focuses on what would happen if the social construct happens to fall. Things like names, trust, help, future would disappear and the only remaining aspect is survival.

2.2. Blood is Thicker than Water: The Strength of the Family

The bond between people in society is prone to be shattered when civilization is no longer existing, McCarthy describes the gradual horrifying events happening after the apocalypse happened,

People sitting on the sidewalk in the dawn half immolate and smoking in their clothes. Like failed sectarian suicides. Others would come to help them. Within a year there were fires on the ridges and deranged chanting.

The

screams of the murdered. By day the dead impaled on spikes along the road.

What had they done? He thought that in the history of the world it

might even be that there was more punishment than crime but he took small comfort from it. (McCarthy 28)

People may provide help to those in need at first but with time, selfishness is the only existing factor that manifests through chaos, what is known before as crimes has disappeared, because there are no laws preventing them.

However, with the two main characters, the man and the boy, mutual altruism remain strongly present. The parental love of the man is not expressed in words like: I love you son neither is boy's; nevertheless, he would try to provide the son with everything he needs without any expectations in return. On the other side the boy would always persuade his father to reconsider his actions by refusing to take everything the father gives him. Instead, the boy would prefer to share because he wants to take care of his father and he would watch himself so he would not worry his father. Both perform altruistic actions towards each other with the motivation taking care of one another. A simple example shown in Cormac's novel is when the father used the last half packet of cocoa powder into his own bowl of hot water and started blowing at the rim to decrease the heat that could hurt the boy. And the boy reacted like this:

You promised not to do that, the boy said.

What?

You know what, Papa. He poured the hot water back into the pan and took the boy's

cup and poured some of the cocoa into his own and then handed it back.

I have to watch you all the time, the boy said.

I know.

If you break little promises you'll break big ones. That's what you said.

I know. But I wont. (McCarthy 29)

In the novel, they provide support to each other with no hesitation, they related by blood. A kinship that is far stronger than social construct. This shows that blood related kin will always act altruistically no matter the circumstances. Even if altruism exists, it is finite and will disappear with time if not enforced or supported by other motivations.

2.2.1. The Father's Altruism Bounded in Kin

The nameless man with unknown details about his past life in the pre-apocalypse shows a full devotion to the well-being of his son and nobody else. His care towards the boy has no limits, while his care for any other creature, either human or animal, have very little room if not none. However, the man does not cross inhumane lines even if they seem to be logical in some events. He would avoid causing pain, suffering, or be overly selfish towards others. Past painful memories of his dead wife haunt him and wishes that he considered her opinion in the matter of survival. Further details about this part will be provided in section (2.2.3. The Mother's Paradox)

The father's altruism towards his boy was extreme and self-sacrificial in many events and situations, he would do his most effort to avoid exposing the boy to any dangerous situation which is very effortful considering they live in a post-apocalyptic world. The father will ensure the safety of every nutrient before consuming it:

What is it, Papa?

Morels. It's morels.

What's morels?

They're a kind of mushroom.

Can you eat them?

Yes. Take a bite.

Are they good?

Take a bite.

The boy smelled the mushroom and bit into it and stood chewing. He looked at his father. These are pretty good, he said. (McCarthy 34)

another incident like this happens later in the novel where both were starving horribly. The father came upon a farm with apples trees around. He found a bunch of dead apples laying around for a while, he ate an entire one, maybe out of hunger at first, but it was to check if they were safe to eat regardless of their taste. It is important to note that the man had a good scientific knowledge about different things which give an explanation of him being able

to know when something is edible or not. The altruistic actions of the father are not only about verifying food, he also avoids bringing his son along when he attempts to scavenge for

food in abandoned, in addition, he always leaves the pistol with the boy to fend for himself in case a bad person shows up. The father actions towards his kin are certainly altruistic; however, it is not the same case for others. The man would prefer not to help nor share anything with anyone for two major reasons: his lack of trust, and sharing food would make starvation worse. The man continuously showed his egoism towards others no matter the

circumstances. They came across a dying man that was struck by lightning and the father refused to help him on the grounds that it would expose them to danger and the man is not

going to survive in the first place. Another incident is when the boy found another little boy and did his outmost desperate effort to convince his father but the father still refused claiming that little boy already has a family. An incident where it shows the extremity of the man, when he refused to let his son to keep a lost dog he found on the road (McCarthy 34,72,69).

The man may show unquestionable egoism towards any other person beside his kin, he, however, would not go as far to hurt anyone or anything without a reason for self-defense. He expects nothing from others and he assumes the others would expect nothing from him. Kin selection here is strongly and exclusively present within the father's altruism.

2.2.2. The Boy's Purity

The man's boy, a pure soul newly born into the world, ventures with his father across the dead violent lands of *The Road*. The boy is exceptionally naïve and innocent and has a tendency to be sacrificial for the sake of the others without exceptions unlike his father. He is the bearer of moral responsibility of remaining a part of the "good guys" that don't cause harm. It is important to analyze the boy's altruistic character by asking the question of: What is the motive behind his direct and unthought altruistic actions towards others?

It is true that the boy is weak and needs his father's protection which may cause a misconception that shows the egoistic needs of the man's survival for his own sake; however, if that was the case, the boy would not tend to help anyone else. Throughout the entire novel, and at the same time, he continuously tries to help the man in every situation regardless of his lack of experience, knowledge, and strength.

As previously mentioned in section (1.4.1.1. Fictive, Empathy, and Altruism) where Batson conducted an experiment concerning the effects of empathy as a motivator to people to perform altruistic actions in helping others, the boy is heavily influenced by similar emotions that function as a triggering factor to his altruism. Throughout the novel he is emotionally affected and wants to help every person he comes across. However, it is important to note that according to Batson, people tend to help others who are similar to them, but this does not apply in the case of the boy. There was an incident where the boy wanted to help another little boy that appeared to be alone and afraid (McCarthy 72), this one case at least proves Batson's point to be true since both of them are young and afraid of danger. But the rest of other incidents have a lot less if not no similarities at all between the boy and the others. Regardless of that, the boy still attempts to show his altruism unconditionally.

In order to understand the motive of the boy behind his altruism, it is crucial to examine the influential aspects he was exposed to. The constant care and attention given to him by his father has developed the boy's understanding of how altruism works in practice. John Locke (1632-1704) dealt with the theory of the Blank Slate which says that every human is born with clean sheet of paper that will be nurtured by the surroundings. The boy was raised in a caring environment by his father even in the midst of an apocalyptic period. The man's indirect influence of the boy caused him to be caring and altruistic, however, this does not explain his unconditional desire to help others nor does it explain the motivation. If the boy should've become like his father where he would show his care and altruism towards his kin only and that's not the actual case. The boy has a deeper spiritual and moral motive. This motive is explained in chapter three, section (3.1.1. Carrying the Fire: The Symbol of Humanity) where the religious and metaphysical aspects of altruism are analyzed.

2.2.3. The Mother's Paradox

The man's wife, also the boy's mother appears only in the man's dreams and memories. She committed suicide using obsidian after she failed to convince her husband to that all three of them are better dead than to live in a cruel world. It is paradoxical and extremely rare for a mother to support death for her kin; however, it happens to be the less horrible in both scenarios. The man's argument was to preserve their lives and move with life as survivors, but he realizes that, in his view, she was right. This section explores the contrasting perspective of the wife and how her egoistic desire is altruistic at heart.

Altruistic actions with egoistic motives are the typical scenarios that exist within humans, yet the mother expressed it in opposite placements. The mother's fear and love for her child is unquestionable, and the first reaction she made in the moment where a series of explosions started to happen was to cradle her belly, pregnant with the boy and asking her husband "what is it?" (McCarthy 45). A mother cat would choose to take the life of her kittens if there's an imminent danger from a predator. It appears that the woman in the novel debated continuously about considering suicide as an alternative solution to protect the family from a fate worse than death, "Sooner or later they will catch us and they will kill us. They will rape me. They'll rape him. They are going to rape us and kill us and eat us." (McCarthy 48). However, she was not able to persuade her husband and gave up on the idea the night when she gave birth to the child, expressing that her emotions have died the moment he was born (McCarthy 48). Her gruesome expression represent that she is suffering a psychological trauma caused by her worst fears of what could happen to her child. Unable to stop it or change her husband's mind, she decides to give up and take her own life instead. She continuously expresses how horrible she is for leaving as well as it is a price she wants to pay voluntarily, so she would not be costed a graver consequence.

Altruism is not confined to taking actions to benefit others, it can also shape in acts that protect others from harm's way. In the perspective of the mother, death is a protection compared to the life that the man and the boy survive through. In the eyes of her husband, she was selfish. However; later on, he told his son to do the same at a dangerous situation (McCarthy 95). It happened when they found human livestock inside a house, they ran away in hiding from the cannibals. The only difference is that the father would not be able to kill his son, so he asked his boy to do it to himself. The father presents a deeper paradox. He constantly protects his son from danger altruistically but he would egoistically ask him to commit suicide.

In conclusion, both the father and the mother have mixed motives with different placements. The mother would take the life of her own son depriving him from it to protect him from harm, while the father would help him through life altruistically, because deep inside, his egoistic motive is to see the boy alive, even if it could end in a horrible way.

2.3. Father and Son Connection

The protagonists' hellish journey of surviving an apocalyptic world still maintains a father and son connection. The relationship between the boy and the man deepens during the course of the novel. It develops from a simple series of tasks that each side perform to an unbreakable bond. Each one has regrets and a few angry reactions towards each other, yet it does not result in hatred. They have invested themselves to their zone of kin. Both sides worry greatly about each other's health, nutrition, and safety. For example, the boy started to have horrible nightmares concerning his father's death, the horrible images developed since the man is sick and his bloody coughing continuously increase in the novel (McCarthy 157).

2.3.1. The Contrasting Purposes

The boy and the man are truly connected; however, their purposes are completely different. The purpose of the man is to guide his son and help him understand how to survive and trust only himself. He taught him how to hide, scavenge, ration, and analyze the surroundings. The son, on the other hand, would sacrifice his safety for the sake of helping others. These opposite perspectives shape a very interconnecting relationship between the father and his son.

The man's self-awareness of his inevitable death of his sick lungs, pushes him to teach his son how to survive on the road by himself. He performs altruistic actions towards the boy, at the same time, he provides instructions about how can the boy rely on himself as well. The man wants the boy to remain alive long enough until he comes across another group of people that are good. His purpose increases his egoism towards everyone he comes across in the novel. Not only does he not trust anyone, but also puts the boy's survival as the ultimate and only goal. On the other side, the son does not care about remaining alive. It is true that he is scared of danger and being hurt by others, but he holds a different purpose. The goal of the boy is to preserve the moral code of being "the good guys". To him, good guys mean helping others in need and never hurt anyone. To him, being altruistic to others hold more meaning than just surviving. A good example for this is when the boy found another little and wanted to see him so bad, and could not let go of the idea of wanting to help him:

I want to see him, Papa.

There's no one to see. Do you want to die? Is that what you want?

I dont care, the boy said, sobbing. I dont care.

The man stopped. He stopped and squatted and held

him. I'm sorry, he said. Dont say that. You musnt say that. (McCarthy 72)

Surviving is considered as a secondary objective to the boy. While the man considered as the primary and only objective. The boy wanted to help others, but the man would always refuse. Yet their contrasting purposes will influence each other, as this will be in details in the next section of (2.3.2. Exchanged Influence).

In conclusion, the father refuses the boy's altruistic motives, because, he sees them as dangerous and threatening. And the boy persists to perform altruistic actions instead of following the man's egoistic views towards others. Nevertheless, the boy is incapable of enforcing it on his father, but he is somehow relieved a little knowing that both of them do not hurt anyone else.

2.3.2. Exchanged Influence

The constant struggle between the boy and the man with their purposes results in influencing each other's characteristics. Where they start to show changes in their behavior. Most of these new features are positive and strengthen their relationship, but it sometimes become dark and depressing.

The communication part was mostly one-sided, the man tries to communicate with the boy in case he notices a distress in his psychological state; however, the boy prefers to keep his thoughts to himself. It improved later on after a series of events but it was not the only thing that developed. The boy, being a child, started to give up on things like toys, he threw away his flute and focused more on helping the man in scavenging for more useful things like food (McCarthy 134). His communication also improved. However, their purpose was not to help the man, as he used this skill to be more convincing in helping others by providing logical arguments. For example, after the event of coming across the little boy and

the stray dog, the boy tried to convince the man to let them join arguing that the dog could help in scavenging for food and he would share his own food with the boy (McCarthy 73).

The boy's influential attempts were consistent, but most of the time they were not successful. One major event was where the man accepted the boy's plead to help an old man that could barely see. The boy convinced the man to give him some food and the father accepted and handed him a tin of fruit cocktail, after that the boy persuaded the man to let the blind man have dinner with them during the night. The father accepted as well calling it the best deal he could have and there is no negotiation about keeping the old man with them the next day (McCarthy page 137,138,139). Another influential factor was when the father started listening to the ideas and opinions of the boy.

The manifested influence included the man accepting to be altruistic towards another person. However, his ultimate motive was to satisfy his son's desire to help another person. Sharing food with the old blind man was counted as a cost. In addition, the man learned to show empathy towards others unlike before, where he apologized about saying anything offensive about those who died," I'm sorry about what I said about those people." (McCarthy 169). The boy seemed extremely happy to see such a thing evolve in front him as he did not leave the sight of his guest. He provided help whenever he saw an opportunity even in the simplest things. He did not care that the man was dirty and smelled bad. The boy's conscious and altruism grew wider and bigger as he realizes that his father has limited time left, and he did whatever he could as a child to help ease some of his responsibilities, and felt extremely guilty and sorrowful whenever he made a mistake whether big or small. The boy would do his utmost best to lessen the pressure off his father's shoulders.

In conclusion, the exchanged influence was mostly positive and altruistic rather than growing egoistic perspectives. Which deepened the kinship relation between the father and his son.

2.4. The Others in the Eyes of Family

The family, consisting of three members, one is deceased, and the two others venture on the road and surviving day after day. They were kin and felt alone in the world with no one else to rely on. Each of them perceived the others in their way, and every member tried to show that their individual opinion is the correct one.

The woman tried to explain that the world has fallen into complete chaos, where everyone survivor out there is nothing but a simple human eating creature. To her there was no faith or hope left in this world; therefore, only extreme egoism is expected from everyone. The father agrees with the same idea; however, he slightly believes that there are still good people out there and the world. he believes that since he and his son still exist in this cruel world, others must be as well. Nevertheless, he would not trust or approach anyone with the intent of befriending them as he knows well, it could be life-threatening. The boy has a completely different view. His nativity makes him assume that everyone deserves help and support, he would always propose that each person they meet could be a one of the good guys. His innocence and basic faith in humanity motivates him to be completely altruistic towards everyone, except if those people turn out to be bad. He would still prefer to avoid them rather than hurt them.

The bottom line, kinship remains as the only zone in which a family could still see through each other clearly, while the rest of the world and others become dark silhouettes that still require a flash light to expose their intentions.

Conclusion

The motive of each member of the family is altruistic at heart; however, it can be perceived as egoistic from the point of view of other family members. The self-sacrificial nature of the mother is considered to be egoistic according to the father; however, the latter understands that her interest is the protection of the boy from a fate worse than death. The boy's innocent perspective tries to show and influence his father to consider everyone as fictive kin and they must be helped, while the father perceived his altruistic motives as dangerous, self-harming, and kin's harming. He attempts to convince his boy to be more self-considering and avoid being altruistic to those who are not his family with the objective of protecting him from other characters that may take advantage of his self-sacrificial behavior. Each action of the family members is altruistic towards each other, but they contain a degree of self-interest. Regardless of the boy's nativity, he and his family members perceive others cautiously if not dangerous and never consider safety around them.

**Chapter 3: The
Ideologies of
Altruism, Egoism,
and Kinship in *The
Road***

Introduction

The characters' analyses in chapter two focused on the family members explaining their altruistic and egoistic nature towards each other and others. Chapter three focuses on the ideologies that drive and nurture the nature and personalities of the characters. It is very important to analyze the sources and reasons of the family members and other characters' behavior and the way they act in the novel. The objective of this chapter is to pin point the beliefs and occurred events that motivate and shape the characters, and how these ideologies take effect in their actions and what the results of these actions are on society in *The Road*.

3.1. God and Kinship

The idea of God's protection is often bestowed upon kinships amongst people. When two people pursue creating a family, they form an oath in God's name to bond each other not only in the eyes of witnesses but also spiritually. The goal is to have a supernatural being to watch and protect their kin from harm and destruction. In *The Road* God has abandoned the people, leaving them in chaos, despair, and unspeakable crimes. Kins are rare to find as there is no super being watching over them anymore. The absence of such a being leaves kins living in a pressuring atmosphere where they feel lost, hateful, and longing towards any trace of their creator (McCarthy 27)

Regardless of the decreasing number in kins, their purpose still remain which is to sustain and preserve the image of God in the apocalypse. This is with the goal of showing that morals and altruistic actions have to continue existing.

3.1.1. Carrying the Fire: The Symbol of Humanity

Carrying the fire is a symbol that is repeated throughout the novel. The exact meaning of it remains ambiguous, but it is perceived as a moral responsibility that has to be carried forward no matter the circumstances. It represents hope and what is left of the protection of God to continue surviving in the cruel world. The phrase also constitutes a spiritual ideal that bring kins closer together in difficult times.

Decency in the world is longer existing after the fall of human civilization; however, the man tells his son that it is their moral code to carry the fire of decency in the road. They would refrain from murder and committing inhumane acts. The image of fire traditionally represents light that shines upon civilizations and carrying it is the efforts to preserve a civilized mindset in an uncivilized world. before the man died, he told his son to protect the purity and goodness of the fire throughout the road and never give up as his father would become a spirit and keep his son company (McCarthy 234)

In the perspective of the father, goodness still exists among others, where there will always be a form of protection towards the ones who need it:

Do you remember that little boy, Papa?

Yes. I remember him.

Do you think that he's all right that little boy?

Oh yes. I think he's all right.

Do you think he was lost?

No. I dont think he was lost.

I'm scared that he was lost.

I think he's all right.

But who will find him if he's lost? Who will find the little boy?

Goodness will find the little boy. It always has. It will again (McCarthy 236).

The spiritual aspect of carrying the fire is deeply embodied in the image of God. He spreads all the goodness within the world and it shall never be lost as long as there is still faith within the people. The man faith, although in decline (McCarthy 96), teaches his son that faith will always bring good things in his way.

The ideology of carrying the fire is the act of preserving faith in God, in order to win his protection.

3.1.2. The Father's Metaphysical Objective

It is obvious that the father does his best to ensure the protection and the well-being of his son. He would deprive himself from sleeping during uncounted days when his son gets sick (McCarthy 209). The father's objective was not only to protect his son from danger, as his days being alive were decreasing, he held a different objective in mind.

"He knew only that the child was his warrant. He said: If he is not the word of God God never spoke." (McCarthy 4). The father considers the survival of the boy as a mission given to him by God himself. His son's purity is the only remaining hope left in humanity. He would sacrifice his morals of carrying the fire for the purpose of ensuring the boy's continuous path on the road.

During the last moments of the man's life, he expressed an idea to his son that even after he departs and dies, he would still accompany his son. He told his son that he only has to think about him and remember him, in addition to talk to him whenever he needs him (McCarthy 235). The religious ideal expressed here is that with the faith, the boy would not lose hope and would continue moving on.

The flag Bearer, the person who carries a flag during war, is a prestigious position in the army that symbolizes what soldiers are fighting for. It serves as an indicator to make it easy for soldiers to gather around it and not get lost. This is similar to the boy, however, instead motivating a war, the boy motivates the belief that God still exist and he is protecting the good people.

To the father, Altruism would only continue to exist if and only if the boy survives. The son would inspire others, and restore their fate in humanity.

3.1.3. The Relationship Between Separated Kins

With the presence of religious moral in families, it is only natural that it becomes a conventional aspect that links different kins together. Close friends of married Christian couples are often tasked to become godmothers and godfathers of the babies during the process of baptism. A godfather for example would promise to protect and support the child of his friend throughout his life. It is a spiritual task that keeps different kins attached to each other not only socially or biologically, but also religiously.

After the death of the man in the novel, the boy spent three days alongside the body of his father. Later on, a man with a rifle approached him and spoke to him. The reaction of the boy was to immediately point the gun left to him towards the armed man. He saw him as a threat because he did not know who he is and what are his intentions. The situation did not escalate however, where the visitor asked the boy a few questions about his father and how much belongings does the boy have. It appears that the armed man came to offer the boy to join him. The boy asked a few questions like, “are you one of the good guys?”, “do you have a little boy?” (McCarthy 237,238,239). The man answered directly with the first and second

questions, but he did not understand what the boy meant by carrying the fire, yet he answered positively.

The boy asked these questions in order to determine the nature of the stranger. He wanted to know if he had kins of his own, because the boy believed that kinship provides a person with sense of good. A family would trust another family because they would have similar morals and principles.

The family of that man consisted of a mother, a boy, and a girl. When the boy met the mother of the children, she expressed extremely similar beliefs that boy's father believed in:

The woman when she saw him put her arms around him and held him. Oh, she said, I am so glad to see you. She would talk to him sometimes about God. He tried to talk to God but the best thing was to talk to his father and he did talk to him and he didnt forget. The woman said that was all right. She said that the breath of God was his breath yet though it pass from man to man through all of time. (McCarthy 241)

The woman believed that the breath of the boy was the breath of God across the cruel world. she believed what the boy's father believed when it comes the spiritual nature and altruistic essence that the boy had.

In conclusion, kinship share a spiritual connection that ensure safety and trust between them. each member would be able to contribute his best without being taken advantage of. The boy is perceived as a prophet on earth, and kins understand without informing each other that it is their duty to protect them even if they're not related by blood.

3.2. Conventional Society Versus Kinship

In kinship, family is always considered as a priority no matter the circumstances, while a conventional society ruled government institutions support individual progress as a primary goal. Each side has its own features and functions according to its bases.

The characteristics that shape kinships vary in type and source, yet they remain different from conventional society. People that consider others as family are either related by blood, religion, marriage, long standing friendships, and emotions. The strong bonds can withstand pressure and external problems because of the faith that it contains. The problem with kinship is that it requires an amount of sacrifice that differs from a situation to another. In McCarthy's novel, the amount of altruism and care existing within the boy and his father towards each other knows no limits. Both of them never had the slightest intention of causing pain or leaving the other's side.

A conventional society is built differently where the participating parties, usually a vast amount of people, do not necessarily share the same characteristics as kinship. It is instead, bonded by a series of laws and regulations that the majority are relatively satisfied with. The ideals of a conventional society are not about supporting each other, it is about agreeing on not hurting one another.

Kinship and conventional societies differ to a large extent even if they share a few common points. Kinships have a higher amount of altruism compared to the abundance of egoism that institutionalized societies have. Even if a society attempts to copy some aspects of kinship and apply it in concept like charity, the goal remains egoistic regardless. For example, companies would donate money and resources to charities but with the motive of avoiding taxes.

3.2.1. The Problem with the Collective Selfishness

An egoist would always pursue his best interest no matter the cost, and would always seek to avoid any hindrance or pain to himself. The social construct, no matter how impactful, influential, and convincing, remains weak.

The novel describes unfathomably horrific scenes of chaos, murder, madness, suffering, and famine. A series of detonating explosions wiped out human civilization along with most of the living creatures on setting in the novel. With the fall of the social construct, the agreement between people in avoiding hurting each other, has fallen as well. When people create an agreed upon ideal that is based on mutual benefits, all forms of humane behavior will disappear along with the broken agreement. McCarthy describe the quick chaos manifesting in society in this passage:

People sitting on the sidewalk in the dawn half immolate and smoking in their clothes. Like failed sectarian suicides. Others would come to help them. Within a year there were fires on the ridges and deranged chanting. The screams of the murdered. By day the dead impaled on spikes along the road. What had they done? He thought that in the history of the world it might even be that there was more punishment than crime but he took small comfort from it (McCarthy 28).

After only a year, all forms of decency and care for other has disappeared where no one is thinking about the other. Egoism spread with anarchy, murder, death, and lawlessness.

The major problem of collective selfishness is that it does not contain faith or actual altruism towards others. as long as it exists, its sole purpose is ensuring mutual selfish benefit.

3.2.2. Honor Amongst the Selfish

Even after the world got destroyed and fallen societies burnt to the ground, humans are social creatures that remain to operate in groups. The communities that formed in the apocalypse did not have the goal to restore order, instead it sought its own benefits at the cost of everything and everyone.

These communes were composed of the wretched kind of people. They were thieves, killers, criminals, and cannibals. Their sole reason of grouping together is to increase their strength and to ensure their survival and nothing else. There was no kinship between them as they would sacrifice anyone for their own sake. None of them had any basic humane principle. A good example of this when the father and the boy spotted a fireplace in the forest that seemed to be abandoned. They attempted to explore the area and what they found was an extremely traumatic scene. There was a dead body of an infant half eaten and cooked on the fire that left the boy speechless with fear to the extent his father thought he would never say a word again (McCarthy 167).

Cooperation does exist within these groups of cannibals however the moment that mutual interest stops; their agreement stops. The man and his son first came across one of these groups and ended up killing one their members by a shot in the head, they ran away and returned to scan the area and retrieve their goods, what they found was a mixture of left overs of an unknown body. Those intestines were the left overs of the body that the man shot. His own group butchered his body and took it as a consumable meal for later (McCarthy page 60). Another encounter is when they found a basement that was loaded of people being kept as livestock. The people there were not killed directly, instead, the cannibals would remove limbs from those people and keep them alive so nothing goes to waste (McCarthy 93).

The mutual agreement between these groups was based on their ruthlessness, animalistic behavior, and unnecessary conflict. They would feed on the weakest humans while avoiding problems with each other as it would not be in their best interest.

The ideology of these groups was simple: survive at the cost of others. There was no honor amongst them or any sheer of altruism. The only factor that gathers them is their selfishness as they have no faith, trust, or desire to have them in the first place.

3.3. The Behavior of the Kinless

In the course of the novel, the man and the boy met three kinless individuals, a burnt man, Ely the blind old man, and the thief. Each of them had nothing but desperation and helplessness in their eyes and despair. If these characters did not find anything to take advantage of, they would simply remain at distance, and if they had an opportunity to help someone, they would not. They were pure egoists regardless of the circumstances.

The first man they encountered on the road was the roasted man. They were walking behind him at a slow pace. the man sat down and appeared to be hopeless as he suffered unfixable burns that would eventually result in death. One eye was shut from fire, his head remains without hair left as fire burned it leaving only some flesh and skin covering his skull. The father estimated that he was struck by a lightning. The dying man sat down and let the two others pass by while putting his head down in shame (McCarthy 42).

The state of that man was filled with acceptance of death and no expectation of help. A normal person would declare a distress signal to attract help from others even if they have to beg for it. In the light of egoism, an egoist would expect the same psychology they have where no one would actually sacrifice anything for them as they would not sacrifice something for others. that is why the dying man had no expectation of help from the father

and his son, where the only thing he did was to avoid eye contacting to avoid any possible conflict at that state.

The second encounter was when they met Ely, an old man. He was dirty from head to toes and smelling more horribly than a homeless man. His reaction towards the boy and man was instantly giving up his bag and telling them he has nothing for them to take, as he thought they were robbers. The father told him, "We're not robbers", Ely, surprised, replied with, "what are you?" (McCarthy 136). The experience of the old man has taught that anyone he meets on the road is either a robber or a cannibal. The boy saw this as an opportunity to help fearful man by providing him with food, and he convinced his father to let him stay and have dinner with them for the night. In section (3.3.2 The Psychology of the Kinless), a further and deeper analysis will detail the mindset and personality of people who are deprived of having any kin.

The final encounter of another individual happened when the boy and his father were scavenging a boat for supplies and resources close to the shore. A thief stole everything they had leaving nothing behind. After they pursued him and found him, he directly pulled a knife from his pocket ready to assault the man his boy. However, after noticing that the father is pointing a gun at him, he immediately stepped back in fear. It appears that this thief was an outcast from another commune and his finger were cut off as he tried to hide them. The father kept ordering the outcast from to drop the knife and get away from the cart that is filled with all the goods. After the retrieval of the goods the thief was stripped of clothes and left naked on the road, as the father deemed it only fair for what he did to them (McCarthy 215,216). However, they returned his clothes back to where they were after the boy completely refused this act from his father.

The thief begged to be forgiven after he noticed a life-threatening situation. He did not attempt to return the cart to the boy and his father at first since he wanted to fight them to death with a butcher knife. The only existing behavior in the outcaste was egoism, as he did not feel guilt or remorse. He desired the goods and took them all, nevertheless, he begged for his life and made himself look like the victim after he had no chance of taking what's not his.

As a summary, the kinless behave egoistically and expect the same from others. They would not ask for help or support, instead they would either accept their fate or beg for forgiveness after being cornered.

3.3.1. The Psychology of the Kinless

A series of conversations between the father and Ely occurred during their meeting where the true psychology of the kinless places its cards into the game. Ely found it difficult to understand the general descriptions and words that the father expressed. They were not difficult sentences. Ely found this difficulty because they were vague and unusual given the world that they live in currently. There are three major aspects to analyze in Ely. The first is his lack of expecting anything good from anyone even after receiving altruistic actions. the second aspect is his extreme distrust of everything and everyone. The final aspect is the completely lack spiritual faith or in God

After the father being convinced, he suggested to Ely that he joins them to eat with them for the night as the conversation went like this:

When did you eat last?

he said.

I dont know.

You dont remember.

I ate just now.

Do you want to eat with us?

I dont know.

You dont know?

Eat what?

Maybe some beef stew. With crackers. And coffee.

What do I have to do?

Tell us where the world went.

What?

You dont have to do anything. Can you walk okay?

I can walk. (McCarthy 140)

Ely's last expectation is to be altruistically invited for dinner without having to do anything in exchange. The events that he went through as an outcast made him forget what it means to be helped by anyone else.

Before dinner, the man spoke to Ely asking details about his age, name, "what's in your pack", but later on after eating and drinking coffee, it seems that Ely has lied about almost every information he gave the father. His not is not even Ely. He explains that he does not trust the father and does not want anyone to know where he was, what he was doing, and who he was doing it with. He argues that the less that is being said the better as it would decrease any chances of danger from anyone (McCarthy 144,145). The psychological trauma that Ely has went through left every fiber of his being wanting to remain invisible to everyone, where no help, care, or altruistic action can fix it. He wishes to be dead but he even considers this to be something luxurious. By tomorrow when the boy furtherly helped the old man by giving him food, the father suggested that he should thank him to which Ely

exclaimed that he would not have helped him even if he could. The father said, “what if it hurts him?” Ely thought it would hurt the boy if he does not help the boy if he could. The father rejected saying, “No, that’s not why he did it.” At the end neither of them understood why the boy wanted to help Ely so much, because both of them are egoists towards people they have no kinship with (McCarthy 146).

The final aspect is his complete absence of faith in God. He said, “When I saw that boy I thought that I had died.” To which the father replied with, “You thought he was an angel?”, and Ely countered with, “I didnt know what he was. I never thought to see a child again. I didnt know that would happen.” (McCarthy 145). Ely thought that being with the last God on the road at times like these would be a horrible thing. This is the egoistic aspect where a person would not want to feel pain or suffering around them. Ely has given up on the idea that God exists a long time ago and the remaining survivors are the prophets that spread this news. He believes that it is better for everyone to just die and disappear.

In conclusion, the individual egoist would never think of helping anyone else no matter the circumstance. They would only seek their selfish needs disregarding any costly consequences on others.

3.4 The Ideal Altruist and Egoist

The ideal altruist and egoist are the people who take the extreme opposite sides of the spectrum. Each represents his ideals and beliefs towards everything.

The ideal altruist is the boy in which he is always ready to give and forgive. His actions throughout the novel have expressed nothing but happiness and hopefulness towards an altruistic mindset. He would do his best to help another person even if it paying a certain price in exchange. At the same time, he would prefer to refrain from causing neither physical

nor mental harm to anyone no matter what was their nature or state, good or bad, dead or alive. His altruism reaches a purity that cannot be explained in the novel and neither can any empirical method as it exclusively bounded by carrying the fire.

On the other side of the line, the kinless Ely holds the extreme egoism. regardless of his weakness or inability to take things forcefully from anyone else. He would refuse to commune with anyone, unlike the cannibals that at least form packs, he would not join anyone else on the road nor let the people he met learn anything useful about him because it could be self-risking. There is no sheer decency of not even a thank you for helping me. His ideologies are as empty as his heart. Therefore, he takes the crown of Egoism.

Conclusion

Essentially, the road contained ideologies that either, fell, or weakened but remain to exist. Kins that are blood related remain to be able to act altruistically towards each other even with kins that are not blood related. They share common aspects, which are the importance of protecting family, and the faith in God to keep their hopes running through their veins. The Man would murder and mime for his son with God on his side, but after his death, the boy was adopted by another family since he belonged to the ideology of kinship. The cannibals and the outcasted individuals in the novel were kinless. Their ideological motive was based upon a fallen social institution that guaranteed their rights and safety. Without a government that ensured it, these characters ate, murdered, and stole from each other for their own purpose. Even when they operated in groups, it was only a matter of time before one after another was used as a meal to get by. The outcasts ceased as much sharing to the extent they would refuse to share their names to others, where they

only considered themselves before everyone else no matter the circumstance or events in the novel.

General Conclusion

Taking Cormac McCarthy's exceptional novel, *The Road* as a corpus, the present study attempted to analyze the features and manifestations of altruism and egoism in kinship, in addition to the ideologies standing behind them. The study sought to examine how characters act on the individual level as well as how they function in groups. A comparison was made to distinguish the nature of personalities and the nature of the characters in the midst of an apocalyptic era. The characters' analyses focused on traits of altruism, and egoism within the realm of kinship. Hence, the study could reach a number of inferences.

The Road's realistic fiction is inspired partially by contemporary literature alongside with different genres like realism. The novel is surprisingly too merciless compared to every day's reality; however, it attempts to show the possible consequences of an apocalypse. *The Road* is influenced by different fields in science, psychology, and philosophy instead of literary movements and techniques as the details of the novel are mostly practical and based on the naturalist view.

The concepts of altruism, egoism, and kinship were influenced and developed by different fields including biology, psychology, religion, and philosophy. These concepts were integrated in literature and appear to be compatible since recent literary works like *The Road* focus on reality. Altruism in literature is inspired by evolutionary theories; however, it is mostly possible within kinships to ensure its continuity. Egoism always exists within the motives of every person no matter the action. Kinship is not necessarily blood-related as it can be formed conventionally. These aspects influenced literary works when it comes to non-fictional novels, fables, and realistic fiction works. The purpose of their inclusion is to influence the readers by showing them relevant works to past, present, or possible events that may occur in the future. The study found that social issues are presented artistically with the objective of motivating the reader to think about issues and discuss them.

The novel perceives kinship as the purest source and motivation of altruism; however, each member in the family performs his own perfect version of altruism. The blood-related family influence each other's actions and thoughts even in perceiving strangers. Kinship presents the strongest and most durable bond compared to conventional governmental systems. Egoism is the most prominent feature within humans as no matter the circumstances or previous morals; survival was the only true and considerable motivator.

Kinship is a deep connection filled with mutual altruism and influence. Each member of the family shows his altruism to others according to his/her own perspective even if it appears to be selfish. The mother would sacrifice herself mentally and physically and present her dignity to the void of death to hopelessly attempt saving her unborn child from a fate more horrible than death. The father exercises ethical egoism by restricting his altruism towards everything and everyone but devotes himself completely for his son. The boy on the other hand, does his utmost best to show as much altruism as possible to everyone he encounters whether human or animal. His altruism is based on blind faith according to his father's teachings about carrying the fire that represents being good guys that would not hurt others.

Essentially, kinship in the novel is considered to be godlike ties that connects kins with each other even when not related by blood. It is a gift; a moral responsibility that its members have to bear and ensure its continuation. Faith plays a major part as well. Government systems cannot sustain an altruistic environment as it teaches its members to act selfishly but without hurting the other; therefore, the absence of the law results in the most gruesome images of crime. It is also found that individualism or people without kin are considered outcasts, and they consider themselves outcasts that do not expect anything from anyone. Regardless of the mutual beneficial bonds found within the novel, they are still prone for selfishness and sacrificing the other at the end.

Cormac McCarthy's novel is an astounding example to learn and reflect upon the importance of kinship and family to ensure safety and mutual help without having negative and hidden self-interests. Egoism and altruism will remain at the debating table; however, it is important for us to make sure that it is balanced and neither take the extreme side, because if one wins over the other, the result would not be positive. Realistic fiction is a crucial element to inspire people's ideals and way of thinking.

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