

Exile in the road essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Exile not only forces a person into isolation but also instigates an enlightening journey in which the person learns to draw certain conclusions about society. For instance, in *The Road*, the man and the son are completely isolated from the rest of the world by their status of being the “good guys;” however, this experience shows that although evil is more powerful than good, it does not triumph in the end. Cormac McCarthy shows this belief about humankind by proving the two key components of exile, alienation and enrichment, to be both present and equally important.

In *The Road*, McCarthy asserts that while evil is almost always portrayed as undefeatable, it does not completely overcome good. The way in which McCarthy proves this theme is through his use of the boy as a symbol of innocence and moral righteousness. In every experience that the father and son have with evil, the son always pleads to do what is morally correct in favor of what they must do to survive. For example, when one of the “bad guys” advances on the father and son, although the boy is under the threat of danger, he still begs his father not to kill the man, which shows the boy’s generosity and tendency to want to help all people in need regardless of their capacity for evil. The boy’s determination to aid the threatening stranger proves that in spite of all the evil surrounding them, one small trace of good may always be seen in the boy.

Alienating themselves from the rest of the world enables the father and son to become aware of how omnipresent the evil forces existing are. Since the father and son are alone in their journey, the son has only his father to teach him all about life. The son is instilled with the belief that humankind is inherently “bad” through the father’s constant talk of the “good guys”

versus the “ bad guys. ” To support his father’s teachings, almost every person they encounter is threatening or trying to kill them.

For instance, the son finds himself faced with cannibalism, deceit, and theft and never with a positive experience. Therefore, the father and son’s alienation severely limits the son’s view of the world. This would lead the reader to think that the boy would be corrupted by all of the evil surrounding him, whether it is preached about to him by his father or physically displayed by the people they meet. However, the exile of the father and son teaches the son about “ carrying the fire” and the importance of continuing to be one of the “ good guys” no matter how overwhelming the evil around them seems. This appears to be the advice from the father that the boy takes to heart because in every situation where he comes across one of the “ bad guys” he retains his innocence and continues to have hope for the people who threaten to take away his life.

For example, the boy’s reaction when the thief steals their cart, is to demand that the father return and help the thief, which shows that the boy is able to completely disregard all negative connotations about the thief and only recognize that the thief’s desire to survive is the same as his own. In the end, the father is swallowed in darkness when he cruelly punishes the thief, therefore completely surrounding the boy with the presence of evil. This leaves the boy to “ carry the fire” on his own, but since he is so innocent and so completely good, he is able to carry on and trust that the new “ good guys” that he meets will care for him and “ carry the fire” with him as well. This enlightening experience demonstrates the meaning of The Road in that

although evil controls the majority of people, there are still glimpses of good that are never defeated.