

Seeking Redemption: Complicitous Critique in Border Trilogy of Cormac McCarthy

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Cormac McCarthy, the veteran American writer, is often questioned as being obsessed with darkness and nihilism because of the lack of definite redemption in his works. However, if “Border trilogy”, the representative work of his western novels, is put under the framework of postmodern poetics proposed by Linda Hutcheon, it will be found that redemption is hidden in the narrative structure. And the author structures the narration by dual coding strategies, such as parody, paradoxical irony and metafiction to make works conspire with the history and reality while criticize it at the same time. It is the complicitous critique. This symbiotic contradiction makes some accepted ideas problematic and urges the reader to seek justice and redemption in the tension of paradox. Therefore, redemption is coming in seeking.

Keywords: Cormac McCarthy, complicitous critique, narrative redemption, paradoxical irony

Cormac McCarthy is an evergreen in American literature and is regarded as the sole heir to Hemingway and Faulkner. His work has received major awards such as the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award and the PEN Lifetime Achievement Award. But McCarthy’s works have also been criticized for the direct description of violence and death and their failing to offer certain redemption. “The Border Trilogy”, the masterpiece of McCarthy’s Western novel, tells the story of cowboy John Grady and Billy Parham. They have to abandon the farm because of industrialization and travel west to Mexico to realize their dreams. But moving west to Mexico is not a redemptive path for American Adam, either. Grady died in a foreign land, while Parham became homeless in the end. From the surface, the “Border Trilogy” continues McCarthy’s consistent dark and cold style, without providing any definite path of redemption. However, if the work is placed within the postmodern poetic framework of Linda Hutcheon, it will be found that the author’s search for redemption is actually hidden in the complicitous critique formed by the rhetorical narration.

According to Hutcheon, true postmodernism should be contradictory, resolutely historical and inescapably political. The postmodern poetics she elucidated also has obvious contradictory characteristics, so it attaches importance to context while fully realizing the constructive function of discourse, combines truth and fiction, and it uses convention while secretly deconstructing it. Moreover repetition and subversion can coexist. This is what Hutcheon calls complicitous critique, a mixture of both criticism and collusion. This relation is not a dichotomy between self and the other but a mixture of self and the other. This tension prompts the reader to jump

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out of the closed system of redemption myth, think about history and reality, and completely open up to other possibilities, even impossibilities. The coexistence of collusion and criticism is a double intertwined justice with possibilities and impossibilities, which is the redemption toward the other, although uncertain, but never absent.

Parody of Narrative Convention

In Hutcheon's postmodern poetics, "parody" is a rhetorical way that deviates from tradition and even subverts it by narrating the differences from tradition. It is a repetitive strategy that maintains a critical distance from the work, allowing the work to display differences in similarity of fable by an ironic tone. Therefore, parody creates a paradoxical relationship between the new text and the original one so that the former is both dependent on the latter and destructive to it as well. And that is known as "complicitous criticism". McCarthy excels in using parody to create complicitous criticism. He depends on Western mythology on the one hand while subverts it secretly by using rhetorical narrative on the other hand. In this way does the author question the mythology.

American literature develops from exploration in the west, represented by Cooper's "The Tales of Leather Socks". These works are set in the western wilderness, depicting the adventure of pioneers. Cowboys are deliberately portrayed as heroes, who are brave and resolute, relying on resilience and wisdom to achieve their dreams. That type of narrative on frontier constructs "imperial mythology," "pastoral mythology," and the prototype of American Dream, which later develops into a narrative convention. It includes typical elements, such as Western landscape, cowboys, native Americans, adventures, violence, romantic love, gold mining, nomadism and so on. The "Border Trilogy" follows the Western narrative convention. Cowboy Grady and Billy entered Mexico with a dream of exploration, hoping to develop their own territory like their ancestors. The landscape also has typical Western features, including endless pastures, flocks of cattle and sheep, and cowboys singing ballads by the bonfire in the evening... All of these are completely in line with the rural landscape imagined by readers. Cowboys gallop on horseback and they have also met indigenous people from different tribes. For readers, those typical elements are so approachable that leads to a collusion between what narrated in the novel and the narrative conventions.

However, the purpose of "Complicitous critique" is to criticize while collusion is only a means. McCarthy seems to follow narrative conventions, but his narrative is actually anti-Western, anti-hero and anti-mythology. Firstly, the historical background of the novel is different from traditional novels. The story takes place in the early 20th century, when cowboy John Grady lost his ranch and decided to go to Mexico. At that time, the Western Movement had come to an end, and the West was no longer the safety valve and imperial ideology had gradually withdrawn from the society. Latin American countries have achieved independence, but the democratic forces are so weak that they are unable to control the chaotic situation, making it possible for the authoritarian to take the power. Long term wars have erupted between various parties in Mexico, with frequent regime changes, which causes the unbearable suffering to Mexicans. Furthermore, the geopolitical state of Mexico, sandwiched between the United States and other Latin American countries, involves it in the complex political and economical situation. Therefore, Mexico is in a transitional zone between modern and premodern space, and between colonialism and post colonialism. The complex heterogeneity of Mexico repeatedly thwarts the cowboy's dream, ultimately leading to a tragic fate. Space on the west border is no longer the one waiting to be

explored as imagined by many readers, but an absolute other space with resistance and irreducibility, which is anti-western.

Secondly, there are significant differences between the image of cowboy portrayed in the novel and the one of traditional hero. Grady is still a traditional cowboy, with superb herding skills, justice and kindness, and always ready to help other people. But the difference is that good deeds do not bring good results. When Grady helped Stevens, he never expected it would bring endless trouble to himself, directly leading to his imprisonment. Facing the complexity, the imprisoned cowboys can't escape by individual efforts, so the omnipotent become powerless prisoners. Grady also had romantic encounters. But Alejandra, born in a noble family in Mexico, finally abandoned him. Later, he met the humble prostitute Magdalena and dueled with the brothel owner like the cowboy did. But the mythical ending did not happen in reality, and Grady died miserably. Grady failed to form a correct self-image. He sank deeper and deeper in the vortex of fate without redemption. He represents an anti-hero image.

Thirdly, the novel overflows the Romantic framework of narrative and combines more realistic techniques to deconstruct the myth of American dream. By telling the story of Billy and Wolf, *Crossing* deeply reveals the paradox in American dream. Billy tried every means to catch a wild wolf, and then brought it thousands of miles away to set it free. Along the way, Billy tried to tame the wolf repeatedly. However, after taming the wolf, Billy longed for the wildness of the wolf and lamented its lost heterogeneity. Billy's contradictory mentality of trying to conquer the other and being afraid to eliminate its heterogeneity is the reflection of the paradox of American dream. The destructive power from conquering the other actually destroys what the conqueror really looks for. The pioneers conquered the wild land under the banner of civilization, bringing order and rationality to the west, but the subsequent commercialization and industrialization also made the conquerors regret the loss of difference. Such a paradox prompted more desires so that the United States pushed the border further westward. Cowboys, living with American Dream, are unaware of its paradox and even trapped by it to realize an unpractical dream. McCarthy exposed the fictionality of ideology, making the narrative anti-mythological.

Briefly, McCarthy followed the conventions of Western novels and pieced together some typical elements in new contexts. At the same time, he constantly subverts conventions by narrating the differences. Therefore, the work seems to be reminiscing about the past, but in fact, it helps readers break free from nostalgia, subverting myths that are firmly believed by readers, and confronting them with questions. That forms a complicitous critique. On one hand, it does not abandon history, but forms a collusive relationship with it. On the other hand, it questioned the authenticity of historical narratives and criticized the old ideology's harm to human nature. In this tension of contradiction, the certainty of history is constantly broken and the myth of West is deconstructed, leading us to think about others. Redemption is approaching on the way.

Juxtaposition of Contradiction

Juxtaposition is essentially the spatial narrative, which uses certain clues to juxtapose many stories, lacking a definite causal relation. In *Border Trilogy*, McCarthy used the cowboy's journey across the border as a clue to juxtapose contradictory scenes to depict images. Juxtaposition is a dual discourse in which the opposite parties are contradictory to each other, but neither of them is superior to the other. In the way, narrative finds itself a

position of both subversion and obedience, criticism and collusion, showcasing the complexity of society and the contradictions of humanity.

Taking the Native Americans in “The Crossing” as an example, the author divides narrative into several incoherent fragments, each representing a different relationship between oneself and the other. In the first episode, Billy met an Indian with a gun before he left home. Out of sympathy, Billy brought him some food and inadvertently revealed to him about his family. The second episode took place as Billy crossed the US-Mexico border. When he was extremely down and out, an Indian tribe took him in. The third episode took place after Billy returned home. The Indian he had helped was so ungrateful that he robbed his family’s property and killed his parents. Spliced together, these less coherent fragments not only let the reader see the savagery and cruelty of the Indians and reinforce the stereotype of the Indians, but also let the reader see the warmth and kindness of the Indians and deconstruct the readers’ stereotype of the Indian. McCarthy constructs a dual perspective by juxtaposition, which questions the stereotype of Indians.

Moreover, the author adopts the same strategy in portraying Mexican groups. Each segment is not a progression of the previous segment, but a contradictory and independent story. Juxtaposition demonstrates complexity and contradiction in the Mexican nationality. They are conservative, backward, ignorant, and violent while patient, resilient, hospitable, and hardworking. A colosseum in ‘Crossing’ is typical. Many villagers are keen on the bloody beast fighting performance. McCarthy describes in great details the Mexican rural life, which gives readers an impression of ignorance, backwardness, and aggression, strengthening the stereotype of Mexicans. As Billy’s journey continues, more fragments are inserted, so this stereotype is constantly revised and iterated. After his younger brother Boyd was shot, it were Mexican workers who saved him. It was a kind-hearted Mexican doctor who treated Boyd without taking a penny, and Billy felt grateful for the warmth and kindness of the Mexicans. As the story progressed to “Cities of the Plain”, Billy saw Grady killed by Mexicans and felt so sad that he left the ranch and wandered around. At the end of the novel, Billy, old and homeless, was taken in by a kind-hearted family and spent his later years in peace. These fragments lacking of causal connections are not linearly arranged. The narrator only stitches them together by Billy’s journey. The image of Mexicans ranges from ignorance and violence to simple kindness, and then to hypocrite and evil... The narrative continues to cycle through deconstruction and construction, seemingly fragmented, yet achieving continuous iteration and proliferation, fully demonstrating the complexity of Mexican society and the contradiction of its nationality.

The juxtaposition of contradiction is employed so that once readers want to identify someone or something, they can quickly find irrefutable evidence from another segment of the narrative. Whenever readers want to form a collusive relationship with the narrative, they are immediately criticized by the narrative, thus eliminating the collusive relationship. Narration forms a tension between criticism and collusion, which makes things impossible to be self-evident and makes narratives impossible to integrate. It seems that the juxtaposition is full of paradoxes, but in reality, it contains an indestructible justice. It prompts us to question certain myths, to keep skeptical towards history, and thus to open up possibilities, even impossible possibilities. Therefore, redemption comes with reflection.

Metafiction

Patricia Waugh is the earliest scholar to provide interpretation of metafiction. She believes that the distinguishing feature of metafiction from other types of novels is that it has a clear self-awareness, always reflecting on novel as an artifact, exposing the fictionality of language as well as narrative. This self-awareness is mainly manifested at three levels: framework analysis, game consciousness, and artificial constructiveness in reality.

Hutcheon inherited and developed Waugh's theory, elaborating on postmodern metafiction consciousness as a focus on both the exterior and interior of literature, maintaining connections with history and reality while possessing a strong sense of self-awareness. Obviously, Hutcheon adopts both collusion and criticism. McCarthy's "Border Trilogy" also has features of postmodern metafiction, committed to narrating and reproducing history and reality, while maintaining vigilance against the fictionality of narrative and language. So it hides redemption in the tension caused by Complicitous critique.

The novel "Crossing" has the most distinctive feature of the metafiction. On the one hand, by narrating Billy's experiences crossing the border, the work stitches together a large number of historical fragments related to the US Mexican war, which has historical implications. Take Billy's encounter at a bar as an example. The bartender and others were all friendly to Billy, except one drunken man. The man was full of hatred towards his American identity, which remind readers of the feud between the United States and Mexico. Mexicans have mixed feelings about America. They not only hope to rely on the power of America to end the civil war and get a peaceful living environment, but also hate the economic exploitation and cultural invasion of the US and want to maintain the independence. The drunken man's questioning represents a collective hatred that is too difficult to alleviate. In fact, the drunk was a patriot who was shot with three bullets in Zacatecas. Looking back into the history, Zacatecas did experience a brutal war in 1914, which was a crucial battle of the Mexican Revolution. This period was extremely violent and bloody in Mexico's modernization, with civil war leading to continuous conflicts and frequent regime changes. The indelible histories are prominently written on the chest of this drunken man. Because the patriots' parties failed to win power, their experiences were not written in history, and they were not respected after the war. So they had to live in poverty and numb themselves with alcohol. The three bullet holes are historical wounds while the numb and dull expression is the current state. The drunkard represents the vast number of impoverished people who have been tormented by suffering and are almost desperate. His body is a witness to the fusion of the history and present. In the trilogy, similar fragments with obvious historical implications are easy to be found, reflecting the author's awareness of maintaining contact with history and reality.

On the other hand, "Crossing" has obvious self-reference, which is manifested in three aspects: framework consciousness, consciousness of constructed reality, and game consciousness, which are discussed one by one below. The first manifestation is framework consciousness. For example, during Billy's journey across the US Mexican border, the author recorded a monologue by a church gatekeeper, spanning 21 pages. The story is told by the gatekeeper, who also houses the story of another old postman. Thus the narrative forms three levels: the narrator's story, the gatekeeper's story, and the old postman's story. This framework like Russian doll has been used for many times in "Crossing". There is also a 19-page long segment in which the narrator tells the story of

Billy encountering a blind couple on the road. The wife tells Billy the story of the blind person. The narrative also forms three nested levels, which are the narrator's story, the wife's story and the blind man's story. As the novel approaches its end, the narrator mentions Billy's encounter with a group of Native Americans who were towing a plane. Thus another framework of narrative forms with three levels, which are the narrator's story, native people's story and the pilot's story. This way of narrative with one story embedded in the other amplifies the gaps in the framework, which can awaken readers' consciousness of framework.

The second manifestation is the consciousness of constructed reality. In the example of the gatekeeper, the author clearly expresses the constructiveness of language towards reality through the discourse of the characters. The gatekeeper said that the world is like a story, and each story is the sum of some smaller stories. This is how the world is created. A story has no place, only living in narrative. So narrative is the home for story. This discourse is clearly a reflection on language construction, namely narration is an artifact. The old postman also has a similar viewpoint, who believes that all stories are just a narrative. It also exposes the fictionality of language. These direct discourses remind readers that reality is no longer unique and stable, but constantly constructed by language amid a network which is interconnected by many forces.

The third manifestation is game consciousness. Coin games, card games, and marionette games have all appeared many times in the trilogy. In "The Pretty Horse", Alfonsa used a coin toss as an example to express the uncertainty of fate. In her view, the world is more like a puppet show. When you go to the back of the stage and follow the strings of puppet, you will find that the ends of these strings are held in the hands of other puppets, and these puppets' own strings are controlled by higher-level puppets. Alfonsa reveals the vulnerability of subjects and the powerful manipulation of social ideology. Her view deconstructs her previous ideas about revolution. The contradiction shows readers a cycle of self construction and self dismantling. More examples are from "Crossing". Billy encountered mobile jugglers twice. The author detailed their lottery games and acrobatic performances, and used the artist's words to express that everything is a game. A strong sense of gameplay not only criticizes the cruelty and absurdity of reality, but also enhances people's understanding of game, thus forming a narrative tension between criticism and conspiracy. This tension prompts us to constantly doubt the past, keep thinking and searching for the truth. Therefore, redemption is approaching in the reflection and search.

The narrative strategy of metafiction not only refers to the history and reality, but also to the fictionality of language and narrative. That confirms that language is an inescapable cage for us, while also showing distrust of language. McCarthy, in this contradictory narrative, expresses doubts for history, deconstructs myths, challenge the subjectivity, and reveals the heterogeneity. The narrative structure is no longer closed and complete, but exists in diversity, contradiction, self deconstruction, self iteration, and self delay. In the paradox of conspiracy and criticism, readers find it hard to gain definite redemption in the trilogy. But this is not a stance of cynicism, but a stance towards heterogeneity and complexity, which encourages us to seek redemption in diversity.

Shift of Cognitive Focus

Generally speaking, the character in a novel is the figure while the social environment is the ground from cognitive narratology. The figure is prominent, so it is the focus. However, the relation between figure and ground is not constant, so it will change as the reader's attention shifts. McCarthy's novel "Crossing" conforms to the conventional mode literally, telling the story of the cowboy in the western background. So cowboy

should have been the figure while the western land the background. However, further reading will reveal that the work actually leads readers' attention to the social background through detailed narrative on social and rough description of the cowboy, thus reversing the relation between figure and ground. Therefore, the novel seems to be in line with the convention, but actually reverse it, leading to complicitous critique.

The protagonist, Billy, in *Crossing* is a flat image. The narrator uses the external perspective and never describes his psychological activities. In the era when the Western myth has come to an end, he is still chasing the border dream. What the reader receives is a stereotyped cowboy, who has been overly influenced by ideology. However, as for the social background, the author adopts pastiche to show its richness, power and complexity. In this way, the foreground becomes more prominent because it is irresistible while individuals are degraded to the background because they drift in society and can not control themselves. So with the shift of foreground and background, reader's attention is also shifted. And through this defamiliarized structure, the author expresses his criticism of the ideology and his sympathy for the individual. Compassion, sympathy and pity aroused in reader's mind can lead to justice and salvation.

The flattening of characters is self-evident, so the following will discuss the vast, complex and changeable social background from the aspects of culture, history and ethnics.

Firstly, hybridity is what McCarthy employs to represent social complexity because the relation between Mexican culture and Western culture is complicated. Just as the cowboys saw, the idyllic scenery coexisted with the modern city and Mexicans lived in the gap between tradition and modernity. They used Spanish as well as indigenous languages; they retained traditional customs and accept Western culture as well, showing a distinct hybridity. The most typical example is "Death Day". For Mexicans, the festival is a day to commemorate their dead relatives and friends. Local people will set up altars and hold rituals in cemeteries or on squares. On that day, symbols of folklore, such as altars, marigolds and skeleton dolls, will periodically and temporarily change the space of daily life. In the trilogy, McCarthy has repeatedly described the festival. It can be seen from his narrative that traditional beliefs survived tenaciously in the margin and coexisted with the Catholicism although they were expelled from the center by the colonists. This is the way that hybrid developed, which also reflects the strong resistance from Mexican culture.

The hybridity is also distinct in religious belief. Due to the wide spread of Catholicism, the combination of Catholic and local religion became popular. After Mexico's independence, with the awakening of democracy, the elites realized that Catholicism had deceived the people and decided to eradicate her influence. The authorities began a bloody campaign to murder missionaries and restrict freedom of religious belief. Eventually the Cristero War broke out, which caused countless deaths and injuries among the poor. Actually, Mexicans' religious outlook has been constantly shaped in the bloody history full of cruel struggles of various social forces. So it is extremely complicated and even paradoxical. The evidence can be found from three episodes related to bloody handkerchief, in which Women would dip their handkerchiefs in the blood of dead priests to pray for themselves. These fragments reflect the complexity of their faith. According to the Catholic view, the saints have the grace of God in their flesh and blood. If the living people preserve their flesh and blood, they can inherit the grace and ascend to heaven after death. The ancient Aztec tradition also happens to believe that. And it is for the commonality that the custom is widely accepted. When the government began to persecute priests in the twentieth century, Catholicism had already been internalized into Mexican mind. People have

both hatred and worship towards Western missionaries. Being intertwined with religious beliefs, traditional culture, and ethnic hatred, local people felt extremely complicated when facing the priest's death. Besides, people are trapped into the competition between domestic powers and foreign powers, with no way to cope with them, so they became indifferent to the death, only taking blood to pray for themselves.

The above examples show the detailed narrative made by the author so as to highlight the hybrid Mexican culture. Both the cowboys and the Mexican people living in the culture are so fragile individuals that they are swallowed up by the social torrent like duckweed, arousing the sympathy of readers.

Secondly, the incurable trauma is also the aspect McCarthy intends to highlight. Mexico's history is full of suffering, so trauma has never been forgotten and healed. They mixed with the present, forming an indescribably complex sentiment.

Mexico is located at the junction of the North American plate, the Cocos plate and the Pacific plate. It is prone to earthquakes. According to the Geological Survey in United States, Mexico has experienced more than forty earthquakes of magnitude 7 or higher in the 20th century, and four earthquakes of magnitude 8 or higher. Because of the weak government and frequent civil wars, the space damaged by disasters has not been repaired, which looks dilapidated. McCarthy constantly describes the collapsed landscape, such as the cracks in the valley, the church dome suspended in the air, the decaying houses and so on. They are the huge and never healed scars, still groaning and trembling today. Although the disaster happened in the past, Mexico is still threatened by earthquakes at any time. And when the same disaster may happen again, fear and anxiety are always present, reminding us of the physical trauma in space.

Mexico is rich in mineral resources and the main producer of silver in the world, known as the "silver kingdom". Silver is not only the totem of this nation, but also something that brings bad luck to them. It is said that the emperors of the ancient Aztec Empire were obsessed with silver jewelry and obtained them by violence. In the 16th century, Spanish colonists brutally forced Mexican workers to exploit silver for them. Later, the colonists found that Mercury could be used to smelt silver. They began to force the Indians to engage in deadly work, resulting in many deaths. To this day, this backward technology is still used in the mountains of Mexico. When the silver was transported to Europe and promoted the industrialization there, great damage after excessive exploitation was left in Mexican environment. Mexico, drained of blood, is devastating and dying. In *Crossing*, McCarthy described the slag plied on the horizon like a volcano. He also describes the ubiquitous mines, the wooden racks for extracting mercury, the old silverware in the bars, and the ragged, dark-eyed miners in the mountains. These narratives show that the local environment is scarred, fragile, sick and full of trauma.

In addition to the physical trauma found in its space, the psychological trauma of the nation is also incurable. An example about a drunk in the pub has been mentioned above, which also proves that Mexican is deeply traumatized. The unforgettable historical trauma has never been cured, which is folded in the social space and constitutes an extremely complex sentiment.

Thirdly, incompleteness of values is the last perspective the author uses to stress the social background. It can be found that many secondary personas have pre-modern value. For example, the old hunter Billy visited is an agnostic with pre-modern value, who said no one knew about the wolf and God created the wolf just like

God created the world. Traditional Mexicans also regard nature as a mysterious force and advocate awe and obedience to nature. This is contrary to the values of modernity advocated by the United States.

Furthermore, nihilism has also been mentioned many times in the works, which is popular in Mexico. There are two lengthy episodes in *Crossing*, which respectively reveal the traumatic experience of two Mexicans and their nihilistic values. One is the story of the old postman. Because his family was killed in the earthquake, which caused him incurable trauma, he belittled his self-worth, gave up his faith and questioned everything. The second is the story of the blind. He lost his eyes in the war, and the great pain caused an infinite sense of nihilism. These two old men represented the ordinary people in Mexico, who had been tortured by all kinds of hardships. Neither revolution nor reform could free them from suffering, but incurred more suffering. The huge disappointment led to the collapse of their value system, depreciation of self-worth, and doubts about all moral standards. Furthermore, the gradual decline of Catholicism didn't give them spiritual support any more, so nihilism took advantage of it. When nihilism became widely accepted, it further led to social disorder and anarchy which further hindered the modernization. Therefore, the chain effects happened. The historical trauma caused by weakness and poverty led to the prevalence of nihilism. And extreme nihilism led to anarchism. Then disorder further led to poverty and suffering. In this way a vicious circle came into being. Mexicans seem to be cursed, and they can't get out of the vicious circle, and their ideology has stayed in pre-modern state full of nihilism. The complicated and unfinished value system make Mexican society hard to be integrated.

McCarthy describes three aspects of Mexican society with great details to show its hybridity, complexity and incompleteness so that her ancient and modern state, her history and the present, her pessimism and optimism, and her helplessness and resilience are fully displayed. And this background is narrated so grand and realistic while the character is so flattened that the cognitive attention is shifted. Specifically, the focus of the narrative is switched from the characters to the environment, and the reader's attention is also focused on the strong heterogeneity of Mexican society; while the characters who should be the foreground become negligible. Cowboys with the dream to conquer Mexico is like being cursed and entering a vicious circle without helping themselves out. And ordinary people in Mexico, who are poor and pessimistic, are unable to control their life, either. Facing the irresistible force of social change, individuals appear humble and fragile, and life is too difficult to control. Through reversing, the author conveys his deep concern with fate, which arouses reader's compassion. And compassion would inspire us to think about the negligence of individual destiny, think about the possibility of justice, and even the impossibility; and there is the power of redemption hidden in it. Briefly, McCarthy manages to secretly place the redemption in the subversion of conventional narrative structure.

Conclusion

McCarthy uses the skills of parody, juxtaposition, metafiction and shift of focus in the "Frontier Trilogy", which not only follows the narrative conventions of western novels, but also goes beyond them constantly. It admits the objective existence of the grand narrative of history, and tries its best to expose its inner contradiction by irony. It also refers to the history and reality while interspersing the meta-narrative, pointing inward to the fiction of language and narrative. It not only affirms that language is a prison from which we cannot escape, but also expresses our distrust of it. Such narratives form a relationship that Hutcheon calls 'critical complicity'.

Although the contradiction cannot provide any definite salvation, it does not mean the lack of redemption. On the contrary, uncertain redemption is the most responsible redemption, because redemption is neither a return to the myths, nor the manufacture of new certainties, nor a move towards broken postmodernism. Redemption exists in constant questioning and deep reflection, which is a serious attitude to deal with the uncertain, absurd and multidimensional postmodern society. McCarthy makes use of the double coding of language to narrate, prompting readers to search for ethical redemption. So narrative with critical complicity provides the redemption in McCarthy's works.

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