

**SURVIVAL AND ISOLATION AS REFLECTIONS OF
CERTAIN LITERARY ERAS**

SIR 248

Abstrakt

Cieľom mojej práce je ukázať, ako odzrkadľovali spisovatelia určitých literárnych dôb, vlastnú spoločnosť a jej charakteristiky. Vybral som knihy od týchto autorov, v ktorých sa nájdu ako hlavné motívy prežitie a izolácia, lebo podľa môjho názoru pomocou analýzy týchto motívov, dostanem verný obraz o sociálnych zobrazení vybraných dôb. Som presvedčený, že tieto spisovatelia boli schopní znázorniť hlavné problémy svojich spoločností, a implantovať ich do svojich diel, vytvoriť tak príbeh ktorý slúžil ako plášť. Taká plášť, čo možno odhaliť pomocou vhodného výkladu diela, a ktorý zachováva charakteristiky literárnej a historickej doby, práve ako jedna časová kapsula.

Za cieľ môjho štúdia som stanovil aby som našiel vhodný výklad vybraných kníh a dokázal zrekonštruovať charakteristiky literárnej doby, ktoré sú skryté medzi riadkami.

Kľúčové slová: izolácia, prežitie, vedomie, inštinkt

Abstract

The purpose of my study is to point out the way how authors of certain literary eras were able to reflect their view about the society and its features. I chose works from these authors wherein survival and isolation are the main motifs, because In my opinion analysing these themes is the best way to create authentic reflections of the common views on a relevant time period. I think that the authors of the chosen works were able to project their society's features and problems and apply them into their books with creating stories and using them as shells. Shells which can be unsealed with a good interpretation of the works and which shells at the same time serve as time capsules for not just literary but time periods as well.

With this study I would like to find the adequate interpretations of the selected works that would let me help to reconstruct those characteristics of the literary era, which the authors tried to conceal between the lines.

Key words: isolation, survival, consciousness, reflection, instinct

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Introduction

"The consciousness of being deemed dead, is next to the presumable unpleasantness of being so in reality. One feels like his own ghost unlawfully tenanting a defunct carcass." - Herman Melville

How do people gather information about a certain era? Usually they study the materials they could find about it in history books or nowadays, because is a much quicker way, they rather search it on the internet. This method is generally effective. If we take a look on the literary analysis' we can see, that the situation is almost the same. After reading the book there are facts which gain meaning only after we study the author, his life and his view about the actual society and its features that created problems in the era – this happens of course beyond the individual interpretation of a literary work, which only needs the text and the reader without any kind of background knowledge. I analyzed the selected works not in this general way, but rather with an indirect interpretation method. After reading the books I was relying only on the facts (the story itself) that the author have written down, and then I tried to reconstruct the features of an era in which they fit. This is the reason why I started to deal with the literary eras only in the end of each chapter, to remain in the obscurity connected with them. The selected works are *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway and *The Road* written by Cormac McCarthy. The literary eras connected with them in order are Colonial, Modernism and Postmodernism. The large time period between the Colonial and Modernism literary eras helped me to find whether there are any contradictions or important differences between the views of the authors of two eras that have two centuries between them. I chose works with the themes survival and isolation in them intentionally, because in my opinion these motifs let the reader imagine the best way the authors' desperateness and disappointment in the literary eras mentioned above.

In the first chapter I analyzed the book *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Dafoe. I chose this work, because in my opinion it is a very good example for human isolation. I dealt mostly with the main character Robinson Crusoe and his survival on the island, the parts before and after being on the island are mentioned only

in cases, where I found connection or important reference in them which had an effect on him through his misfortune. I found important themes in the novel and I divided this chapter into three subsections, where the themes closely connected to each other are in one subsection. The whole chapter is built and based on these themes. With the help of them I found answers for many of the questions about isolation and survival.

In the third chapter I wrote about the book *The Old Man and the Sea* written by Ernest Hemingway. With the help of this book I analyzed isolation from the old man's point of view, who stands at the final stage of his life. The method used in this chapter is the same as it was in the first except the themes which I have changed according to the different type of the old man's isolation and survival. I mainly dealt with his pride and respect, the motive powers which had driven him through the story. The ideas are confirmed with quotations from the book.

The third chapter is about the *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy. After reading *The Road* a few questions developed in me, which I tried to answer with this chapter. These question were in a close connections to the main motifs I described in the previous chapters, however in this case they are more story centric. There are also subsections with analyzing the story according to the themes religion and survival.

Through my study the following questions formulated: How is survival and isolation treated in the selected literary eras? Were they relevant for people living in those time periods? How are authors from different literary eras able to make a frozen picture of their society and insert it in their books? Is it possible to interpret certain literary works as time capsules? Do the selected books reflect the society wherein their author lived? Is it possible to interpret the selected books with the indirect method? At the conclusion part of my study I tried to answer these questions.

1 Daniel Defoe – The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe

Man is “an animal living in society”, ancient Greek people said. Of what is capable a homo sapiens of its own?¹ In my opinion Robinson Crusoe’s story is a fair and exemplary answer for this question. Robinson Crusoe was able to create a small well functioning society on his own. “Thus, Defoe persuades us to see remote islands and the solitude of the human soul. By believing fixedly in the solidity of the plot and its earthiness, he has subdued every other element to his design and has roped a whole universe into harmony”² Crusoe’s story became very popular. That is because citizens in that time needed a story like that. Pegeant of Robinson was Odysseus, the hero of man’s cleverness. Crusoe became somebody who is able to conquer the world.³ Seeing himself as a hero gave Crusoe a great amount of confidence, courage and exhilaration.

My home is my castle! Robinson’s house was not just a house, it was a fortress and a warehouse. It was a protecting shelter, but also vulnerable. He was not able to build a house with strong underlyings. It can be a symbol to the civilization which was fragile in that time and nowadays too.⁴ However after his sentence: “I lived there..perfectly and completely happy, if any such thing as complete happiness can be formed in a sublunary state”⁵ we can ask is it necessary? We can see that he felt happiness through his “adventure”. This creates a question in me: Was it the effect of the harmony of the island or the survival in absolute isolation? Both maybe?

“In his isolation from the rest of the world, Crusoe is able to create a utopian society that not only he depends on for survival, but it is also dependent on him (Defoe 58). This “Marx-like” economic system which was created proved that a utopian environment is possible to create, though easier having only one “citizen”.”⁶ Robinson - through his survival - was trying his best to create the perfect world around him which was

¹ <http://www.sulinet.hu/tart/fcikk/Kk/0/17677/1> (27.03.2011)

² <http://mural.uv.es/yororo/Criticalanalysisy.htm> (27.03.2011)

³ <http://www.sulinet.hu/tart/fcikk/Kk/0/17677/1> (27.03.2011)

⁴ <http://www.sulinet.hu/tart/fcikk/Kk/0/17677/1> (27.03.2011)

⁵ <http://mural.uv.es/yororo/Criticalanalysisy.htm> (27.03.2011)

⁶ <http://mural.uv.es/yororo/Criticalanalysisy.htm> (27.03.2011)

possible. In my opinion this was the effect of isolation, the fact that he was alone and there was nobody who could have precluded him or destroy what he was building. This kind of perfect world should be the guiding philosophy of humanity.⁷

Robinson Crusoe was always seeking for adventure. Despite of the life his father wanted for him, he decided to be a traveller. That was when one of his friends embarked a ship to London. He could not resist the temptation, and he boarded too. He was happy for this experience until they met with a big storm. This was the first time, when Crusoe felt sorry for his silly decision to join the voyage. However he felt a great fear of death and a weird excitement which he wondrously liked.⁸ I felt this fact important to mention, because I am going to refer to it in this and also in the following sections. Now, because of the topic of my thesis, I would like to jump in the story to the part, when Crusoe landed on the shore of the island, where he was struggling with survival. At that moment when he became conscious, he realized that probably he is the only survivor of the accident. Crusoe always enjoyed thinking, but in this situation he was afraid of it. He did not want to consider his situation, because he knew that he was doomed to death. He compared his fear with the fear which he had felt when he was travelling to London, and they were caught by a storm. He found out, that then his fear of death on the ship was much greater than it is now on the island. "... I had a dreadful deliverance ...".⁹ He summarized himself: he was wet, had no clothes, nor anything to eat or drink, he did not see any other future for himself just to perish in hunger. At this point, his mind gave up. In my opinion this is interesting because of what happened in the next day. It seems that when he woke up his survival instinct immediately switched on. It is a bit strange that he was not desperate anymore. The fact that he was not trying to do anything about getting help somehow could confuse the reader. In my opinion for somebody who finds himself in a situation like Crusoe did, the first and most important thought is to call for help. Here in the book we may think that the author wanted this intentionally. He wanted the reader to concentrate on the isolated Robinson, who is willing to do his best, to make the island as comfortable for himself as it is possible. We can see the picture: civilization meets nature, individual versus the wild. The author probably wants us to consider the island as a void world where Crusoe is the

⁷ <http://users.erols.com/jonwill/> (27.03.2011)

⁸ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 36-37

⁹ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 66

one who is supposed to colonize it. The island caused him to evolve not just physically and mentally, but also spiritually. “Crusoe begins as a wanderer, aimless on the sea he does not understand; he ends as a pilgrim crossing a final mountain to enter the promised land”¹⁰ It was solitude which changed Crusoe’s cast of mind along with his personality, and solitude is a result of isolation.

1.1 Survivor - Isolation - Food

Seizing food was very important on the island. It always gave Crusoe some work to do. The more time he had to spend with finding food, the less time he got for his thoughts. I think that this is the result of isolation and survival, when they are as closely connected as in the case of Robinson Crusoe. There is a big difference between being isolated (but being provided with food, shelter, safety) and being isolated and left on one’s own survival instincts. It raised a question in me: Which one is better? When you feel isolated, lonely none the less you are surrounded with people, or if you are isolated, left alone without any companionship and completely cut out from society? At first it could sound unequivocal but if we take a closer look, we can see that the answer is more complex. Crusoe’s story is a very good and useful example here, because in a way, he fits into both categories. To keep himself alive he managed to evolve his survival technique to perfection. However there are parts in the book when he is absolutely satisfied with his situation but at these pints he always starts to feel the emptiness inside him and the void around him. This is why I think that Robinson’s case belongs partly in both categories I have mentioned above.

The first few days were not so hard for him. He realized that his situation is bad, but because of his interest in adventure, he was less worried than excited. The first thing what he thought about was food, but he was too tired to go and search for it. He was satisfied with the fresh water he found and the tobacco against hunger. We can consider these as the first resources which helped him to survive. The next day he was a bit relieved, when he found bread, rice, cheese and goat’s flesh between the ship’s remains.¹¹ This was a very big help for him, probably without of this supplies he would have starve. And here we can ask a very important question: What would have happened, if Crusoe does not have

¹⁰ <http://mural.uv.es/yororo/Criticalanalysis.htm> (27.03.2011)

¹¹ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 66-67

had the supplies from the ship? Would have he survived without them? He returned twelve times to the ship in the following twelve days. He gained many kind of food in a quantity which was enough for him to survive at least a month, and also weapons and tools he needed for hunting wild animals, to prepare them as food, making fire and every basic thing to survive on an island. Crusoe knew that he was favoured because all of these supplies when he said that: "I was a little suprized, but recovered my self with this satisfactory reflection, viz. that I had lost no time, nor abated no diligence to get every thing out of her that could be useful to me, and that indeed there was little left in her that I was able to bring away if I had had more time."¹² After Crusoe found wild goats on the island the food was not problem for him. Hunting for food became an everyday job. In time he was able to breed animals and grow corn and other vegetables. "The new-grown barley and corn on the island, which Crusoe calls a "prodigy of Nature" (Defoe 80), is really symbolic of the spiritual and emotional growth that is taking place within himself (Peck 96)."¹³ From that point putting up the food became secondary. It was easy for him to make a table full of delicious meal, although the process to be able to do so was very long. The grains were very important source of meal for him. We can see the utopistic picture here how nature and humanity are living in harmony.¹⁴

The island turns Robinson into a person who is not afraid of his fears and problems anymore. He realizes that regretting his situation and considering it as a misfortune which leads to nowhere but soreness and despair. While finding out how to keep himself alive he also found the healing power of religion and God.

1.2 Religion - Bible

Providence and Deliverance. Robinson Crusoe uses these two words very often through his narration. For better and easier understanding of this subsection I think it is good to define these words. Providence – "In theology, divine providence, or simply providence, is God's activity in the world. By implication, it is also a title of God. A distinction is usually made between "general providence" which refers to God's continuous

¹² DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 76

¹³ <http://mural.uv.es/yororo/Criticalanalisy.htm> (27.03.2011)

¹⁴ <http://mural.uv.es/yororo/Criticalanalisy.htm> (27.03.2011)

upholding the existence and natural order of the universe, and "special providence" which refers to God's extraordinary intervention in the life of people.”¹⁵ Providence is “the foreseeing care and guidance of god or nature over the creatures of the earth. It is God, especially when conceived as omnisciently directing the universe and the affairs of humankind with wise benevolence, a manifestation of divine care or direction.”¹⁶ Deliverance – “In the Bible, "deliverance" conveys an overall picture of salvation through the hand of a loving and powerful God. It describes the full impact of Jesus' death and resurrection being applied to and outworked in the lives of God's people. And it signifies the fullness of freedom in Christ.”¹⁷ However I found many more meanings of these two words, I will need just the meanings which are very closely connected with religion and God. At first even Crusoe himself is not sure, but through his survival he manages to apprehend these words, and he uses them gladly. In my opinion religion was played a very important part in Crusoe’s isolation and survival, because it completely changed his personality.

When Crusoe realized that he had landed on shore securely, he immediately began to pray and thank God that he was kept alive. This was the first time on the island, when he talked to God. The word “Deliverance” appears in the book in this part: “as I may say, wrapt up in the contemplation of my deliverance”.¹⁸ I think that he considered his deliverance in two ways: as divine providence that saved his life, and also as a punishment because of his covetousness and because he could not resist the temptation of being rich and this is what led him onto another voyage. He was a bit confused about his faith.¹⁹ On the first week religion was not an important part of his survival. However there are cases when he mentions God. One of them was when he created the short list of things he needed on the island. The fourth was this: “a view to the sea, that if God sent any ship in sight”²⁰. Up to this part of the book, the reader may consider it a bit confusing, that we cannot really decide whether he is highly devotional or just a bit religious, who sometimes in a desperate situation is expecting help from God. Looking him as an outsider we may think, that he calls God because he is just desperate. But after we cogitate the idea, that the first thing he

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_providence#cite_note-0 (10.04.2011)

¹⁶ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/providence> (10.04.2011)

¹⁷ <http://www.wordbasedcounseling.org/Articles/Deliverance.htm> (10.04.2011)

¹⁸ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 66

¹⁹ <http://www.gradesaver.com/robinson-crusoe/study-guide/section1/> (10.04.2011)

²⁰ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 76

did when he landed on shore was praying, and he was expecting the only help from God (by sending a ship), we can assume, that he was a god-fearing religious man. Maybe his mind was so full of thoughts about survival, saving the supplies from the ship and creating some kind of shelter for himself, that he forgot to talk to/with God. Reading the book we can see, that Crusoe is always thankful to God.

After collecting everything from the wrecked ship he is joyful that God has gave him so many things he can use to survive. He also thanks to God when after the rains he realizes that his plantation is growing.²¹ “after I saw barley grow there, in a climate which I know was not proper for corn, and especially that I knew not how it came there, it startled me strangely, and I began to suggest that God had miraculously caused this grain to grow without any help of seed sown, and that it was so directed purely for my sustenance on that wild miserable place.”²² In my opinion this far in the book the reader might think that Robinson believes in God but he does not really lives his life according to the scripture, he does not really spend much time to go over God’s rules and commandments. I think this mainly because of what he said before he started to believe that God is capable of miracles indeed: “I had very few notions of religion in my head”²³ His deeds are for the most part just for his own comfort. And they also were before he got to the island. He seems to be religious only when good things happen with him. When things turn bad for him he immediately starts to doubt in his faith: “I must confess, my religious thankfulness to God’s providence began to abate”²⁴. But there was a great change in his apprehension to religion when he got sick. During his sickness his faith was in a big trough of a wave. First, in his despair, he prayed to God but without any real meaning: “prayed to God again, but was light-headed, and when I was not, I was so ignorant that I knew not what to say”²⁵ As his pain grown bigger his mind started to turn from sane to insane. In the fear of death his mind was completely overwhelmed by visions and thoughts of punishment. He became so confused because of these thoughts, that he was not sure anymore if he deserved his life. He recalled all his life till that time and he considered himself as a wicked creature who “not having the least sense, either of the fear of God in danger, or of thankfulness to God in

²¹ <http://www.gradesaver.com/robinson-crusoe/study-guide/section2/> (07.04.2011)

²² DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 94

²³ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 94

²⁴ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 95

²⁵ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 102

deliverances”²⁶. In my opinion it is very impressive that nevertheless a person realizes that his life means nothing and he lived his whole life in sin, he is capable of forgive himself and ask forgiveness from God. Crusoe did not fear of subservience: “Lord ! what a miserable creature am I?”²⁷ But he did fear of death: “Lord, be my help, for I am in great distress.”²⁸ He looked at this sentence as his first prayer. I think that this is important to mention, because with this statement he pushed himself to the next stair on the stairs which lead him to be a truly religious God-fearing man. He sees his sickness as a punishment for not realizing God’s goodness sooner, and he thinks that his biggest mistake was not listening to his father. From this point we can see Crusoe’s struggle with his faith through the whole book. He starts to read the Bible and suddenly he feels less sick. In my opinion from that ill physical state of body and miserable state of mind for Crusoe, God and the Bible was the way out. He realized that he had to believe in something more powerful than himself to remain sane and be ready to continue his survival.²⁹ From this point in the book God, religion and the Bible played a very important role in Crusoe’s life on the island. There is an interesting part, when he is theorizing on the meaning of the word deliver. The reader may think this a bit confusing, because Robinson used the word deliverance along with providence often before and he seemed to be sure of their meanings. “*Call on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver, and thou shalt glorify me.*”³⁰ This was the sentence where Crusoe did not understand the word deliver, he said: “the word had no sound, as I may say, to me”.³¹ It was not really surprising after I did some little research of the word. I found that deliverance has (except of what I already defined on the beginning) four other meanings which are closely connected to the Bible: 1. “to deliver out of the hands of..., to escape” 2. “drawing someone to one's self” 3. “to deliver into the hands of...for the purpose of judgement.” and the 4. meaning “to have ample space between oneself and one's enemies.”³² Although it could sound a bit unexpected, but in my opinion this incomprehensibility was very apropos for Crusoe, because it gave him something to spend time with. I think that these kind of religious questions emerge in every person who is in a same situation wherein Crusoe was, and by this situation I mean getting acquainted with

²⁶ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 103

²⁷ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 105

²⁸ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 106

²⁹ <http://www.gradesaver.com/robinson-crusoe/study-guide/section2/> (07.04.201)

³⁰ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 108

³¹ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 108

³² <http://www.wordbasedcounseling.org/Articles/Deliverance.htm> (10.04.2011)

the scripture and not being on an island and fighting for survival. The difference is that Crusoe had almost nothing else to do except to learn from it, and trying to figure out the answers for his own questions. We can see that he tried to control his curiosity generated by the desire to create a deeper relationship with God: "I began seriously to read it, and imposed upon my self to read every morning and every night, not tying my self to the number of chapters, but as long as my thoughts shou'd engage me."³³ However on the other hand there are parts in the book where he seems that he became obsessed with religion. For example we can read about sudden prayers of his in a kind of ecstasy of joy, knelt down, hands lifted up to heaven, crying out aloud the name Jesus and so on. After continuing to read from the Bible he gets to conclusion: "deliverance from sin is much greater blessing than deliverance from affliction."³⁴

He is trying to explain his misfortune as God's plan for him because of his sinful past life and he connects all goodness what happened to him on the island to Providence and God. It is interesting, that he is not noticing that these things are not from God, but are from his own hard work. In my opinion this delusion is a part of a mind-controlling game. It helps him to consider his life on the island from a positive point of view. "If he can look upon the corn bread as a gift rather than a product of hard labor, he can be more grateful for its existence."³⁵ This kind of thinking helps him in a very great measure. He feels like he is blessed and because of this he is able to take every barrier much more easily. We can see that how much religion, believing in God and reading the Bible had helped Crusoe through his survival. The reader may wonder if Crusoe would have survived without these things. I think that the other interesting thing about this is the timing. He was in a dark pit with horrible state of mind and very bad physical health when he found the "word of God". In my opinion from that point when he at first truly prayed to God he went through a complete change of his perspective about God and religion and mainly about Providence and Deliverance. After this change he looked differently about his past life. "I looked upon my past life with such horror, and my sins appeared so dreadful, that my soul sought nothing of God but deliverance"³⁶. From that time he always tried to be and act like a God-fearing man. His faith remains same strong in the story only with one exception, when he

³³ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 110

³⁴ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 111

³⁵ <http://www.gradesaver.com/robinson-crusoe/study-guide/section2/> (07.04.2011)

³⁶ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 111

finds a man's footprint on the shore. This is when the existence of devil on the island comes into his thought at first time. "I considered that the devil might have found out abundance of other ways to have terrify'd me than this of the single print of a foot"³⁷. Crusoe's faith in God was abating, but after a time, with the help and strong effect of the sentence "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver, and thou shalt glorify me."³⁸, he convinced himself about God and he swept away his thoughts about the devil. From that time his faith remained deep and strong, and he managed to explain Friday the connection between God and devil without any difficulties. This leads us back to the beginning of this subsection, where I said, that the reader must be confused about deciding Crusoe's faith in God. Now it is clear, that at first he was not that much religious, but he had reached a point, where his only way out of misery was God himself. In my opinion when somebody is isolated from the society and one is fighting for one's own survival it is highly probable that after a certain time he will turn to religion. And probably it will be a bright leading light in one's affliction because it gives something to believe in and to hope for.

1.3 Robinson Crusoe and the Colonial literary era

James Joyce noted that the true symbol of the British conquest is Robinson Crusoe: "He is the true prototype of the British colonist. ..." The whole Anglo-Saxon spirit is in Crusoe: the manly independence, the unconscious cruelty, the persistence, the slow yet efficient intelligence, the sexual apathy, the calculating taciturnity."³⁹

"In a sense Crusoe attempts to replicate his society on the island. This is achieved through the use of European technology, agriculture and even a rudimentary political hierarchy. Several times in the novel Crusoe refers to himself as the 'king' of the island, whilst the captain describes him as the 'governor' to the mutineers. At the very end of the novel the island is explicitly referred to as a 'colony'. The idealised master-servant relationship Defoe depicts between Crusoe and Friday can also be seen in terms of cultural imperialism.

³⁷ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 163

³⁸ DEFOE, D. *The Life & Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965. p. 163

³⁹ James Joyce, "Daniel Defoe," translated from Italian manuscript and edited by Joseph Prescott, *Buffalo Studies* 1 (1964): 24–25

Crusoe represents the 'enlightened' European whilst Friday is the 'savage' who can only be redeemed from his barbarous way of life through assimilation into Crusoe's culture. Nonetheless Defoe also takes the opportunity to criticise the historic Spanish conquest of South America.”⁴⁰

As we can see, it is clear that with the indirect interpretation method we were able to create the same picture about the society that we can find after searching through authentic materials. There are mentioned the society's characteristic features and its problems too. The features can be found as: European technology, agriculture, rudimentary political hierarchy; king, governor. And the problems occur when we analyze Crusoe's reactions, feelings and mainly his thoughts: isolation, loneliness, desperateness.

⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robinson_Crusoe#cite_note-10 (19.03.2012)

2 Ernest Hemingway – The Old Man and the Sea

"You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who."⁴¹ "Through Santiago's actions Hemingway teaches the reader about bravery and perseverance in the face of adversity."⁴²

The Spanish fishermen take you out on the sea, and you can fish the whole day. It is a stoop, very hard work, which you must do at full stretch. But after a six hour long combat, if you haul a great tuna on the shore, after you fought with it until any part of your body wished the ceaseless endeavor and if you finally pull it to the side of your boat, when it cradles silvery, greenish and bluish on the indolent ocean, that is the point when you reach the catharsis. The struggle is the pride of a simple person, the redemption caused by physical pain or the battle with the nature, where is no place for pretending nor for opportunism.⁴³

There is a promised harmony in the seasonal marriage of maturity and fatigue, transience and fructification. Our hero considers the big fish, at the same time more noble than his own human kind. This hero is an old man, poor man, clever man and a hunter man living along with nature: "I would gladly swap with this big fish down there"⁴⁴

"There isn't any symbolism. The sea is the sea. The old man is an old man. The boy is a boy and the fish is a fish. The shark are all sharks no better and no worse. All the symbolism that people say is shit. What goes beyond is what you see beyond when you know."⁴⁵ I thought that this quotation was worth mentioning mainly because I have motifs in my thesis which in some subsections are connected with ideas of mine. However I have no intentions to go against the author's clear warning, to talk about them like symbols as many other critics did: "There are a variety of different readings of the novella. It has, for instance, been read as a Christian allegory, a Nietzschean parable of overcoming, a Freudian dream of Oedipal wish-fulfillment, and a Humanistic saga of triumph in the face

⁴¹ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 61 ISBN 90 280 4892 8.

⁴² <http://www.echeat.com/essay.php/essay.php?t=31555> (16.04.2011)

⁴³ PALIN, M. *Hemingway nyomában*. Budapest : Park Könyvkiadó, 2008. p. 158 ISBN 978-963-530-818-7

⁴⁴ SZENTKUTHY, M. *Műzsák testamentuma*. Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1985. p. 265 ISBN 963 14 0336 x.

⁴⁵ Ernest Hemingway, 1952

of absurdity.”⁴⁶ When I connect a motif to an event in the book I do it because I think that it might be the effect of the event.

2.1 Survival

The book immediately starts to describe the old man, the boy and the unlucky fishing situation. The old man had not take fish since eighty-four days. From the first few pages we can learn, that the old man is very old, thin and that he is suffering in skin cancer because of the suns reflection on his skin through the tropic sea. This fact is important to know, because it throws new light upon the old man’s eighty-fifth day fishing. Probably he is thin because of the lack of food in his weekdays. Maybe without the boys help he would not have survived so far. He checked on the old man every day, because he learned everything about fishing from the old man, and therefore he liked him very much, and wanted to take care of him. Fishing was very hard for the old man, mostly because he had to do everything alone and also because he had very old tools and boat. Although he claimed that he was strong enough to go fish alone, the boy brought him food, and said: “You’ll not fish without eating while I’m alive.”⁴⁷ In my opinion the boy knew that without regular eating the old man probably would have died on the sea.

The survival begins for Santiago when he is putting his boat on the sea and in my opinion he is partly aware of that. He wanted to prove that he is capable of catching a big fish not just for himself, but also for the other people in the village. That is why I think that deep inside he knew that he might not return by evening or maybe not at all. His tools what he used for fishing were very old and we can say that he had just the basic things: a small skiff, a harpoon, rope and a small knife. This fact creates a small contrast. If he knew that he might not return soon, why did not he pack more things necessary for survival? In my opinion we can explain this question in two ways. Maybe he was ready not to return. He was at the autumn of his life and there was the thought in his mind that he is alone again. After time struggling enough with the marlin he says: “Come and kill me. I do not care

⁴⁶ <http://www.gradesaver.com/the-old-man-and-the-sea/study-guide/section1/> (14.04.2011)

⁴⁷ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 15 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

who kills who.”⁴⁸ At this point he was not afraid of death. He knew that the sea could be a very dangerous place: ”She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel...”⁴⁹ Despite that this happened long after he put out, in my opinion it proves the first idea. The other explanation could be his big experience on the sea and the inside volition he felt for catching a big fish. To confirm this idea I must jump a bit forward in the story again. Experience and knowledge shows itself when he first feels hunger. “The old man is almost superhuman in his eating patterns. He never professes hunger, despite eating very little or not at all. For him, eating is not about pleasure, but is instead a painful act that he must endure for strength. The old man does at one point refer to hunger as pain, but in terms of the fish’s hunger, not his own.”⁵⁰ Without knowing what part and type of the fishes and what kind of crab is eatable he would have died. The interesting thing is that he did not eat to ease his hunger, but firstly to gain enough strength, to be able to finish his mission and just secondly to keep himself alive. “The old man’s battle with the fish is not only a battle of strength, but a battle of wills. The old man makes up for his old age with incredible endurance, willing to withstand hunger, physical pain, and isolation from the rest of the world as he battles the fish.”⁵¹

When he was fighting with the sharks his knowledge, his experience and skills were his only rescuers. Here we can ask a singular question: Was physical strength playing an important role through his survival? In my opinion the answer is a no faded into a yes. Yes he needed strength, but not more than an old man could have. The proof is that if we go over his deeds when his life was in danger, it was his skills which put him through that situation.⁵² I think that survival is only possible when the person owns a certain amount of knowledge about those exact circumstances, has enough usable experience and possesses serious skills.

⁴⁸ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 61 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁴⁹ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 72 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁵⁰ <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/hunger-theme.html> (23.04.2011)

⁵¹ <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/perseverance-theme.html> (23.04.2011)

⁵² <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/strength-skill-theme.html> (23.04.2011)

2.2 Isolation

“The theme of alienation, isolation either from society or one's self is a recurring and necessary theme in much of Hemingway's work.”⁵³

Santiago lives in a small shack isolated from the village. The fact that his house is almost just a room may grow the thought in the reader that Santiago is materially unsuccessful.⁵⁴ Because of his almost three luckless months he became the laughing-stock between the other fishermen in the village. However I do not think that this was the reason, why he was living bit far from the hamlet. From the first few pages of the book, we can learn that the old man had lost his wife long ago. After it happened Santiago's life was not the same anymore. In my opinion he never managed to deal with the loss of his wife. He often recalled her, but when he did that, he felt pain and sorrow inside him. He wanted to get rid of these feelings and I feel sort of that this is why he moved out from the village. There is a sentence in the book, when the narrator says: “Once there had been a tinted photograph of his wife on the wall but he had taken it down because it made him too lonely to see it”⁵⁵ which in my opinion proves this theory. The problem is that not being in the village, living isolated was not a solution for getting over his wife's death. Even so he did it, and I think that this was possible because of his friend, the boy Manolin. He was not just a friend for him, but also a company, especially on the sea, where sometimes silence means solitude. When the boy tells Santiago that his parents want him to work on another boat, he was not angry but I think that he felt sorry that he will lose his apprentice. The deep relationship between the two can be seen when Santiago says: “I know you did not leave me because you doubted.”⁵⁶

Sitting in the boat far away from the shore Santiago was talking to himself. He said that he could not remember when he started doing so. In my opinion that was the effect of isolation and loneliness on the sea because of the silence what I have mentioned above. Despite that if somebody is talking to himself and he does not get any answer because he is alone, it could abate loneliness with breaking the silence and it could also change the mood

⁵³ <http://en.allexperts.com/q/Hemingway-Ernest-3413/Soldier-Home-Ernest-Hemingway.htm> (23.04.2011)

⁵⁴ <http://www.gradesaver.com/the-old-man-and-the-sea/study-guide/section1/> (23.04.2011)

⁵⁵ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 13 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁵⁶ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 10 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

to less tense. In this kind of situations the man who is alone usually reaches the point, where he retraces something important for him. For Santiago this point was when he said: “Now is the time to think of only one thing. That which I was born for.”⁵⁷ If we divide the old man’s isolation into degrees, the next would be when he lost sight of land. That was also the time when the marlin took the bait.⁵⁸ We can see that two important things had happened almost at the same time. Was the joy from the catching big enough to dull the frightful feeling of being lost on the sea? For the old man definitively yes. “He was happy feeling the gentle pulling and then he felt something hard and unbelievably heavy.”⁵⁹ From the moment he felt the fish pulling the rope he concentrated on nothing but the catch. We can see that how important was for him to take a big fish home after so many unlucky days. Despite that Santiago claimed that it is not possible for a man to be on the sea he does not seem to be heavily nervous about it. The reason here could be either his wish for the marlin or he just simply found pleasure in that situation probably because he recognized that the marlin could give him wisdom he never was able to acquire through his life. During the long struggle with the fish the reader may think that Santiago is a part of another world. There is just him and the fish, everything else is irrelevant. Probably this part was the best opportunity for his deepest thoughts to come up on the surface. The state of his engrossment about the situation goes deeper when the setness of his purpose starts breaking. This is clearly visible when he says: “Fish, you are going to have to die anyway. Do you have to kill me too?”⁶⁰ This fright immediately ends when the marlin dies. The great fight is over and Santiago’s tenseness looks like it is dissolving. We can feel this change also on his manner of speech which gathered speed immediately. There is just one thing which is a bit dim: “is he bringing me in or am I bringing him in?”⁶¹ We can find this sentence a bit confusing because of the time it was said in the story. The marlin was already dead when the old man hesitated. In my opinion the reason of this could be fatigue. Santiago was really tired and he was not sure if the battle with the marlin was real or just a

⁵⁷ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 28 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁵⁸ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 29 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁵⁹ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 30 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁶⁰ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 61 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁶¹ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 65 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

dream. But then the pain from his wounds confirmed the reality: “Now he knew there was the fish and his hand and back were no dream.”⁶²

The old man was isolated socially and emotionally. “This isolation defines who he is, and emphasizes the unique nature of his character. Isolation becomes both a weakness (he suffers from loneliness), but also a necessary element to his battle with the fish.”⁶³ The level of his isolation had changed after the marlin was tied to the side of his skiff. The interesting thing about it is that it did not go deeper, but rather it turned around and the degree of loneliness inside him was starting to abate. The reader may think that it is unnatural, because usually if someone is in any kind of isolation and as long as that person can occupy himself or the situation in which he is could be considered as an occupation, the person is not really able to think deeply into his actual isolation, because his mind is concentrating on his momentary action. The reason why Santiago felt the exact opposite of this idea could be his great relief because of the end of his struggling with the marlin. His gladness was so intense in that situation that it made him forget the fact that he is completely alone on the endless sea without any sign of land. Regrettably this feeling does not last long in him because a shark arrived with the purpose to destroy his gem, the big marlin. From this point in the story, the idea of distraction I have mentioned above prevails and the isolation falls into the background. The respect for the marlin takes its place.

2.3 Respect - Pride - Religion

“In *The Old Man and the Sea*, pride and humility are not mutually exclusive qualities. The old man is declaratively characterized as humble, yet he “suffers no loss of pride” in being so. Later, however, his pride is referred to as “long gone.” What does it mean to be proud, the text asks us to consider. Humility, it seems, is a beneficial characteristic, as it keeps the old man sound and rational in his decisions on the sea. Santiago briefly wonders if pride is a problem, if killing for pride makes the act a sin.”⁶⁴

⁶² HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 65 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁶³ <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/isolation-theme.html> (22.04.2011)

⁶⁴ <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/pride-theme.html> (22.04.2011)

Santiago had never disrespected anybody. Not like some of the other fishermen in the village had disrespected him. He was not angry with any of them. However he had great pride in himself. He was a very old and practiced fisherman, and he believed that he is strong and healthy enough to prove his knowledge about fishing. But there were also people, who knew that he gained his own respect through his long years. One of them was Martin, the owner of the Terrace, who used to give him food. He always sent it to the old man by Manolin, because he knew that Santiago was too stubborn to accept it directly.⁶⁵ I think that Santiago's pride is important to consider because that was one of the things which had driven him through the story. "In *The Old Man and the Sea*, friendship is always based on mutual respect."⁶⁶ Manolin played a very important role in Santiago's life. He was not just a boy to whom Santiago could give all his knowledge about fishing, which he collected with hard work through his life, but he was the one who gave Santiago the recognition he needed. "There are many good fishermen and some are great ones. But there is only you."⁶⁷ When Manolin said this, Santiago felt happy and I think that he considered it as a kind of glorification, which gave him strength for carry through his plan, which was to return with a great fish. Santiago felt the respect from the boy towards him and he also returned it by an invisible equality between them created by him. We can see this equality when Manolin offers a beer for the old man and Santiago says: "Why not? Between fisherman."⁶⁸, and also when the boy says that he wants to serve Santiago some way, the old man says: "You are already a man."⁶⁹ Here we can see Santiago's wisdom he acquired through the years. He knew that with showing respect and appreciation he contribute in the boy's spiritual growth.

The old man many times mentions a baseball player, the great DiMaggio. The interesting about this fact is that although the reader probably hauls down the conclusion that DiMaggio is much younger than Santiago, the old man looks at him and speaks about him as an icon. This proves the idea about giving equality without having any preconceptions connected with age, which was one of the most important features of the

⁶⁵ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 16 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁶⁶ <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/friendship-theme.html> (22.04.2011)

⁶⁷ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 18 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁶⁸ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 10 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁶⁹ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 11 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

old men. Through the story we learn that despite DiMaggio had had a serious injury he never gave up and returned to baseball. Probably this perseverance was the main reason why he was so important for Santiago. The following sentence shows us what DiMaggio meant for him: “But I think the great DiMaggio would be proud of me today.”⁷⁰ These kind of imaginary admission helped the old man through his fagging. “Endurance becomes a way we connect the old man and the fish he fights, as they share a determination that, in its magnitude, separates them from other people and creatures.”⁷¹ After the arrival of the first shark Santiago felt a kind of doubtfulness. “It was too good to last, he thought”⁷² He put so intense power into killing the shark that we may consider this as a compound of all the bad things that had happened with him through the battle with the fish, all the aching wounds and the spiritual prostration. After this fight came his most important recognition: “But man is not made for defeat,’ he said. ‘A man can be destroyed but not defeated.”⁷³ In that moment it became clear that it did not matter anymore what was going to happen either with the marlin or with Santiago that wisdom was what he was looking for. It reinforced his level of his most important features which were pride and respect. “Although he does not recognize it himself, what makes the stakes of the battle with the marlin so high is the notion of respect. The old man derives respect from others with displays of strength and prowess. Santiago himself feels great awe and respect for the marlin, repeatedly emphasizing this during his struggle and after he has killed the fish. Additionally, the old man’s friendships are based on mutual respect.”⁷⁴

“I am not religious,’ he said. ‘But I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that I should catch this fish, and I promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin de Cobre if I catch him. That is a promise.”⁷⁵ Despite that the second part of the sentence makes the first part a bit ineffectual, we can see that after a certain time of being isolated the request from a higher power is extremely probable. The prayers gave him relief and that was exactly what he needed. The next religious train of thoughts appeared after he had killed the marlin

⁷⁰ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 64 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁷¹ <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/perseverance-theme.html> (23.04.2011)

⁷² HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 67 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁷³ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 68 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁷⁴ <http://www.shmoop.com/old-man-the-sea/respect-reputation-theme.html> (23.04.2011)

⁷⁵ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 44 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

and it was about sin. “You were born to be a fisherman and a fish was born to be a fish.”⁷⁶ Nevertheless the former sentence gives us a clear picture that killing fish is not a sin for a fisherman, because that is what his job is, after he sunk in thoughts he became dubious: “You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?”⁷⁷ This question is an exact proof that how much respect he had in himself and how seriously he considers the consequences of all his deeds. The answer for this question is foggy but the correct interpretation of it lies there in everyone who has read *The Old Man and the Sea*: “Fishing kills me exactly as it keeps me alive.”⁷⁸

2.4 The Old Man and the Sea and Modernism

“Modernism was a backlash against more traditional types of literature. It was born out of the instability that rocked the world during the World Wars, and birth of the atomic era. It was characterized by the relativity that dominated culture and thought. Hemingway was one of the greatest modernists, and changed the way both critics and ordinary people thought about novels and short stories alike.”⁷⁹

Important elements of Modernism:

- Disillusionment and loss of faith in the American Dream
- Rejection of traditional themes and subjects
- Emphasis on bold experimentation in style and form, reflecting the fragmentation of society
- Psychological focus on character, focused on the inner workings of the human mind.
- Revolt against the spiritual debasement of the modern world.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 69 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁷⁷ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 70 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁷⁸ HEMINGWAY, E. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Amsterdam : Meulenhoff Educatief, 1980. p. 70 ISBN 90 280 4892 8

⁷⁹ http://www.utc.edu/Faculty/Deborah-McAllister/imax/old_man_and_the_sea.htm <19.03.2012>

⁸⁰

<ftp://billingswest.billings.k12.mt.us/bodinek/American%20Literature%20I/Great%20Gatsby/Modernism%20handout.pdf> (19.03.2012)

The analysis of *The Old Man and the Sea* in this chapter proves that this work can also be interpreted as a time capsule and a reflection of the society from Hemingway's time. The reexamination of existence and the theme of loneliness and isolation were the devices that let us reach this conclusion.

3 Cormac McCarthy – The Road

Darkness.

Death. Dying world.

Destruction.

Fire. Ashes. Soot.

Hunger. Starvation. Pain. Suffering.

These words probably creates a very pessimistic and sad mood in the reader. Is this the point? Is this feeling what the author wants us to feel? In my opinion, yes. Yes, because he tries to create a setting, wherein he gives you the opportunity, to try to reach the pitch of your ability of hoping. Hope. Despite of those dark words the reader might find hope in the story. But is finding hope between the lines the main goal of the author, or has he another intention with his sad story? Is he trying to teach us something about religion? Is he trying to wake us up to the forgotten truth about Parent-child relationship? Is he trying to show us what real survival looks like? These are the questions what I try to answer in this chapter.

3.1 Survival

Start at the beginning. We are shown a dying planet with people on it trying to survive. The plants are dead and the animals are on the edge of extinction. There is nearly no food which caused some people to into cannibalism. But what exactly caused all this? We see the world through the eye of the father. He says that there was an enormous light what started the destruction. What could this light have been? Was it an atomic bomb or some kind of nuclear war? Solar flare or aliens? There are so many theories but all of them is disputable except one, which is an environmental meltdown. “It's about what would happen if environmental meltdown continued to its logical conclusion: crops and animals would die, the weather would go out of control, there would be spontaneous wildfires and blizzards, you wouldn't be able to grow anything and the only thing left to eat would be

tinned food and each other.”⁸¹ When I was reading the story – at the beginning – I felt a kind of urge for getting know the cause of the apocalypse. But after a few pages it became irrelevant. I was starting to sympathize with the father and the boy. I was starting to see the events through their point of view. And I think that from their point of view the cause was not important but the effect was. They needed to get along in their situation, they needed to survive. That was their first priority, especially for the father.

What was the force which kept them going? Hope? Love? The basic instincts? In my opinion all of them. Hope in a better place where they could live a normal life. The father had dreams about the past many times. In these dreams he saw a living world with all the beauty of nature and life in it. Probably this view was floating before his eyes throughout the story every time when he made any kind of effort to make themselves survive. However deep inside he knew that there was no chance for them to find that place. That is why I think that in a way the father was stuck in his dreams (in his past) although this vision was one of the most important driving and guiding forces which made him care. The boy had also hope. The difference is that he could not be able to recall memories when everything was “normal”. He knew only things what his father had told him. That is why he was afraid of everything which was new to him and that is why asked his father whether there are people on Mars.

As I take it love was also a powerful emotion which had I great influence on them mainly on the events caused by them. One might say that giving food to a stranger and helping people when they lack food is generosity not love. But I think that we can agree on the fact that love is a basic element of generosity. McCarthy uses a symbol for love (and for many other things) in his story which reaches its emotional vortex on the last pages when the father is dying:

“I want to be with you.

You cant.

Please.

You cant. You have to carry the fire.

I dont know how to.

Yes you do.

⁸¹ <http://www.newscientist.com/blogs/culturelab/2010/01/joe-penhall-humanity-after-apocalypse.html>
(18.03.2012)

Is it real? The fire?

Yes it is.

Where is it? I dont know where it is.

Yes you do. It's inside you. It was always there. I can see it.”⁸²

Carrying the fire meant carrying love and being humane in a world where humanity - because of the consequences of the happening - seems to degrade itself into an animal like level of living beings. Basic instincts were also playing a huge role in the stream of event of the story. Every living creature has an instinct inside which makes it want to live. In case of life threatening conditions it is willing to do everything just to survive. Humans are not exceptions but they have an ability which makes this instinct weaker in certain situations. This ability is thinking. In a case of a suicide thinking could be so strong that it even overwhelms the basic instinct of survival.

With his writing style the author managed to create a stimulus lacking environment. In my opinion as the environment lacks stimulus so is the reader able to read through the story with an intensifying emotional state which leads him/her into a deeper empathy. What do I mean by a stimulus lacking environment? The scarce conversations, dialogs, communication (short questions, short answers) between the boy and the father and the repetition of the similar happenings (searching for food, making a camp, gathering lightwood, making fire...). Because of these things for me certain parts of the work seemed more like poetry than prose.

„How would you know if you were the last man on earth? he said.

I dont guess you would know it. You'd just be it.

Nobody would know it.

It wouldnt make any difference. When you die it's the same as if everybody else did too.

I guess God would know it. Is that it?

There is no God.

No?

There is no God and we are his prophets.”⁸³

⁸² McCarthy, C., *The Road* p.91

⁸³ McCarthy, C., *The Road* p.54

Ely's part in the story is very interesting. After a mini-research I found out that according to the Bible Elijah is a herald of the Messiah who will return on the Day of Judgment. The symbolic meaning of the dialog above with Ely as a participant in it is splendid because of the contradiction that he considers themselves as prophets despite the fact that he denies the existence of God. Whose prophets are they then? I think we could also take this story as a messianic parable, the father and the boy walking on a road as pilgrims camping by rivers and in caves.

3.2 Religion

The boy wants to help Ely at all costs. This is clearly because of the goodness inside him. The question that where does this goodness come from is appropriate. It is a wisdom which - to appear - needs a lot of experience. But the boy did not have any. He could not have had because he was not in a situation like this before (meeting with a stranger who is not one of the bad guys). This part shows us that there are things what cannot be explained. In my opinion in this case only faith can be the answer to this question. There is no need for a particular religion, strongly believing in something is more than enough. Despite all the horrible things that happened to them the boy believed in the goodness inside people, which goodness comes from within. This goodness was the same one what the father was passing over to the boy all the time with him helping and caring about the boy.

In my opinion the boy's mission is to somehow outlive death, the very same death which acts like a lover who is reaching its own demise.

3.3 The Road and Postmodernism

„If one were to describe postmodernism in just a word or two, "skepticism" and "relativism" would probably best capture the overall ethos of its adherents. Deep skepticism about "absolute truths" and traditional systems of philosophy and religion is a common thread running through all the critical theories that comprise postmodern thought. They even criticize the very notion that there is any such thing as "objective reality," and

reject logic, reason, and science as tools for discovering truth. Religion is particularly suspect and is seen as merely a culturally determined meta-narrative. ”⁸⁴

„Postmodern literature, like postmodernism as a whole, is hard to define and there is little agreement on the exact characteristics, scope, and importance of postmodern literature. But as is often the case with artistic movements, postmodern literature is commonly defined in relation to its precursor. „⁸⁵

These two descriptions of Postmodernism are the evidence that it is impossible to define this literary era. However it is possible to reconstruct the author’s point of view about his society and the time he lived in. This is the reason why we can say that the indirect interpretation method worked in the case of this book as well. There is no accurate definition of Postmodernism, but with the analysis of *The Road* we were able to summarize the main features of this literary era which matched the two descriptions above.

⁸⁴ <http://voices.yahoo.com/the-road-postmodernism-through-dystopia-3322612.html> (19.03.2012)

⁸⁵ <http://tnrdlibrarysystembookclubblog.wordpress.com/2011/12/09/the-god-of-small-things-by-arundhati-roy-thoughts/> (19.03.2012)

Conclusion

Isolation and survival brings out many same features from people, however many other attributes are different depending on the person's character, the circumstances around him and the type of isolation he is in. Robinson Crusoe was isolated from the society involuntarily, Santiago became emotionally isolated accidentally, however in his case he was prepared for it. The boy and his father were isolated and fighting for their lives after an unknown apocalyptic event. Through the survival for all the characters in the three books the inceptive supplies had determinative importance for the later happenings and they defined the level of their survival. We can see that Crusoe's isolation was the longest but his survival was the easiest because of the supplies he gained at the beginning. If we consider the old man's isolation, we see that it was the shortest but his survival was very hard from the physical capabilities and the inceptive supplies' point of view. Clearly the boy's and his father's survival was the hardest from every angle whereof it can be considered. Another very important factor is the isolated person's aspect of religion or a higher power. At the beginning of the book *The Life & Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* Crusoe's relationship with God was weak which became very strong and deep at the end. Santiago was not talking with God almost never despite of this through his isolated survival he prayed to Him. The father's and his son's connection with God was the most fascinating because of the goodness in the boy and the small possibility of hope in a hopeless world. Other important factors are people's inner features and the emotions which determined their days through their isolation. Robinson Crusoe was adventurous before he got on the island however fear very often defined his thoughts and deeds. Santiago's pride and respect were the only feelings which helped him survive. The father's only driving force was to take care of his son and it was the same thing that let his consciousness survive even after the physical death.

How is survival and isolation treated in the selected literary eras? All the three authors were trying to emphasize different aspects of survival in their books, although there is a basic factor in all the three stories which is the same: gathering or searching for food. In the *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* Daniel Defoe emphasized how people change if they are isolated from civilization for a long time. Ernest Hemingway in the *Old Man and the Sea* emphasized that pride and will do not necessarily decrease no

matter how old we are. In *The Road* Cormac McCarthy showed us that goodness comes from within and if we look deep we can find hope even in the darkest situations. Were survival and isolation relevant for people living in those time periods? In the case of the Colonial Literary Era survival – as the survival in *Robinson Crusoe* – played an important role among people. In the Modernist and Postmodernist era mental isolation was very common, probably because of the disappointment in the actual society. How are authors from different literary eras able to make a frozen picture of their society and insert it in their books? They have the ability to formulate stories in a way that lets them describe their time in great detail and in this way it is relatively easy for the reader to comprehend and acquire all the information – which was important for them – about the society they lived in. Is it possible to consider and interpret certain literary works as time capsules? Yes, it is, but the reader must pay attention to the fact that which feature(s) of the society are the authors trying to emphasize with their work. Do the selected books reflect the society wherein their author lived? Yes they do, but it strongly depends on the selected book. To find out whether the description of the society was between the author's intentions or not first we need to read the book then interpret it according to the facts we have learned about that certain society. We compare our results with the real facts and in case they match our hypothesis is correct. Is it possible to interpret the selected books with the indirect method? Yes it is possible, although to be able to reach the interpretation of the society's criticism, in the cases of *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Road* we need to have a small modicum of background knowledge about the society in which the author lived.

Despite the fact that with the three selected books my interpretations with the indirect method proved that they could be considered as reflections of certain literary eras, in my opinion readers' own interpretations are at least as much important – and can give them the solutions for many problems – as the interpretations in this study.

Resumé

Za cieľ mojej práce som stanovil skúmanie troch kníh z rozličných literárnych dôb, a aby prostredníctvom vhodnej výkladovej metódy som dostal komplexný obraz o spoločnosti doby, o jej charakteristiky a problémy. Zaujímavosťou tejto metódy je, že nespracúva knihy tradičným spôsobom. Informácie nezíská z vonkajších zdrojov, neinterpretuje podľa toho. Práve naopak. Na základe interpretácie skúsi vytvoriť obraz a to porovnáva so skutočnými udalosťami. Vybral som knihy: Robinson Crusoe od Daniela Defoa, Starec a more od Ernesta Hemingwaya a Cesta od Cormaca MacCarthyho. Tieto diela vzťahujú sa k nasledujúcim literárnym dobám: Literatúra koloniálnej doby, Modernizmus a Postmodernizmus.

V prvej kapitole môjho štúdia sa zaoberám s Robinsonom Crusoem. Túto časť som rozdelil do viacerých podkapitol na základe hlavných motívov. Sústredil som hlavne na slová a myšlienky hlavnej postavy, a na základe týchto som skúsil rekonštruovať sociálnu situáciu.

V druhej kapitole som analyzoval knihu Starec a more, počas ktorej opäť sa formulovali motívy ktoré sú v tesnom kontakte s motívmy prežitia a izolácie. Napríklad otázky náboženstva a pýchy.

V tretej kapitole – tiež podľa chronologického poradia literárnych dôb – sa zaoberám s dielom Cesta. Počas analýzy sa sformulovali vo mne viacero otázok, na ktorých som pokúsil odpovedať na konci kapitoli.

Počas môjho práce som odhalil skutočnosť, že demonštračná nepriama metóda funguje, čiže, na základe diel dokážeme rekonštruovať obraz spoločnosti, ktorý vytvoril autor. Však v niektorých prípadoch, aby tento obraz bol verný, potrebujeme základné informácie. Napriek tomu, že táto demonštračná metóda funguje, podľa mňa je dôležitý aj výklad čitateľa, čo v problematických situáciach dokáže poskytnúť vyriešenie.

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