

Narratives of Resistance: A Critical Exploration of Colonial Legacies and Ecological Violence in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy and Anne Pancake

Sreya Mukherjee

Abstract

This paper offers a postcolonial ecocritical perspective on contemporary American literature by exploring and analysing instances of ecological and human violence in two significant novels: Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian; or, The Evening Redness in the West* (1985) and Anne Pancake's *Strange as This Weather Has Been* (2007). While McCarthy delves into the portrayal of ethnic and racial violence and Pancake delves into the intricacies of class violence, both authors demonstrate a keen awareness of the intricate connections between economic and political hierarchies and various manifestations of ecological and human violence across different American settings.

These novels, in essence, challenge the deterministic and colonial constructs underpinning contemporary societies concerning economy, power, and knowledge. They also address the troubling legitimisation of hostility and violence against those perceived as 'other' or different. A closer examination of the experiences and transformations of specific characters, such as the fifteen-year-old female protagonist, Bant, in *Strange as This Weather Has Been*, and the male teenager known simply as the kid in *Blood Meridian*, reveals how individuals and groups can dismantle the deterministic colonial constructs of patriarchy and violence through heightened ecological awareness. This analysis sheds light on the enduring discrepancies and contradictions inherent in the legacies of colonial culture and modern politics for both colonising and colonised nations. It ultimately underscores the limitations faced by coloured Americans in their pursuit of freedom and equality within the frameworks of colonial and national systems.

Keywords: American literature, ecological awareness, race, violence, colonisation.