

**POSTCOLONIAL ECHOES IN SILENCE: A MINIMALIST  
APPROACH TO RECLAIMING MARGINALIZED VOICES IN  
THE ROAD**

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**Abstract**

*Minimalism as a theory was introduced in the year of 1960 in United States of America. The theme of Minimalism used to reduce the length sparse dialogue, restrained acting and subdued color palette. This theory used to less the lengthy dialogues make the movie to be understandable by the viewers. This research paper focuses on the novel The Road (2006) as well as the movie version of the novel. Adopting a novel into a movie transforms words into screen. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century most of the novels were transformed into movies that includes Dog man (2025), It ends with us (2024), Pain hustlers (2023) and so on. This research paper explores the Award-winning novel The Road (2006), which was written by Cormac McCarthy American post-apocalyptic novel writer. This research paper examines the novel with its movie version using the theoretical framework of Linda Hutcheon's theory. This research paper enquires by what means the minimalism is implemented in the transformation of novel into a movie of 1.51 hours duration.*

**Keywords:** McCarthy, Minimalism, theory of Adaptation, Linda Hutcheon and Films.

**Introduction**

Films are the finest medium, which connects all type of people. In this contemporary world of film industry main story of the film were taken from the novels. In this modern world films are the biggest mediator to advertise or

show the things to reach or understand the things easily. Cormac McCarthy was a well-known English writer from American literature. He has written several novels, screenplays and some short stories also. His areas are gothic, western, post-apocalyptic and also travel writings. Cormac McCarthy in his career many of the novels were adapted as films. *No country for old Man* converted into movie in the year 2007 and it was directed by Leon's brothers. The road movie came into film version in the year 2009. It was directed by John Hilcoat. *All the pretty horses* as a movie came in the year of 2000, which was directed by Billy Bob. This novel was Published in the year of 1992. *The sunset limited* as a movie released in the year of 2011 also adapted from the McCarthy's novel. This movie directed by Tommy Jones. *The counselor* as a movie came in the year 2013 which was directed by Ridly Scott. This movie's screenplay is written by Cormac McCarthy. James Franco directed a film adapted from McCarthy's novel *Child of God*. This work was written in the year 1973 while the film was converted into a movie on 2013.

This research paper examines the minimalistic approach to the novel *The Road* (2006) with the comparison of movie version and also the text version. The Road movie was directed by John Hillcoat released in the year of 2009 and released by Nick Wechsler and his team in the year of 2010. The screen plays of the film by Joe Penhall. The novel written in the year of 2005 and the following year of 2006 the book was published. This novel won several awards in specifically won Pulitzer Prize in 2007.

Films are the messengers in this modern world in words by screening. Apart from images movies should take care about words. Films conveys the essence of the story while comparing with words in the novels in the writer's point of view. In television series, the directors explore the act of adaptation from print to screen. Shakespeare has converted the words into the stage play during the sixteenth century. His most of the works were firstly appeared as stage play after sometimes the dramas and poems were published in the folios and quartos.

## Literature review

Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* has been widely studied for its minimalist style, which scholars characterize by lexical economy, pared-down syntax, sparse punctuation, and narrative ellipsis that reflect the novel's devastated post-apocalyptic setting and compel readers to engage interpretively with its silences. McCarthy's minimalism is not simply a formal device but an ethical strategy, since the absence of names, detailed backstories, and descriptive

excess mirrors the moral and existential barrenness of the narrative world while demanding imaginative participation from the reader (Cooper 2011). (Cooper 113; Sullivan 78). Moreover, although the prose is austere, McCarthy's vivid sensory imagery ensures that each sparse word carries intensified affective weight, producing a paradoxical density within apparent simplicity (Walsh56). This duality of minimal form and maximal resonance has anchored much of the textual analyses on the novel. The researcher has come out with literature review that so far minimalist approach is less concentrated in this framework. The researcher applied one more research design to understand the purpose of the research paper. On this point, contemporary adaptation theory becomes crucial, using the tool to analyse how the austerity of prose is negotiated in film. Linda Hutcheon argues that adaptation must be understood as 'repetition without replication,' a process that is inherently dialogic and creative rather than derivative (Hutcheon 7). Similarly, Robert Stam critiques fidelity discourse, suggesting instead that adaptation should be seen as dialogism, where film and literature enter into textual conversation rather than hierarchical comparison (Stam 62). Brian McFarlane, too, emphasizes the borders between transmission and adaptation proper, a distinction particularly useful after dealing with minimalism, where effects often arise from what is withheld rather than what is expressed (McFarlane 12). In the context of *The Road*, such theoretical perspectives illuminate how cinematic minimalism through long takes, muted color palettes, spare sound design, and silences can function as an inter-semiotic translation of McCarthy's prose economy. The ethical stakes, however, are significant: how does the adaptation preserve the novel's restraint and its demand that audiences confront absence, or does it risk sensationalizing silence through visual spectacle? Here, Hutcheon's and Stam's frameworks allow scholars to assess adaptation as both interpretive and transformative, acknowledging the impossibility of literal transfer while valuing functional equivalence across media. In this phase, perspectives have reframed the 2009 film adaptation not as a test of fidelity but as an exploration of how minimalist aesthetics can be transposed into cinematic language, creating a dialogue between literary and visual modes of austerity. This approach also identifies a gap in current scholarship: while McCarthy studies emphasize textual minimalism and adaptation studies address intermedial translation, few works systematically combine the two. By integrating these discourses, research on *The Road* can articulate how minimalism operates as both aesthetic and ethical practice, and how adaptation theory provides the critical tools to

analyze its transformation in film. Ultimately, this synthesis enriches both fields, advancing our understanding of McCarthy's craft and demonstrating how adaptation studies illuminate the challenges of translating minimalist literature into cinema.

Adaptation is becoming the life changing art of work in the field of interdisciplinary in literature. In this field of academic research scholars made far-reaching moments in finding new ideas and perspectives in the academic arena. Adaptation makes the old novels to become greater levels. In this research paper the researcher aims to collect the similarities connecting with the theory of adaptation. Minimalism is a lifestyle or style used in many fields. Literature, arts and all type of fields. In literature minimalism used to produce the text into simple, clarity, Economical language reducing the poetical or fictional words or ideas become understandable one to the readers. Key principles of minimalism are simplicity, intentional, mindfulness and sustainability. Minimalism in literature followed in various genres Poem, Fiction, Non-fiction, Drama, One-act plays, Biography, Memoir and more. Second key principle of this style intentionality that provides narrow downing the particular idea or the key concept of the fiction or any piece of work. That explains, what is the purpose of writing for. Third key principle of the style mindfulness this key helps to complete the work not focusing one idea. Final key concept principle of minimalism is sustainability this key idea helps to reduce.

### **Minimalism in Film**

Marriam webster dictionary explains Minimalism is a style or technique as in various fields music, literature, or design that is characterized by extreme sparenness and simplicity. Minimalism as movement first appeared in the 1960s, has had a significant influence on both art and design (Margariti et al. 2017). The theory of minimalism uses to comprehend the grim gears of the fictional notions in the novel. In order to the filmic aspect's web series, drama, films and short films also.

The use of minimalism in graphic design can result in simple, uncluttered layouts that put emphasis on readability and usability. Minimalism can enhance the effectiveness of connecting with audiences by helping to bring attention to important messages or items by removing superfluous features (Gumber 2023).

The theme of minimalism made a trend set at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century period of time. The movement De Stijl

did a spark in Netherland in the year 1917 in the cinemas the setting of the bedgrounds in the scenes the landscapes, important colors and etc. Piet Mondrian' art works are in the movies showing things to introduce the movie with rectangular blocks to screen *Obendorf* (2011). In cinematic minimalism there are some important key features to define the theory.

### **Sparse dialogue**

Firstly, sparse dialogue reduces the dialogues that are spoken language in the films instead replacing the setting is to be understandable by the audience. This sparse dialogue is used by the directors to carry the emotional connect while comparing the novel with the filmography. This kind of idea encourages the viewers to connect their feeling and compare to their real-life circumstances. While watching the movie every pause and move makes the audience keep closer to engage with the film that makes the people to watch again and again. 'You have to carry the fire. I don't know how to. Yes, you do' (McCarthy 298). Here the novelist showed the excellence of projecting the sparse dialogue that the man and the boy should have the courage, keeping their hope and not to lose the energies explained in the simple lines.

### **Restrained Acting**

The directors adopting a novel to cinema isn't a simple thing in the novels the writers giving the things the settings and emotions in a simple way by writing. When it come to the film, every word comes as acting form every small action like the smile gestures eye blinking itself. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century people might know about the great directors do their films giving more importance to acting and the visualizing comparing to the dialogues that only thing that connect the people and feel the real burden of the characters faces in the novel.

### **Subdued Color Palette**

In movies, color plays the vital role it helps the audience to grab the attentions to the action. Every color giving different meaning to the audience color palette is a thing that use to mixing the colors when an artist painting an art. Directors uses the color tool to express depth of the scene or a setting or a context of the stories, the tone of the scene the emotion of the character also.

### **Limited Settings**

Limited setting is a unique method of film making that is using a single location to narrate the whole story and connects the film to everyday life. In Hollywood there are several films were in the single and limited setting films are *12 Angry Men* (1997), *The Boat* (2018) and many.

### **Narrative Economy**

Narrative economy is a feature that is art of narrating a story that gives more impact to the form of a film than written form of novel in short time. The core principle if the narrative economy is in the form of film all scenes are counted and every scene make the film into the next level. The economy of the narration is to show the things whatever the feeling the setting emotions like smile, cry, inner happiness or sad each actions speaks.

McCarthy's Minimalist Prose writing style made the people to make feel of readers can know the real burden and be close to the text in the time of reading books. McCarthy is famous for abandoning quotation marks in novels like *The Road* (2006) and *No Country for Old Men* (2005). This choice serves two purposes. Fluidity: It blurs the line between narration and speech, creating an unmediated, almost oral storytelling quality.

### **Linda Hutcheon and Adaptation theory**

Linda Hutcheon in *A theory of Adaptations* defines as a work announced and extensive transposition of a particular work. According to Geoffery Wagner defines, the film adaptations in to three categories "transposition, commentary and Analogy" these three things make a work of art. Linda Hutcheon, popular theorist has done lots of contribution to the study of adaptations. She created a guide to adaptations named *A theory of Adaptations* (2006). This work explains how the process of adaptation are working and how it has to be done and the guidelines also. In the book *A theory of Adaptations*, she had clearly explained about making film from a book. Also, about the dramatizing a stage-play from a movie also adaptations contain two major key ideas product and process finally receptions or results.

Product is about the main source the text like fiction novel drama or any other primary text or an idea for making a film. Second one is process, the entire process of making a film from deciding to do a film to making screenplay, dialogue writing, selecting actors, promoting movies to the audience. Final thing is reception, reception is about the comments and suggestions after releasing a film or launching game from the novel or after the process of adapting films, dramas, related video games are included.

"An adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative, a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic" (Hutcheon 35). The process of adaptation working leads to create a new dimension for the particular novel or a of art work to become a film version. This basement process is used for adapting work. The film makers work upon the novel or a written story to best version of the novel by screening the movie.

First, an acknowledged transposition of a recognized other work or works. Second, the story must be a creative and interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging appropriating means borrowing from other texts to make a new one while salvaging means that act of saving an old text from being forgotten, or paying homage to a previous text. Thirdly and finally, an adaptation must be an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work, (Hutcheon 35).

The researcher has interpreted Linda Hutcheon theories in this research article by applying it in the novel *The Road*. Adaptation is not only mirroring the original text rather than it is an intertextual analysis of the novel and the preliminary work of the process. This thing should be like a renovation process of the movie version of the road (Adumati 2023). There are so many novels were adapted in films with the theory, *A theory of Adaptation*. Clueless (1995) adapted from Jane Austen's *Emma*, Baz Luhrmann adapted from Shakespeare's *Romeo Juliet* (1996), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, 'ÀàreAjagungbadé' an adapted film from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

The theory of minimalism and the theory of a theory of adaptations (2006). First thing is drawing through the adaptation theory. *The Road* novel firstly acknowledged by the director or the creator of the *The Road* movie. In following year that it was rereleased in the year 2010 in United Kingdom the running time is one-hour fifty-one minutes. There were so many works were adapted using the theory of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon *Restless Run of the Locusts. The metafictional paradox* (1980), The movie version of the novel *The Road*, the first page and the first line give the whole setting of the opening scene explains that the boy is sleeping father got up watched everywhere the environment so bad.

When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him. Nights dark beyond darkness and the days more gray each one than what had gone before. Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world (McCarthy 1).

Minimalistic approached deliberately researcher explained with reference text, rotted forest the dead trees were in the valley in the waterbodies. The characters in the novel the boy and the father stuck with the confusion of the problem how we do have to cross the river in between the travel to the southern coast: "Below in the little valley the still gray serpentine of a river. Motionless and precise. Along the shore a burden of dead reeds. Are you okay? he said. The boy nodded" (McCarthy 4).

The boy and the man father want to escape from the bad environment and also catastrophic situation, the environment is so cold and windy. After seeing the place with binoculars, the man said to his son, the boy, I'm all right without any hesitation, the boy said OK with action of nodding. After some time, both of them moving towards south to find shelter by the binoculars, they saw the place was like black and white sketches in the wall.

At the top of the hill, they stood in the cold and the wind, getting their breath. He looked at the boy. I'm all right, the boy said. The man put his hand on his shoulder and nodded toward the open country below them. He got the binoculars out of the cart and stood in the road and glassed the plain down there where the shape of a city stood in the grayness like a charcoal drawing sketched across the waste (McCarthy 6).

### **Movie Visual Analysis, Adaptation of Minimalism Theory**

Dimension films, 2919 production has released the movie version of *The Road* in the year of 2009. Instead, watching in the full movie gives more interesting and it reaches the people easier. Sugandha Gumber stated in the research paper using the theory minimalism in various movies finds that the use of graphic designs gives some good fragrance to the film and to the audience. The movie directors avoided the use the difficult words and lengthy dialogues. But in the novels the writers used to follow the archetypes in method of writing and in using the poetic words. When it comes to visualizing or dramatized format directors follows the colloquial mode of presenting and using simple reactions like nodding, smile and love between the father and son to expose emotions. These ideas can be the reasons to bind the emotional connect to the audience. Camerawork plays the important role in the filmmaking that things or speaks more than the dialogues that are spoken by the characters in the movie. Here the director uses words from the novels to the screen using more artificial visualization for conveying the dialogues and background voices. In the novel condition of the environment is completely unimaginable. Entire forest and cities were fired and fully ash

covered, the setting the background clearly speaks the condition and the ecosystems surrounded by the characters in the novel.

Yes. Of course.

Are we going to die?

Sometime. Not now.

And we're still going south.

Yes.

So we'll be warm.

Yes.

Okay.

Okay what?

Nothing. Just okay.

Go to sleep.

Okay.

I'm going to blow out the lamp. Is that okay?

Yes. That's okay.

And then later in the darkness: Can I ask you something?

Yes. Of course you can.

What would you do if I died?

If you died I would want to die too.

So you could be with me? Yes. So I could be with you.

Okay(McCarthy 9).

Characters from the select novel the father and the son were used short dialogues not stressing too much to understand the novelty of the writer this particular scene from the novel as well as in the movie *The Road* also minimalist approach is there deliberately. Heros of the novel unnamed boy asking to his father about are we going to die? father replied to his son that we never going to die instead going to south for live. So, they have to be warm for tomorrow. 'true nature of pessimistic forces outside the psych'(Govindaraj 2) the characters from the novel suffered by the external forces like ashes, so much of rain, cold and ruined bad environment. The boy said 'Okay' father asked him that okay for what he replied that nothing just I'm. The father asked so many questions to him the boy told him that all the questions okay. Here the power of the word okay works for all type questions. "He knew only that the child was his warrant. He said: If he is not the word of God God never spoke" (McCarthy3). The narrator the novel author mentions that without any extra symbols that shows simplified writings by author. In this movie simplest wordings, the setting providing the theme of minimalism:

No way to light it. He put it in his pocket. He walked out in the gray light and stood and he saw for a brief moment the absolute truth of the world. The cold relentless circling of the intestate earth. Darkness implacable. The blind dogs of the sun in their running (McCarthy138).

The world described here as so dark fully emptied the environment is fully in the color of gray that shows the bleakness unimaginable plays that are carried by the characters in the novel. He signifies the environment as the blind dogs are running towards the sun, in movie visually can feel the conditions the characters experienced and overcome the situations visible in the novel here by visually the audience can connect. There are two important words obviously reporting the minimalism can applicable in the novel and also the movie is 'Gray' and 'Okay'. Okay is the only word repeatedly 195 times in the whole novel and the 'Gray' comes 84 times.

## **Conclusion**

This research paper dealt the technique of Minimalism, in the novel *The Road*, the researcher concludes with some information that are noticed from the novel and that as well as in the movie version of the novel also. Using minimalism theory, provided three important key features to the viewers clarity, speed and versatility. The directors have shown the movie to be an understandable one to all kind of audience. This particular theory not blindly interpreted in this paper and following that the frameworks of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon theory in the early 21st century, with the reference of the theory of adaptations has employed this using textual analysis.

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