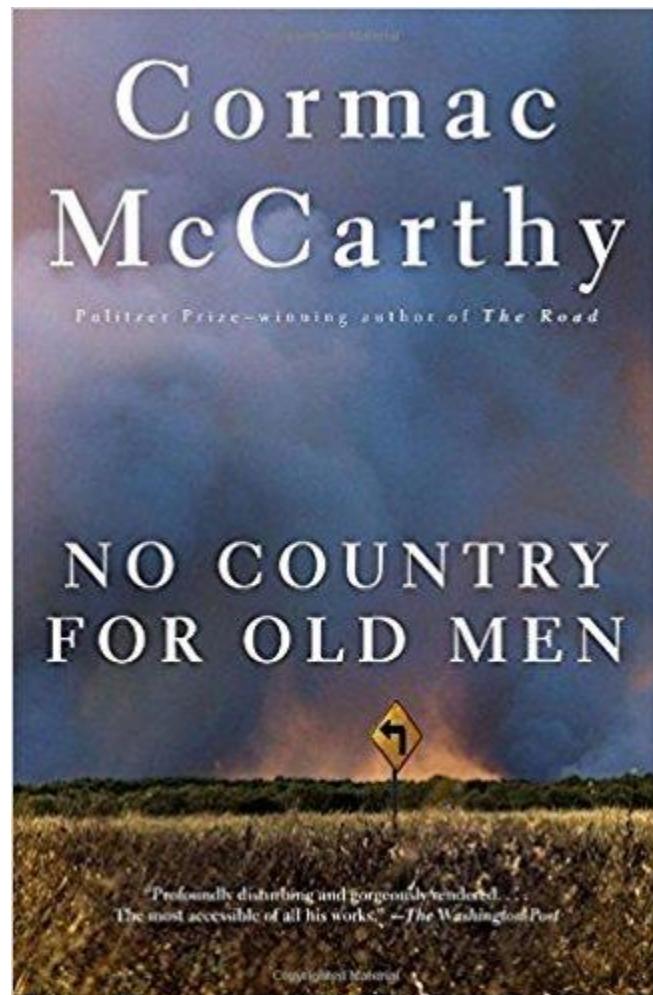


## **Deontology and Consequentialism in Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men***

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### **Social Issues and Literature**

Literature is one of the oldest art forms in writing which is considered to have artistic or intellectual value. The exact definition of literature varies from one reader or critic to the another but most of them agree that it is any kind of writing with some degree of merit and language that serves as a gateway to the literary world. Literature can never be looked at

excluding Sociology, Psychology and Philosophy. There are so many modern Philosophies which emerged in Literature such as Deontology.

### **Deontology and Consequentialism**

Deontology is the normative ethical position that judges the morality of an action based on set of rules or doctrines. This ethical philosophy very similar to Consequentialism. Consequentialism is the class of normative ethical theories holding that the consequences of one's conduct are the ultimate basis for any judgment about the rightness or wrongness of that conduct. This paper tries to imply the concept of Deontology and Consequentialism in Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*.

Llewellyn is a character in this novel who stolen the money. As per the theory of Consequentialism he faced his own death. According to Deontology, he did something which was against the rules. Being a Vietnam War Vet, he should be very helpful to others as well as to his families. Instead he became a burden to his family because of his materialistic attitude. This is how this paper explains how Deontology and Consequentialism plays a vital and simultaneous role in this novel.

### **Cormac McCarthy**

Cormac McCarthy is an American novelist, playwright, and screenwriter who has written ten novels, spanning the Southern Gothic, Western, and post-apocalyptic genres. McCarthy's fifth novel, *Blood Meridian* was on *Time* magazine's 2005 list of the 100 best English-language books published since 1923. For *All the Pretty Horses*, he won both the U.S. National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award. His 2005 novel *No Country for Old Men* was adapted as a 2007 film of the same name, which won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture. *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Road*, and *Child of God* have also been adapted as motion pictures.

### **Llewellyn Mossis**

Llewellyn Mossis the protagonist of *No Country for Old Men* a young guy went for hunting one day and found a drug deal went wrong in the middle of the desert. In the midst of dead bodies, he found a briefcase with two million dollars. Llewellyn found one wounded drug runner still alive. The man asks for water, but he had no water to give. Llewellyn took

the money home to his wife, Carla Jean, but he returns to the scene of the crime later that night with a jug of water.

“She followed him down the hallway to the kitchen pulling on her robe. He took an empty gallo njug from under the sink and stood filling it at the tap” (McCarthy 22).

His compassion turns out to be a mistake. Drug runners killed thirsty man and roaming in the area.

“When he got back to the truck he left the trace and steered by the moon. He crossed under a volcanic chea dland at the upper end of the valley and turned south again” (McCarthy 23).

They shoot at Llewelyn. “The shotgun was gone” (McCarthy 24). He abandoned his truck and ran away. They easily identified him from his vehicle, so he told his wife to stay with her mother.

Here's what's goin on, Carla Jean. You need to get your stuff packed and be ready to roll out of here come daylight. Whatever you leave you ain't goin to see it again so if you want it don't leave it. There's a bus leave south of here at seven fifteen in the mornin. I want you to go to Odessa and wait there till I can call you (McCarthy 38).

### Criminal Anton Chigurh

Meanwhile, a criminal named Anton Chigurh was arrested. He killed the deputy officer and escaped. Chigurh worked for one set of drug runners. He determined to finish off Llewelyn and get back the money at any cost. Chigurh tracked the Llewelyn's stayed motels and a few shootouts occurred. At a certain point, both were wounded. Llewelyn limped across the border to a hospital in Mexico and hid the money in a riverbank along the way. Chigurh treated himself in the motel.

In Mexico Llewelyn was visited by a Wells who had been hired to retrieve the money. He was not a maniac like Chigurh. He was ready to leave Llewelyn to live. Llewelyn retrieved the money and called Wells but unfortunately Chigurh answered the phone call.

He hung up the phone and dialed the mobile number that Wells had given him. It answered on the second ring but it wasn't Wells. I think I got the wrong number, he said.  
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You don't have the wrong number. You need to come see me.

Who is this?

You know who it is (McCarthy 148).

### **Carla Jean**

Chigurh threatens Llewelyn that he would kill Carla Jean if he refused to give money. Llewelyn gets out from Hospital. When he stopped at a motel, he was killed in a shootout. It was not by Chigurh. It was done by unnamed drug runners. After the slaughter Chigurh found the money in the air duct in Llewelyn's room. Chigurh killed Carla Jean also. After murdering Carla Jean, he met with a car accident.

Old Sheriff Bell never once interacted with Llewelyn or Chigurh but he feels guilty because he can't stop all the horrible evil that happened around him. Sadly, he was pretty useless. The book ends with the laments of Bell.

Being a Vietnam War Veteran, the thing which he did is wrong. When he found the Drug money he has to hand the money to the Sheriff.

### **Judging the Morality of an Action**

Deontology is the normative ethical position that judges the morality of an action based on set of rules or doctrines. According to Deontology it was wrong. But the thing is he met the consequence in the end of the novel, he was killed. This what the Consequentialism says, one's conduct are the ultimate basis for any judgment about the rightness or wrongness of that conduct.

Like deontological theories, consequentialist theories are criteria of rightness. They are not decision procedures. They do not tell us always to strive to make outcomes as good as possible. Indeed, many consequentialists believe that there are good reasons why we should not strive to make outcomes as good as possible (Lippert-Rasmussen 18).

Old Sheriff Bell strives to prevent the murder, but he couldn't. This is not his mistake instead this was consequence of Llewelyn. Llewelyn strives to make the outcome good as much as possible but there is no good reason and good way. Deontology and

Consequentialism are criteria of rightness. “One form of deontological ethics involves the so-called Doctrine of Double Effect . . . the DDE is the thesis that there is normally a stronger reason against an act if that act has a bad state of affairs” (Hooker 35). The bad state affair in Llewelyn life is extreme materialistic attitude which makes him to take the illegal money and faced his own consequence.

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