

## THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the problematics and the role of American frontier and American West in Cormac McCarthy's border trilogy consisting of *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994) and *Cities of the Plain* (1999). The reading proper focuses mainly on the second novel of the trilogy, making frequent references to both the other two volumes of the trilogy and to *Blood Meridian* (1985), a novel directly preceding the trilogy itself.

The main goal of the thesis is to demonstrate that the trilogy not only critically engages with the American nationalist ideology represented by a nostalgically conceptualized myths of the American frontier, but that it also offers its own alternative vision of the concept of the frontier and of American national identity. The thesis further claims that McCarthy's critical approach to the mythical representations of the American history bears strong resemblance to the philosophy of American pragmatism as defined by a French philosopher Giles Deleuze in his works dedicated to American thinking and culture. In his pragmatic view of American identity the frontier ceases to function in its traditional, nationalistic sense as a line of separation that divides the social and political space into binary categories, and instead it is understood as an open and constantly permutating process which precludes the possibility of a stable, essentialized historical identity.

The thesis itself is divided into four distinct parts, namely: the introduction to the theoretical and historical background, two main chapters dedicated to the reading of the primary text, and a conclusion. The introductory part presents the historical problematics of the American frontier and American West and contextualizes McCarthy's work. The introduction also presents Deleuze's conceptualization of American pragmatism and discusses its relevance for McCarthy's work in the trilogy. The two main chapters provide a detailed historical, stylistic and narrative analysis of the central primary text, *The Crossing*. The first chapter this focuses on the complex relationship between the protagonist and the she-wolf, which is considered in

the context of Deleuze's concept becoming-animal. The second chapter subsequently focuses on the protagonist's relationship with the American frontier tradition. The goal of both main chapters is to demonstrate, that the aesthetics and narrative technique employed in the novel intentionally work to disrupt the notion of a stable, rooted identity, both individual and national, and that the concept of the frontier ceases to function in its established nationalist sense, becoming an open space for encounter with the new. The conclusion of the thesis summarizes its finds and places them in broader historical context, hoping to provide a new perspective on the significance and direction of McCarthy's artistic project in this creative period.