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### Going Forward



Although the *Great Gatsby*'s main takeaway is the American dream, the topic of looking at the past also arises from the book. As I read *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, the Man's character intrigued me. In a post-apocalyptic world, everyone is left to survive independently, and with that comes the psychological strength required to keep going. As for the Man, "He

knew that the child [His son] was his warrant,” and believed that “If he [His son] is not the word of God God never spoke.” He simply couldn’t live without his son by his side—he didn’t accept even the thought of it.

Having his boy there to be the center of his world comes with responsibilities different of that from the normal, pre-apocalyptic world. Throughout the course of the book, we discover the Man’s strict qualities in the name of survival. He’s always careful with his surroundings, refuses to help others in sympathy, and is always aware of his surroundings in case of any potential evil attackers. To keep his son safe, he has to reflect these ideas to him in periods of lessons, even if it makes the child unhappy at times.

One thing I have noticed is that the Man seems to trance out of his qualities and way of survival when he sees something of his happier, memorable past. On his journey with the boy, he spotted his home from the world before, only extraordinarily run down. The foundation in the ceiling had been exposed and bones were left on the floor, but that didn’t bother him. Without any caution, the Man went in and explored despite his son’s clear trepidation. In search of something in the abandoned building, he seems to be “half expecting to find his childhood things.” Since we know that his son is the only factor that keeps him going, we can infer that the Man might be blinded by his past in pursuit of another reason to keep living rather than just one. I only come to that conclusion based on how quickly his character changes to joy and contentment as he discovers places in simpler times when he used to sleep and have childlike dreams. He does this to only eventually snap back into his survival character protecting his son.