Books are made out of books: a study of influence from the Cormac McCarthy archives.

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Abstract
In December of 2007, the Southwestern Writers Collection, part of the Wittliff Collection of the Alkek Library at Texas State University, in San Marcos, Texas, acquired Cormac McCarthy’s literary papers. The collection contains early drafts, correspondence, and notes. Access to the archives makes possible scholarly investigations into influences on McCarthy’s work, a subject that, given the author’s reticence about discussing other writers, has been largely relegated to informed speculation. The following study moves scholarly interest in McCarthy’s influences away from speculation and toward a more solid foundation based on detailed manuscript research. By chronicling McCarthy’s references to writers, books, and thinkers in his correspondence, in working notes, and in marginalia found in early drafts, I have provided a reference guide that will serve other scholars engaged in the study of Cormac McCarthy’s influences. The work is composed primarily of alphabetized entries corresponding to the names of writers, artists, and thinkers found in the archives. For instance, the first entry is Edward Abbey, the last the ancient Greek philosopher Xenophanes. Each entry describes the location of the reference in the archives by identifying the box and folder in which it is contained, and describes the context of its appearance. For instance, the reference to Edward Abbey appears in Box 19, Folder 14, which contains McCarthy’s notes for Suttree. It refers to a specific passage in Abbey’s book Desert Solitaire. Having identified the location of the reference, I then describe the passage from Abbey’s book and explain the way in which McCarthy used ideas and images from it in a scene from Suttree. Some entries are relatively short, while others, if the influence of the writer on McCarthy is significant, are long essays. In addition to the descriptions of the archival material and the relationship of that material to McCarthy’s published works, I draw conclusions about McCarthy’s methods of composition, arguing that he is less interested in the thematic possibilities inherent in his sources than he is in the aesthetic possibilities they provide as raw material to be incorporated into his own work.

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The Cormac McCarthy Journal is a peer-reviewed journal focusing on the works and influence of Cormac McCarthy. CMJ publishes articles, notes, and reviews related to Cormac McCarthy's novels, dramas, and screenplays, the film adaptations of his work, and other appropriate scholarly materials. CMJ is published annually in hard copy and online, and is a member of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals; the Journal is supported by the Cormac McCarthy Society. Coverage: 2001-2020 (Vol. 1, No. 1 - Vol. 18, No. 1). Moving Wall: 3 years (What is the moving wall?) The “moving wall” represents the time period between the last issue available in JSTOR and the most recently published issue of a Cormac McCarthy told an interviewer for the New York Times Magazine that "books are made out of books," but he has been famously unwilling to discuss how his own writing draws on the works of other writers. Yet his novels and plays masterfully appropriate and allude to an extensive range of literary works, demonstrating that McCarthy is well aware of literary tradition, respectful of the canon, and deliberately situating himself in a knowing relationship to precursors. The Wittliff Collection at Texas State University acquired McCarthy's literary archive in 2007. In Books Are Ma... Cormac McCarthy told an interviewer for the New York Times Magazine that books are made out of books, but he has been famously unwilling to discuss how his own writing draws on the works of other writers. Yet his novels and plays masterfully appropriate and allude to an extensive range of literary works, demonstrating that McCarthy is well aware of literary tradition, respectful of the canon, and deliberately situating himself in a knowing relationship to precursors. This groundbreaking exploration of McCarthy’s literary influences-impossible to undertake before the opening of the archive-vastly expands our understanding of how one of America's foremost authors has engaged with the ideas, images, metaphors, and language of other thinkers and made them his own.