

Matt Bixler

## The Road

To me, the story seemed to be about the balance of morals and survival, which was epitomized in the boy's development as driven by the father. Story-wise the morals the boy developed seemed to lead to, and then stem from, the finding of the old man, which became a test of his developed morals and a firm establishment of the idea of charity and society in the boy.(136-147) From the first distinction of “good guys” versus “bad guys,” the man had been raising the boy in such a way as to not only avoid losing his innocence, but to serve as the man's conscious. Though he was able to resist the boy's pleas regarding the other small boy, he couldn't persuade him to ignore the old, sick man they found walking in the road.

The boy insisted they feed the stranger, and the boy insisted that they cook for him, hence forcing them to stay the night with him, but it's worth noting that the boy had no delusions about taking the man with them.(138) The man has apparently not just raised the boy to understand and give charity, but he raised him well enough to understand when such impulses became irrational or dangerous to their own survival. Within this, the man became some sort of id to the boy's superego, ensuring that they're both kept safe, but the role becomes switched in situations where the boy understands that other people are suffering, but the man rationalizes that to help them would put them both in danger.

The whole event of the strangers' care seemed to be a test for the boy to attempt to show mercy to a human being and discover whether such a thing can happen without negative consequences. The boy had seen the perils of human association from the encounter with the small army(51) and the house filled with waiting slaves,(91) but the boy held onto the distinction of “good guys” and “bad guys” by noting what specifically was wrong with the people to make them dangerous.(107, as an example)

The man had raised the boy not only to understand how to survive, but to understand how to live as a human being, preventing him from falling in with selfish mercenary types under motivation of

survival, but helped to ensure his eventual introduction to as society after he was rescued by a “good guy.”(237)

Also I read on Wikipedia that apparently there's some sort of religious association and the child's some sort of messianic figure, but that's really reaching for it and besides everyone's a messianic figure these days and I'm sick of it, ugh. Also, Wikipedia's pretty dumb.