

With the first gray light he rose and ~~he~~ left the boy sleeping and walked out to the road and squatted and studied the county to the south." (4)

Study originally done w/ boy

- "He studied what he could see." (4) "The segments of road down there among the dead trees. Looking for anything of color. Any movement. Any trace of standing smoke."

above/superior to road

others carrying the fire

- "They stood in the road and studied it." I think we should check it out, the man said. Take a look." (6)

(gas station)

- "They walked along the shore while his uncle studied the tree stumps, puffing at his pipe, a manila rope coiled over his shoulder." (13)

perfect day of his childhood flashback: ("day to shape days upon")

"perfect" day = color; moving / changing nature; Sea v. road

- "He blew the dust from the lids and studied them. Someone before him had not trusted them and in the end neither did he and he walked out with the blankets over his shoulder and they set off along the road again." (22)

need to remove dust/ash (new) world to be able to see, to be able to study

man originally studies food (survival) by himself boy left out in the road

- "Bye and bye they came to a set of tracks cooked into the tar." They had just suddenly appeared. He squatted and studied them. Someone had come out of the woods in the night and continued down the melted roadway.

study attempts to reinstate logic/reason

Who is it? said the boy. I don't know. Who is anybody?" (49)

boy turns to man (and study) for answers

study becomes more removed from physical reality

Right after killing roadrat: "A single round left in the revolver. You will not face the truth. You will not."

first can't study/understand others' place in the world

then can't place tracks other than own

then can't find selves on map

man can only study what he can see

In the grudging light that passed for day he put the boy in the leaves and sat studying the woods. When it was a bit lighter he rose and walked out and cut a perimeter about their siwash camp looking for sign but other than their own faint track through the ash he saw nothing." (68)

attempting to place themselves in the world

later lose their own track

can't/won't study what you don't see

After spotting the little boy: "At a crossroads they sat in the dusk and he spread out the pieces of the map in the road and studied them. He put his finger down. This is us, he said. Right here. The boy wouldn't look. He sat studying the twisted matrix of routes in red and black with his finger at the junction where he thought they might be. As if he'd see their small selves crouching there. We could go back, the boy said softly. It's not so far. It's not too late."

illogical logic

He studied the sky (102) "He studied him." (101)  
 god → sun → looking for light/guidance  
 Standing there with his hands in the pockets of the oversized pinstriped suitcoat.  
 "They stood in the yard studying the facade." (106)  
 left boy → finds apples: "All these things he saw and did not see." (109)  
 house front, also illusion → sight (and studying) = illusion  
 Do you think I lie to you? → boy questioning + threatening + replacing + man  
 "He went back to the gable and stood studying [what he could see of the house] beyond the corner of the barn. Then he climbed back down the ladder." (119)

↳ inferiority  
 Loss of god guy status → cannibalism discussion  
 ↳ "of the house" means what he can see is actually extremely limited (v. "studied what he could see" p. 4)  
 ↳ loss of fire search for color & hope  
 "They studied the pieces of map but he'd little notion of where they were. He stood at a rise ~~in the road~~ in the road and tried to take his bearings in the twilight..."  
 ↳ no bearings/identity w/o light  
 ↳ loss of lighter = loss of direction  
 ↳ no longer "the good guys"; no clear identity  
 "Can we have a fire?" the boy said.  
 "We don't have a lighter."  
 ↳ literal possibility v. "should" (morality)  
 "The boy looked away."  
 "I'm sorry. I dropped it. I didn't want to tell you." (126)  
 ↳ map appears to reassure after moral dilemmas

Waiting for followers (pregnant woman) to pass:  
 "The boy was sleeping and he went down to the cart and got the map and the bottle of water and a can of fruit from their small stores and he came back and sat in the blankets and studied the map."  
 ↳ boy not involved in study; father resists acknowledging/facing inferiority/loss of identity

"You always think we've gone further than we have."  
 He moved his finger. Here then. (195)  
 More → Boy beginning to determine direction (and therefore identity) Here.  
 Okay.  
 ↳ hope/dream (map) dying  
 He folded up the limp and rotting pages. Okay, he said. They sat looking out through the trees at the road." (196)  
 ↳ but boy now refuses to be excluded  
 ↳ corrects man's incorrect view

After seeing infant's corpse:  
 He didn't know if he'd ever speak again... It wasn't a safe place...  
 They ate the last of their provisions and he sat studying the map.  
 He measured the road with a piece of string and looked at it and measured again. Still a long way to the coast. He didn't know what they'd find when they got there. He shuffled the sections together and put them back in the plastic bag and sat staring into the coals." (199)  
 ↳ Attempt to restore logic/order  
 ↳ map (dream, meaning) must be protected/kept clean from filthy world  
 ↳ remnants of "the fire"/identity  
 ↳ attempting to separate from nature

House they can't go upstairs in:  
 "What do you want to do?"  
 "You have to say."  
 "We both have to say."  
 "Do you think they're okay?"  
 "I think if we cook them real good they'll be all right."  
 "Okay. Why do you think nobody has eaten them?"  
 "I think nobody found them. You can't see the house from the road."  
 ↳ man passing control and decisions to boy  
 ↳ Man can't see domesticity/comfort (house) from the road (wild survival)

We saw it. > Man has repeatedly been studying what he can see  
 You saw it.  
 "The boy studied the jars."  
 ↳ boy sees more → boy now in charge of study  
 ↳ on study of non-map in 2nd half of book  
 ↳ morality/fire  
 "I think we've got no choice."  
 ↳ I think you're right. Let's get some wood if it gets any

(They) walked out down the beach and sat in the lee of the dunes and studied the map." (271) → right before "passing the ruins of a seaside resort" → dashed dreams

right before beach:  
↳ "The boy sat by the fire at night with the pieces of the map across his knees. He had the names of towns and rivers by heart and he measured their progress daily." (215) → "we don't work on your lessons anymore" boy internalizing man's hope through map & logic

On their backs were vermiculate patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming. Maps and mazes. Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made "right" again." (287) → maze is essentially a map + confusion

↳ ultimate failure of study → attempts to reestablish order & morality (human) v. pattern (nature)

study = ability / attempt to turn maze into a map

First study of nature → then map

↳ attempt to re-establish control/order over nature & identity

First just man involved in study, boy becomes more and more involved, eventually takes over

↳ able to do so based on superior sight → allows him to see both house and food

↳ plural v. singular pronoun / actor

→ boy does internalize map's message (hope, logic, order, humanity)

After first encounter with bad guys (roadrat) man turns to map at "crossroads" (literal and metaphorical)

↳ tries to turn to god/nature (sky) → then the boy → finally "facade" of cannibals' house → facade forces him to "face the truth" (68) - ish. Only studies map after that

↳ recognizes that he cannot see (and therefore study) nature

→ however, loses ability to orient himself after losing lighter/identity

Man uses study to attempt to fight/control nature → but ultimately results in loss of identity

↳ sight = necessity for study

↳ sight dependent on nature

↳ therefore study dependent upon nature

(Working)

↳ boy recognizes this (abandons map; map/maze on trouts back)

- Thesis: In Cormac McCarthy's The Road, the transition from the man to the boy's method of "study" reveals man's flawed attempts to control nature through study, but true understanding only comes through study working in concert with nature/the senses.

### Chronological Organization/Progression

I. Man studies nature (pages 4-22)

II. Gradually losing identity (p. 49-86)

III. Increasing desperation = delusion (p. 102-106)

↓

IV. Loss of sight/fire → reliance on map (p. 119-126)

V. Boy gradually takes over sight/study (p. 196-271)

↳ Conclusion: paper/man-made map eventually abandoned altogether (287)  
↳ nature's map = no "study"

## Scene:

- lighter found by bearded man -
- Man attempts to use lighter → blinded by light
  - ↳ disconnected from nature ≠ sight/understanding
  - ↳ fire as destructive force
- other men and women recoil → "fire" = isolating
- Wait for eyes to adjust (bearded man only) → sees bold black letters of caution/warning on the white sticker on the side of the lighter → ~~see~~ WARNING: Flame may cause fire. maze of the
- Flicks lighter off → man feels his way along the <sup>^</sup>hall to sit with the rest of the huddled masses → balance restored

## Elements of Style:

- lighter "like an offering" → generally lots of religious language
- "Studied what he could see"
  - ↳ but no nature = no sight
- Sensory description = super short sentences (subj. only)
- light personified more than people
- Dialogue uses God/Christ colloquially
- Writing purely describes action, almost no figurative language / elevated diction
  - ↳ intense action = all sense, no thought/commentary
- increased heart rate = polysyndeton (excessive use of "and")

## Analysis:

- Basement scene is a turning point in the book → man only studies the map after this point
- Attempt to use study to control, ~~control~~ but useless ≠ lead to understanding separated from nature
  - ↳ bearded man can only read stupid warning label, and ultimately abandons attempt to use lighter (carry the fire)
  - ↳ bearded man turns to comfort of the familiar cinderblock pathways (maze) and away from the light/sight