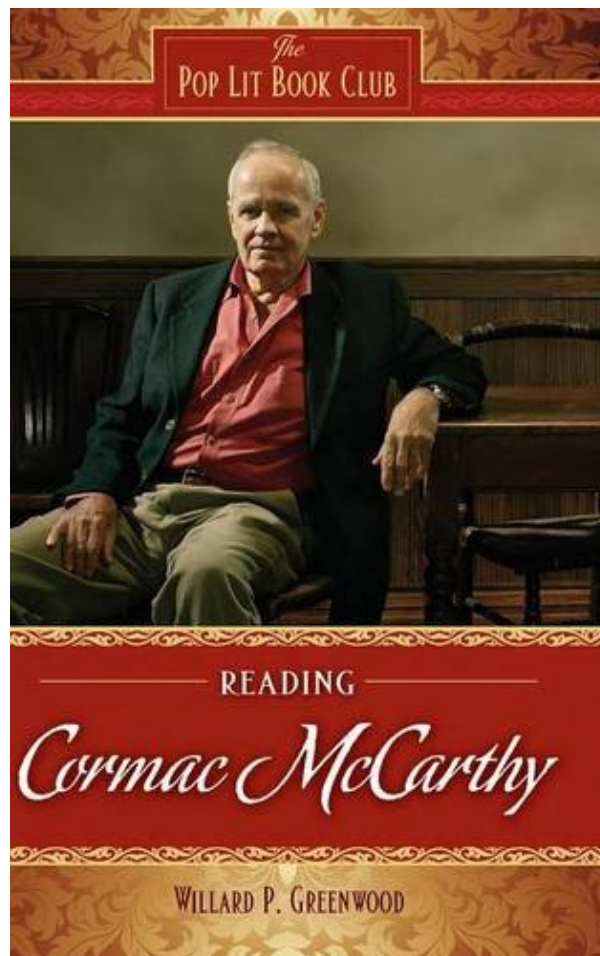
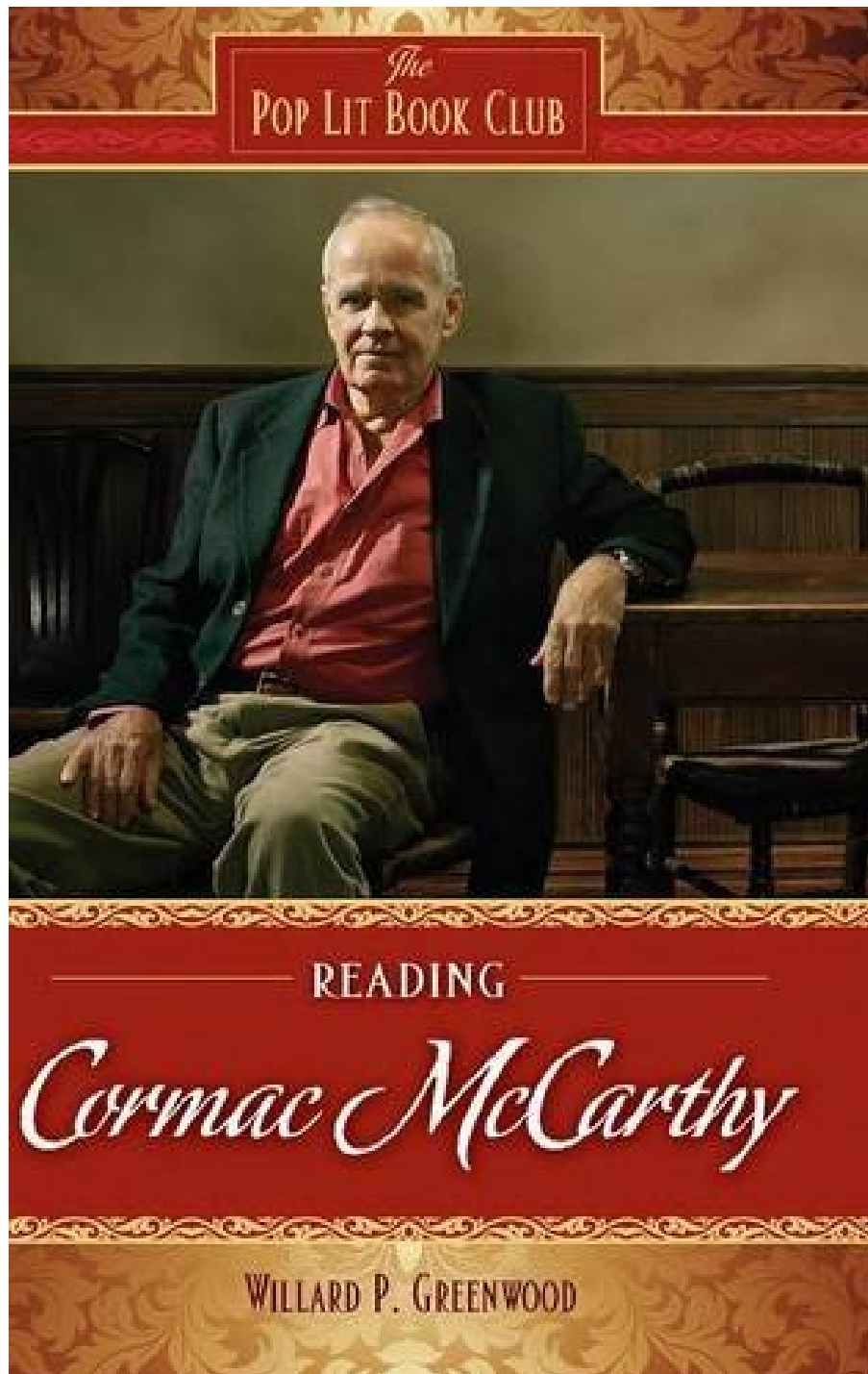


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Review

"Greenwood (English, Hiram College) tackles the fictional works of Cormac McCarthy and provides readers with a thorough discourse of the common themes, writing style and recommended works from this Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist and playwright. The author discusses ten of McCarthy's books, ranging from 1965's *The Orchard Keeper* to 2007's *The Road*, and provides discussion questions and factual sidebars to each title. A short biography and critical analysis of McCarthy is also included, along with discussions of his connection to pop culture, current events and the Internet." - Reference & Research Book News

About the Author

WILLARD P. GREENWOOD is Associate Professor of English and Chair of the English Department at Hiram College. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Hiram Poetry Review, and his writing has appeared in such outlets as *Yale Angler's Journal*, *Passages North*, and *American Literary Review*.

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One of today's most important novelists, Cormac McCarthy is at the peak of a long and productive career. The film adaptation of his *No Country for Old Men* is a major motion picture, and his fiction is widely read in book clubs. This volume looks at his works, characters, themes, and contexts and relates his writings to current events and popular culture. Chapters include sidebars of interesting information, along with questions to stimulate book club discussions and student research.

One of today's most important novelists, Cormac McCarthy is at the peak of a long and productive career. He won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Road* in 2007 and the National Book Award for *All the Pretty Horses* in 1992. This book is a guide to his works and their relevance.

The volume begins with a look at his life and his use of the novel as a means of expressing his ideas. The book then looks at his works, themes, characters, and contexts. It then discusses his exploration of current events and the presence of his fiction in popular culture. Chapters include sidebars of interesting information and provide questions to stimulate book club discussion and student research.

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A solid overview for anyone reading Cormac McCarthy.

By Richard L. Pangburn

Willard P. Greenwood's *READING CORMAC MCCARTHY* is an excellent new overview of McCarthy's published novels to date.

It is 141 pages, counting preface, eighteen chapters of text, a bibliography titled "Resources," and an index. It has a turtleback cover with a picture of old Cormac sitting easily, half his face in light, half in shadow. There are study questions after each chapter. His sources well represent the critical literature available.

This is the third in a series entitled "The Pop Lit Book Club," and previous were *READING BARBARA KINGSOLVER* and *READING AMY TAN*. Hopefully other volumes will follow.

I don't personally agree with several of Greenwood's interpretations--he sees Suttree as mainly "McCarthy's homage to alcoholism," for instance--but any Cormac McCarthy scholar might present his own educated views in such a volume.

If I were to improve the book, the first thing I would add would be a disclaimer that there are many interpretations of McCarthy's work, not just those presented therein.

Chapter 19 is "What Do I Read Next?" with some good suggestions to readers wanting more of the same quality if not the same worldview. Greenwood mentions many of the same books that we have recommended at the Cormac McCarthy Society over the years--*MOBY DICK*, *OF WOLVES AND MEN*, *THE BIRTH OF TRAGFDY*, *ABSALOM*, *ABSALOM!*--very good books indeed. And he says:

"Reading the epics of Homer will make McCarthy's work more accessible, but most important, these ancient works are as relevant today as they were when they were created. They represent a continuity of the human experience that transcends time."

"...The second section of McCarthy's novel, *THE CROSSING*, opens with the sentence: 'Doomed enterprises forever divide lives into the then and the now.' To understand why some of McCarthy's male protagonists seem to embrace futile or lost causes, it is essential to reference the *ILIAD*, and especially, its doomed young male warrior, Achilles."

"Homer's richly imagined and gifted hero is timeless because of his rebellious romantic tendencies. Achilles holds himself to a strict code of idiosyncratic ethics that will not be influenced by any outside forces...Achilles' doomed nature and how he faces his destiny ennoble him and his struggle...The *ODYSSEY* contains the character of *ODYSSEUS*, who serves as the archetypes for many McCarthy characters..."

All in all, one of the very best overviews of McCarthy to be found anywhere.

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