Throughout our study of Southern literature, we have seen numerous depictions of the South, each with their own specific qualities that define what life is like in that specific community. With each author we read, the dynamic of their particular South shifted, revealing slight differences in how life varies across regions of the South. In their individual works, Harry Crews and Cormac McCarthy both present portraits of life in their particular Souths through characterization and setting.

In *A Feast of Snakes*, Crews uses his main character, Joe Lon, to depict life in his region of the South. Joe Lon's life is filled with alcohol, drugs, sex, racism, and violence. Frankly, Joe Lon is a terrible person, and his story reveals the more dark and corrupt areas of the South. Throughout the novel, Joe Lon acts without considering the effects it will have on those around him, laying waste to the relationships in his life. Joe Lon is obsessed with himself, snakes, and sexualizing women. His life is filled with violence and corruption, and he does nothing to overcome the dangerous turn his life has taken. In high school, Joe Lon had a promising life, but after graduating, he fell into a life that resembled that of his father. He allowed the corrupt aspects of his region in the South define who he was; he let his environment dictate who he became. The experiences that Joe Lon endured in his life were fostered by the environment – both place and people – that surrounded him. The absence of personal growth that Joe Lon experienced is the reality for many people in the South. In particular regions, ones that resemble Joe Lon's world, growth is stunted. The elements of a person's environment begin to influence their choices, often trapping them in a soul-sucking life. For Joe Lon, and many others, the environment of his home leads to his demise.

In *Child of God*, McCarthy also shares a story that is riddled with violence. In his novel, McCarthy follows Lester Ballard as he struggles to stay afloat in the life he has been dealt. Lester

is an outsider in his community, and spends much of his time hiding out in the woods away from the rest of civilization. Craving personal connections, Lester falls into a killing spree, using the lifeless bodies of his victims for his own personal pleasure. Lester's acts of necrophilia inadvertently separate him even further from the rest of his community, even causing him to be hunted after word spreads about his heinous acts. Similar to Joe Lon's situation, in a sense, Lester becomes a product of his environment. Lester is forced out of his home after his father is found dead, and is left to his own devices. Thus, Lester ends up living in the woods. Like Joe Lon, Lester is a horrible person, both by his own fault and the fault of his environment. Lester is forced into the real world with little awareness of what it takes to survive, and his unpreparedness leads to his demise. Through Lester's story, McCarthy presents a portrait of what life can look like in particular regions of the South, where life is corrupt and dark.

Contrary to some opinions, there are regions of the South that are less than ideal. In both of their individual works, Crews and McCarthy present portraits of life in the more violent areas of the South, where young people can often become trapped in an environment that does not foster growth. Joe Lon and Lester both become products of their environments, falling into lives of violence that eventually cause their demise. Although quite depressing in a sense, through characterization and setting, *A Feast of Snakes* and *Child of God* present portraits of life in particular regions of the South.