

Cormac McCarthy's Literary Seascapes

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This paper focuses on seascapes in the fiction of American author Cormac McCarthy (1933–2023). While McCarthy is predominantly associated with the regions of American South and Southwest and most of his works take place in the inland United States, his later fiction, especially the penultimate novel *The Passenger* (2022), increasingly engages with seascapes and sea imagery. Moreover, in the 1980s McCarthy worked on an unpublished screenplay “Whales and Men” that extensively discusses sea environments and includes scientific findings concerning deep-sea life that echo in his later published works. McCarthy’s texts thus feature seascapes that build on traditional meditative and sublime sea representations but significantly alter them, presenting a combination of scientific and poetic view of the sea. Drawing on recent works of blue ecocriticism, such as Stacy Alaimo’s *The Abyss Stares Back: Encounters with Deep-Sea Life and Blue Ecocriticism* and the *Oceanic Imperative* by Sidney I. Dobrin, this paper seeks to demonstrate that McCarthy’s representation of seascapes reflects a rupture between seascape as an artistic form gliding on the surface and seascape in a more environmental sense, capturing the sea as a complex and vulnerable ecosystem affected by human actions.

