

Cormac McCarthy and the Writing of American Spaces (Spatial Practices)

By Andrew Keller Estes

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In *Cormac McCarthy and the Writing of American Spaces* Andrew Estes examines ideas about the land as they emerge in the later fiction of this important contemporary author. McCarthy's texts are shown to be part of larger narratives about American environments. Against the backdrop of the emerging discipline of environmental criticism, Estes investigates the way space has been constructed in U.S. American writing. Cormac McCarthy is found to be heir to diametrically opposed concepts of space: as something Americans embraced as either overwhelmingly positive and reinvigorating or as rather negative and threatening. McCarthy's texts both replicate this binary thinking about American environments and challenge readers to reconceive traditional ways of seeing space. Breaking new ground as to how literary landscapes and spaces are critically assessed this study seeks to examine the many detailed descriptions of the physical world in McCarthy on their own terms. Adding to so-called 'second wave' environmental criticism, it reaches beyond an earlier, limited understanding of the environment as 'nature' to consider both natural landscapes and built environments. Chapter one discusses the field of environmental criticism in reference to McCarthy while chapter two offers a brief narrative of conceptions of space in the U.S. Chapter three highlights trends in McCarthy criticism. Chapters four through eight provide close readings of McCarthy's later novels, from *Blood Meridian* to *The Road*.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4153435 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Rodopi
- Published on: 2013-02-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .55" w x 5.98" l, .79 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

The study resumes its detection of biocentric maps from McCarthy's 1985 novel to *The Road* in a remarkable series of close readings that sometimes are in themselves much more sophisticated and exacting than their overall theoretical framework that conjoins Hegelian *Aufhebung* and Buellian environmental criticism. Julius Greve (Köln), in *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies* 25.2 (2014), pp. 193-195"

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