

**DOES WATER DREAM IN DYSTOPIA? AQUATIC IMAGERY IN PAUL
AUSTER'S *IN THE COUNTRY OF LAST THINGS*, NEVIL SHUTE'S *ON THE
SHORE* AND CORMAC MCCARTHY'S *THE ROAD***

Brîndușa Nicolaescu
University of Bucharest

***Abstract:** This paper briefly analyzes the aquatic imagery of three dystopian texts belonging to what has been deemed as (post)apocalyptic fiction, a subgenre of dystopia. If *On the Shore* by Neil Shute (1957), one of the first novels dealing with the apocalyptic concern, was neglected by the critics, unfairly to a certain extent, *In the Country of Last Things* (1987) by Paul Auster and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (2006) are two well-known postmodern novels that have received a right amount of critical appraisal and praise, especially the former. I will attempt to refer only to those studies that can bring light to the way the image of water is dealt with by the authors of the three novels, resorting to a close reading of significant passages. Seemingly the water in these environmental dystopias has a function of a muted witness, of an indifferent or even reluctant receptacle of so much excruciating suffering caused by reckless human behaviour, a darkened mirror in whose depths nevertheless invisible mysteries may be brewing.*

***Keywords:** utopian / dystopian fiction, (post)apocalyptic, landscape imagery, water imagery*