

ALCHEMICAL FREEDOM: TURNING IRON INTO GOLD IN CORMAC
MCCARTHY'S *SUTTREE*

by

Amanda R. Thompson B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
with a Major in Literature
May 2016

Committee Members:
Mark Busby, Chair
Susan Morrison
Robert Tally

COPYRIGHT

by

Amanda R. Thompson

2016

FAIR USE AND AUTHOR'S PERMISSION STATEMENT

Fair Use

This work is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553, section 107). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgement. Use of this material for financial gain without the author's express written permission is not allowed.

Duplication Permission

As the copyright holder of this work I, Amanda R. Thompson, authorize duplication of this work, in whole or in part, for educational or scholarly purposes only.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members for helping me through this process. Your guidance helped me believe in myself. Dr. Busby, thank you for being my first reader. Your notes and revisions pushed me to write my best paper. Dr. Morrison, thank you for your encouragement. It helped me believe I could finish this. Dr. Tally, I truly appreciated your attention to detail.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CHAPTERS	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE OPUS	6
III. THE PRIMA MATERIA	18
IV. NIGREDO	38
V. ABLUTIO	54
VI. RUBEDO	69
WORKS CITED	79

I. INTRODUCTION

Wrap me in the weathers of the earth. I will be hard and hard. My face will turn rain like stones. – *Suttree*

The beginning of *Suttree* invites us into the heart of Knoxville. We are enticed by an unnamed narrator with the greeting of, “Dear friend,” and summoned to see Knoxville as it truly is. The opening pages create a whirlpool of images:

[o]ld stone walls unplumbed by weathers, lodged in their striae fossil bones...corrugated warehouse walls down little sandy streets...[w]eeds sprouted from cinder brick...[a] city constructed on no known paradigm, a mongrel architecture reading back through the works of man in a brief delineation of the aberrant disordered and mad...[a] world beyond all fantasy, malevolent and tactile and dissociate. (McCarthy, *Suttree* 3-4)

This world houses the derelict and fringe members of society—the other. The imagery defined in the opening presents a world completely aware of death and degradation.

McCarthy’s opening characters are “countrymen,” “hunters and woodcutters” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 4) who are “old teutonic forbears with eyes incandesced by the visionary light of massive rapacity” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 4). These characters are not depictions of the modern American man, but rather, they evoke an image of a time before.

However twenty-three pages into the novel, Suttree mutters an off-handed comment that turns the tone of the novel. While drinking with J-Bone, Suttree says, “Blind slime. As above, so it is below” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 23). This shift is where the focus of my thesis begins. In his middle-draft, McCarthy has an annotation in the margin that reads, “Quod est inferius / est sicut quod / est superius” which loosely translates to “What is above is the same as what is below” (McCarthy, Box 22). This marking occurs

on the page narrating Suttree's drinking with J-Bone and is a quotation from the *Tabula Smaragdina*, a book that discusses the rules of alchemy. In this book, "[r]eality was envisaged as a unitary continuum: 'the totality of things, though multiple, is said to be One'" (Periera 134). This medieval chemical philosophy is the perfect example of Suttree's goal. Like alchemists, Suttree wants to change the elemental nature of the world into something golden¹. And, also like alchemists, he discovers that his goal is impossible. It is my belief that the novel, *Suttree*, presents an experiment in alchemy. Suttree's journey is that of an alchemist – searching for a way to transcend his existence. His failure to achieve this purpose is his reason for punishment; his acknowledgement of reality, his release. This thesis discusses the connections between alchemy and *Suttree*. In addition, I contend that because Suttree is unable to transcend his predicament and fails in his attempt to repair the world of Knoxville, he unconsciously creates Michel Foucault's panoptic prison system. For Suttree, Knoxville is more than just a city in which he lives; it is his prison. Here Suttree functions as both the warden and the prisoner as he controls his movements, limits his autonomy, and deprives himself of an identity, for a prison only works if it has "the power to punish" (Foucault, *Discipline* 89). To read *Suttree* is to read a novel that epitomizes Foucault's theories from *Discipline & Punish*. It is a novel that reveals the nature of punishment, prison, and the power of the soul. Using the *Tabula Smaragdina*, mythological archetypes, and Foucault's theories on prison, madness, and civilization, I examine concepts of redemption and transformation and their connection to the possibility of freedom

The structure of my thesis is as follows:

Chapter I discusses the history of alchemy and Foucault's theory on prison and punishment. An understanding of each of these principles is necessary to further my exploration of *Suttree*. I begin with an analysis of the text of the Emerald Tablet. Using Atwood's translation of the book, I explain the historical significance of alchemy. I first establish the importance of placement in the principles of alchemy, discussing the quotation cited in McCarthy's notes on *Suttree*. I also use C. G. Jung's research into alchemy to develop the significance of the idea of transformation. Jungian psychology examined the relationship between alchemical symbolism and tradition. In Chapter I, I also provide explanation about the relationship between mythology and transformation. I use Joseph Campbell's research to examine the role of alchemy in literature and further examine the symbolic transformation of characters. I close this chapter with a discussion of Foucault's theories on punishment, madness, and civilization. My purpose is to demonstrate that a clear understanding of Foucault's work is necessary in developing my analysis of Suttree's self-abnegation as a means of transformation. This chapter serves to establish the stages of an alchemist's transformation, highlighting the importance of allegiance, faith, and abnegation.

Chapter II contains an analysis of the setting of *Suttree*, paying particular attention to the degradation and filth of the environment. I look closely at how McCarthy shapes the world in which his character must inhabit, noting changes made in the middle-draft of the novel. Each of these changes further develops the concept noted in the quotation from the *Tabula Smaragdina*. I also establish how the world of McAnally Flats functions as a prison for Suttree. I analyze the panoptic nature of the city, paying close attention to the routines Suttree establishes and his resulting madness. I also develop an

analysis of the workhouse/prison in which Suttree faces his first test of faith. I show how this experience establishes the 'below' concept of Knoxville. This chapter also examines McCarthy's use of the woods, the river, and the highway.

Chapter III includes an analysis of how Suttree creates his prison based on his alchemical *opus* and the many ways he punishes himself. I examine how Suttree's connections with the citizens of McAnally Flats are tainted by his alchemical *opus* and catholic guilt. I will begin with an analysis of the mountaineer. Using Gabe Rikard's book, *Authority and the Mountaineer*, I establish the presence of the 'other,' a term often used in Foucault's work that denotes characters placed outside of society. I define Suttree's actual *opus*, defining its subconscious roots and external developments. Most of the chapter explains how Suttree forms his three most important relationships: the ragman, Ab Jones, and Gene Harrogate. I provide examples of how these relationships are both repetitive and unsuccessful. The failure is what causes Suttree to punish himself. The sense of duty he feels towards people establishes his flawed *opus* thus establishing his prison and punishment. I examine how these events shape Suttree's journey of transformation.

Chapter IV examines Suttree's descent into madness. I begin with a presentation of the narrative melancholic tone that is present throughout the novel. In this case, the tone establishes Suttree's distance from his chosen family, for the narration weaves in and out of Suttree's consciousness revealing the depth of his emotions. I then analyze four distinct moments where Suttree gives in to the madness that permeates his unconsciousness: his drunken fights, the Gatlinburg Mountains, his relationship with Joyce, and his typhoid fever. Each instance punctuates a moment of insight into Suttree's

nature, for they show his commitment to his *opus*. I conclude this chapter with a connection between alchemy and madness, revealing the nature of the later in completing the former. Thus, madness is the necessary qualification for transcendence.

Chapter V concludes my thesis through my analysis of the actual transformation Suttree experiences. Here I look at the ending of the novel, paying particular attention to Suttree's escape from McAnally Flats. I connect this ending to the books of alchemy and Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. A section of this chapter pays homage to other readings of *Suttree*, looking closely at the nihilistic readings. However, the main purpose of this chapter is to analyze the hopeful, albeit Sisyphean, ending of the novel, asserting that Suttree's decision to move on functions as a transformation of the soul, thus allowing him to complete his journey of transformation.

Each chapter furthers the unavoidable connection between alchemy and *Suttree*. McCarthy's annotations found in his middle draft serve as the root of this analysis, but a close reading of the novel reveal the interconnected nature of faith, purpose, punishment, madness, and freedom.

II. THE OPUS

The study of alchemy is rooted in controversy. Its presence in the medieval period is evidenced by multiple scholars; however, it was usually excluded from academic studies. According to Lyndy Abraham, “[i]t was not until the twelfth century that the art of alchemy began to influence European culture,” (xv); nevertheless, its placement as a legitimate science and philosophy was still contended. Michela Pereira refers to the conflict as follows: “For most cosmologists of the twelfth century, there were hardly any doubts that alchemy was linked to that middle level of being to which heavens and stars belonged, and thus they considered alchemical doctrines relevant to understanding how nature operates” (133). Despite the interpreted value of the principles of alchemy, and its growing popularity as a legitimate field of study, alchemists were deemed outcasts who practiced black arts and forced to live on the fringes of society. The dichotomous split between science and religion fueled this controversy. By the seventeenth century, alchemy was intellectually accepted while remaining a controversial study. The history of alchemy is full of interesting conflicts, battles, and discoveries; but my research is connected to two specific elements: its symbolism and its conflict with Christianity. Both of these qualities offer insight into McCarthy’s *Suttree*, revealing Suttree’s internal conflict of spirit and establishing his role as an alchemist.

In his middle-draft, McCarthy has an annotation in the margin that reads, “Quod est inferius / est sicut quod / est superius” which loosely translates to “What is above is the same as what is below” (McCarthy, Box 22). The *Tabula Smaragdina* (Emerald Table) was considered to be the alchemist’s “book of laws” (Abraham 70) from which they learned the history and goals of their philosophy. Accordingly, “Reality was

envisaged as a unitary continuum: ‘the totality of things, though multiple, is said to be One.’ Spirit and matter are but two polarized stages in the One, and there is no sharp distinction between animate and inanimate beings: ‘If you do not spiritualize bodies and do not corporify spirits the expected result will not ensue.’” (Pereira 134). Thus, all beings are considered one and the concept of antithesis is rejected. C.G. Jung cites this concept as the main conflict between Christianity and alchemy: “Christianity has made the antinomy of good and evil into a world problem and, by formulating the conflict dogmatically, raised it to an absolute principle” (Jung, *Psychology* 25). Alchemy does not deal in absolutes, but rather accepts the duality of existence acknowledging the possibility of good and evil existing side by side. The issue, then, that alchemy addresses is not the concept of punishment as a response to human failing, but rather, the possibility of evolution and transcendence through understanding. Thus, “alchemical symbolism and tradition implied a religious problem,” (von Franz, *Alchemical* 33) because the soul is caught between its internal desire to rectify its dichotomous nature while religion seeks to classify and separate. Therefore, “[h]ad the alchemist succeeded in forming any concrete idea of his unconscious contents, he would have been obliged to recognize that he had taken the place of Christ—or, to be more exact, that he regarded not as ego but as self, had taken over the work of redeeming not man but God” (Jung, *Psychology* 355). This concept will be further explored in chapter three.

Alchemy, then, is an attempt to return imperfect substances to their natural state, and the alchemist is able to complete this process without the aid of a god. This point presents the main conflict between alchemy and Christianity. The mythic picture of alchemy allows man to be “the one to be redeemed and the redeemer” (Jung, *Psychology*

306) In Christianity, man's redemption is made possible through the work of divine intervention, essentially removing the man himself from the power of salvation. However, in alchemy, the duty of salvation is placed squarely on the shoulders of the individual. Therefore, his fate is his own, and, much like the Anglo-Saxon concept of fate or *wyrd*, in which his will is free, he is able to define his path. In addition, Christianity seeks to define and dictate morality, presenting dictums such as the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and other doctrines. These documents are meant to show humankind the path towards enlightenment, and the sacramental nature of redemption is achieved only through a rejection of moral failures. To the alchemist, however, "[m]oral qualities" are only useful and considered "in so far as they help or hinder the *opus*" (Jung, *Psychology* 352). Therefore, sacrifice and abnegation are only necessary as a means of achieving transformation. Vereen Bell defines this conflict as Suttree's "imperfectly lapsed Catholic" nature.

The duality of humanity is further explored in what Joseph Campbell refers to as the "World Navel." In his work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell contends that, "the World Navel is the symbol of the continuous creation: the mystery of the maintenance of the world through that continuous miracle of vivification which wells within all things" (32). Essentially, the quest for transcendence is a continual journey, and evolution occurs only to be lost so that it can reoccur later. Alchemy allows for good, beauty, and salvation to exist within the soul, or as C.G. Jung terms, "the unconscious." An alchemist, then, is not concerned with the possibility of transforming metals into gold but rather reconciling its unconsciousness with its consciousness. As Campbell contends, all creation begins at its root with the soul. C.G. Jung cites this concept as: "The self is

not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness” (*Psychology* 41).

In order to transcend his existence, the alchemist searches for the *prima materia* that was composed of two antagonistic elements: fire and water. Alchemical symbolism extends beyond that which is tangible, for the *prima materia* is neither an object nor an element, but rather the essence of space, time, and energy (von Franz, *Alchemical* 16). In this case, “time was understood as the inexplicable attraction of certain substances to one another and the inexplicable repulsion of others” (von Franz, *Alchemical* 16-17). Therefore, time and space are beyond traditional conception, returning to the concept of the continual creation cited in the “world navel” (Campbell, *Hero* 32). As C.G. Jung explains, “[a]lthough these two elements [fire and water] are antagonistic and even constitute a typical pair of opposites, they are yet one and the same. . .” (*Psychology* 232), highlighting the alchemist’s fascination with opposition. Since alchemy is rooted in a never-ending cycle, it is a symbol of continual struggle, for “[t]here [is] nothing . . . to convince the alchemist of the senselessness of his chemical operations . . . alchemy had a sufficient *raison d’etre*” (Jung, *Psychology* 241). This is clearly seen in Suttree’s repeated attempts to reason with Harrogate and other citizens of McAnally Flats and his inability to reconcile his Catholic upbringing with his current philosophical state. However, these seemingly dichotomous philosophies and futile exercises are reconciled through alchemical processes, allowing Suttree to realize what Nietzsche defines in *Twilight of the Idols*: “To live alone one must be a beast or a god, says Aristotle. Leaving out the

third case: one must be both—a philosopher” (Nietzsche, *Twilight* 467). Therefore, *Suttree* reveals the possibility of transcendence through alchemy.

Furthering this concept of the cyclical nature of alchemy is the presence of chaos at the inception of the alchemical quest. An alchemist’s journey began within chaos or “*massa confusa*” (Jung, *Psychology* 230); that is to say that the concept of chaos is the basis of the *prima materia*. The alchemist sought to discover the *prima materia* through the process of splitting and reconciling the four elements. The first task presented to an alchemist was the assignment of “dividing or differentiating the undifferentiated chaos into four elements, earth, air, fire, and water” (Abraham 34). At the center of this chaos, however, lies the self. Thus, the foundation of darkness and chaos is formed by the darkness and chaotic nature of the unconscious. The alchemist was not as much a scientist as he was a philosopher. His scientific knowledge was vague at best, which is why his attempts to define the nature of mater, the *prima materia*, are based on an attempted understanding of the unconscious. Their findings and rules were projections and hypothesis and “[i]n seeking to explore it [the nature of matter] he projected the unconscious into the darkness of matter in order to illuminate it” (Jung, *Psychology* 244).

The alchemical quest parallels Joseph Campbell’s description of the Classical definition of the quest: “The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades” (Campbell, *The Hero* 67-68). Therefore, the alchemist is aware of the difficulties before him, but nonetheless compelled to embark on the journey. Namely, “[t]he first step...consists in a radical transfer of emphasis from the external to the

internal world, macro- to microcosm, a retreat from the desperations of the wasteland...” (Campbell, *The Hero* 12). The alchemical principle virtues of health, humility, holiness, chastity, virtue, victory, faith, hope, charity, goodness, patience, temperance, spiritual discipline, and obedience are only possible when the alchemist “purges the horrible darkness of [the] mind” (Jung, *Psychology* 271). This is the true task of the alchemist because he cannot separate the four elements until he has reconciled his soul. Once this task was completed, however, the opposing elements would then be reunited through the “chemical wedding” (Abraham 34). Symbolically, the good and the evil, the positive and the negative, are reunited, allowing the process to start anew. Transfiguration is not achieved until the alchemist learns to channel his inner darkness into something pure, for “[w]ithout acquiring a bad conscious, without learning to be profoundly dissatisfied with ourselves, we cannot envisage higher norms, a new state of being, self-perfection” (Kaufmann 448). The alchemist descends into “the darkness of inanimate matter...ruled by evil” (Jung, *Psychology* 304) before returning to the world of man only to repeat the journey. This cyclical process highlights the presence of duality and the interminable nature of the alchemical quest. In the case of *Suttree*, the character is surrounded by the degradation and filth of society, the Sisyphean quality of existence, and is forced to master his inner demons – the drinking, the violence, the sexuality – channeling his destructive tendencies into potential.

Thus, the concept of chaos eventually leads to purity, or as the Emerald Table asserts, “What is above is the same as what is below” (Atwood 7). The chaotic darkness is juxtaposed by the depictions of the natural world, mainly through the image of the “tree of life.” As Campbell asserts, “[t]he tree of life, i.e., the universe itself...is rooted in

the supporting darkness” (*The Hero* 32). In alchemy, the tree “symbolizes growth and fruition, in both a physical and spiritual sense” (Abraham 150). The alchemist, then, seeks to establish a connection with the tree as a means of locating the *prima materia*. Through this process, the natural world becomes a symbol for the alchemist’s internal search and the “elemental imperfection” of the tree (its ties to impurity and evil) offers a parallel to the imperfection of the alchemical quest, for neither is beyond temptation (Jung, *Psychology* 312). Therefore, the alchemist posits both good and evil in his quest toward purity. Jung furthers this idea when he asserts that, “there is no good that cannot produce evil and no evil that cannot produce good” (*Psychology* 31). The essence of the soul is the knotted mass where the alchemist’s purity and evil intersect, and like the “tree of life,” is rooted in that which is often disregarded. The depiction of the natural world in *Suttree* is irrevocably tied to depictions of death and decay, for in the alchemical world, the dichotomies are elements of balance rather than juxtapositions.

The tree also presents the model by which the alchemical quest is defined. When the tree is cut down or “truncated” it is an emblem of the alchemical state of suffering. This stage of the alchemical quest is essential in moving towards enlightenment and further develops the balance of good and evil. In *Suttree*, the woods function as both a place of meditation and a place of suffering, leading Suttree towards existential enlightenment. As Abraham asserts, “[p]sychologically, the growth of the tree symbolizes the unfolding of the soul, the expansion of consciousness” (109). In addition, the twelve alchemical operations are organized in the symbol of the tree; thus the principles of the philosophy are intertwined with the natural world. Each stage in the sequence is tied to a natural element (both real and imagined) proving the inseparable

link between the heavens and the earth, establishing the connection between that which is above and that which is below. This link is what ties Suttree to McAnally Flats and the surrounding woods (a place to which he twice exiles himself), and it is his internal struggle that leads him to embrace abnegation. Suttree, like an alchemist, believes that this will lead him towards enlightenment.

Derived from Aristotle's theories on matter, alchemists begin their search for the *prima materia* with the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. These elements were not thought of in their actual form, but rather alchemists believed that each of these elements held an essence that was within all things. Thus: "The idea of transmutation is based on the theory that all bodies, including metals, are constituted of the elements in differing proportions, that these proportions are alterable, and that the elements may be transformed into each other" (Abraham 68). Each of these elements is necessary in the alchemical *opus*, and therefore are present in *Suttree*.

The air and the earth represent the above and below element cited earlier. The air is the land of the birds, which are used to symbolize the four main stages of the *opus*. The spirit is also viewed as a bird shifting from a description of an "amorous bird of prey" to a "mercurial spirit" (Abraham 23-24). Each of these images offers an antithetical nature of the soul: on one hand, the soul is passionately attacking itself as a means of transfiguration, and on the other, it is a creative force, cyclically deconstructing and constructing itself. The birds present in both alchemy and *Suttree* offer a symbolic escape, cited most distinctively in the last two words of the novel, "Fly them" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 471). Therefore, the alchemical element of air represents to possibility of freedom in *Suttree*.

If the air is a symbol of escape, then water is a symbol of the fluidity and mutability of Suttree's journey. According to the "Treatise of Platonic Tetralogies," the *opus* begins in the "chaotic waters of the beginning" (Jung, *Psychology* 264). As in Genesis, the earth is separated from the water, allowing life to form and prosper. Alchemists believed that the path towards enlightenment began with an ability to master water in an endless cycle depicted by the Uroboros:

The water that the mother, the unconscious, pours into the basin belonging to the anima is an excellent symbol for the living power of the psyche. The old alchemists never tired of devising new and expressive synonyms for this water.

They called it *aqua nostra*, *mercurius vivus*, *argentum vivum*, *vinum ardens*, *aqua vitae*, *succus lunariae*, and so on, by which they meant a living being not devoid of substance, as opposed to the rigid immateriality of mind in the abstract. (Jung, *Psychology* 74)

Alchemists saw the many ways this one substance could be applied. Rather than limit its essence, the alchemist acknowledged and celebrated its mutability, proving that water had a dual nature. Thus, water, as a substance, projects the versatile possibilities of alchemy, proving that it has "the quality of ubiquity: it can be found always and everywhere" (Jung, *Psychology* 323). Water, however, was not an emblem of purity as it is in its Christian form, but rather it was a symbol of turbulence. It is volatile and tumultuous, but it also functions as the source of life, proving the interconnected nature of good and evil. The alchemist sought to temper water's volatility through alchemical work. This transformation occurred in "the transforming waters, also known as streams or rivers" (Abraham 191). These waters are dual-natured, and although they function as the

first step towards enlightenment, they are transitory and unbridled. Therefore, the alchemist begins his quest in the waters of degradation, and only achieves his enlightenment or transcendence when he has completed his *opus*. McCarthy embraces the chaotic and tarnished quality in *Suttree* through his images of the river. The river offers a depiction of filth and death but remains Suttree's choice for a home. Much like the alchemist, Suttree immerses himself in the symbol of water as a means of transcendence. However, the nature of the alchemist's goal and its roots in chaos reveal the irrational possibility of success.

In alchemy, the psychic elements culminate in the stage of *exaltatio intellectus*. This is the moment where the alchemist has lucidity and the highest consciousness possible. The element associated with this state is fire. This concluding stage results in redemption and is the product of internal suffering and sacrifice. The mastery of this element allows for "the ability to express divine love; the chief agent of transmutation" (Abraham 76). This can only be achieved through deep meditation and suffering. In the Christian sense, the hero suffers to return the world to its ideal state, but in alchemy, the hero seeks to restore the imperfect nature of the soul. Also associated with the element of fire is the symbolic beheading. This state metaphysically "represents the freeing of the soul from the prison of the body so that through detachment it can gain the ability to discriminate between the merely natural man, bound by his thoughts, opinions and desires, and the illumined, philosophical man, freed from these illusions" (Abraham 22). Therefore, fire is a means of destruction that brings about freedom. Again, alchemy reveals an affinity for opposition. In *Suttree*, the fire and suffering are most explicitly seen during Suttree's fever at the end of the novel when he envisions "the archetypal

patriarch himself unlocking with enormous keys, the gates of Hades...the stars go rolling down the void like redhot marbles” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 457). It is after this scene that Suttree has the knowledge and strength to move on, for he has battled his intellectual demons and reached enlightenment through the fire of a fever.

The final element of matter, the earth, offers the property of coldness and dryness. At the death of the old metal, before transcending into the new metal, the matter is referred to as “black earth” (Abraham 27). The earth is also seen as the “union of conscious and unconscious” (Jung, *Psychology* 50). It is in this state that the matter is imprisoned. Alchemists defined the prison as the state of putrefaction, where the body must be killed, blackened, and putrefied before the soul can be released. Much like the ubiquity of water and air, earth presents a panoptic element, highlighting the surrounding nature of the prison imagery. Much like Michel Foucault’s description of prison, the alchemical prison is endless, and its power to punish exists because its prisoner, the alchemist, has relinquished his right to freedom. The recurring nature of the alchemical quest makes it so that the soul is never fully released from the prison, and enlightenment is a fleeting, illusory expectation. Much like the Classical motif of the belly of the whale, “the hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown” (Campbell, *The Hero* 74). Accordingly, the soul is imprisoned by the darkness that surrounds his unconscious, and despite his desire to transcend this state, he is continually pulled back into the prison. Ironically, the imprisonment is created by the soul’s acknowledgement of its own inability to comprehend its desired enlightenment. Therefore, the prison becomes a motif of power and abnegation. The prison, or earth, becomes, as Michel Foucault asserts, the “darkest region in the apparatus of justice...the

place where the power to punish...silently organizes a field of objectivity in which punishment [is] able to function openly as treatment" (*Discipline* 256). It is because of this suffering that we see Suttree's inability to escape Knoxville and his recurrent need to punish himself.

According to Walter Wilmschurst, "Hermeticism, or its synonym Alchemy, was in its primary intention and office the philosophic and exact science of the regeneration of the human soul from its present sense-immersed state into the perfection of nobility of that divine condition in which it was originally created" (26). Therefore, when considering the goal of alchemy, one must consider gold as a symbol for the soul. However, as previously established, this goal is impossible. Consequently, the alchemist embraces a quest that will never end successfully, leading him towards madness rather than enlightenment. Alchemy, then, offers a final contrast in which enlightenment is actually ignorance and everything that was thought to be defined is actually arbitrary. Thus, "[w]hen man deploys the arbitrary nature of his madness, he confronts the dark necessity of the world; the animal that haunts his nightmares and his nights of privation is his own nature, which will lay bare hell's pitiless truth; the vain images of blind idiocy..." and the cycle begins again (Foucault, *Madness* 23).

Thus, Suttree's world is the embodiment of the alchemical world. Much like the arcane scriptures that alchemists used to define their purpose and complete their *opus*, *Suttree* embraces the four elements to reveal the cyclical nature of the alchemist's purpose. Therefore, before understanding Suttree's eventual transformation, we must enter his world – the world of elemental unity.

III. *THE PRIMA MATERIA*

One of the most important sources for medieval alchemy lies in the translation of the Emerald Tablet. The science of alchemy is based on this document, which begins, “That which is above is like to that which is below, and that which is below is like to that which is above to accomplish the miracles of one thing,” (Abraham 70). Therefore, there is a natural collective relationship in all things. The heavens, the earth, and the water are all one, and man must first understand the shared relationship among all things before he can move towards enlightenment. Accordingly, the natural world is paralleled with the constructed world. In Egyptian alchemical texts, there is a love affair between contrasting elements: “What is clear from above is that the sun and moon are beside each other,” (von Franz, *Alchemy* 109). The line between opposing elements diminishes, revealing a union of opposition. The alchemist learns to accept these oppositions in his quest towards enlightenment. Rather than look to classify and separate, he chooses to embrace duality, allowing seemingly dissimilar entities to exist side-by-side. Much like Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, the alchemist understands that “[t]he more he [the tree] aspires to the height and light, the more strongly do his roots strive earthward, downward, into the dark, the deep—into evil,” (Nietzsche, *Zarathustra* 154). The world of Cormac McCarthy’s *Suttree* also embraces the unification of opposition. The novel’s various settings, the city, the river, the woods, and the prison, function as alchemical symbols of both purity and evil, beginning with the concept of the underworld and the alchemical stage of “nigredo, the initial, black stated of the *opus alchymicum*” (Abraham 135) moving towards the stage of purification. Each of the distinctive settings serves as a symbol of the above and the below, providing Suttree with the perfect setting for his alchemical quest.

Suttree opens with a description of McAnally Flats that dispels with the concept of time. This Knoxville is one of “*dusty clockless hours*” and “*the drunk and the homeless*,” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 3). Although the novel’s time is explicitly defined as the 1950s, the setting embraces a sense of eternal struggle described as: “*This city constructed on no known paradigm, a mongrel architecture reading back through the works of man in a brief delineation of the aberrant disordered and mad*” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 3). The prologue is noted for its epistolary construction and its invitation to the reader. Thus, “the epistolary address to the reader makes clear from the novel’s inception the importance of place in the author’s conception, as the surreal, the gothic, the grotesque, and the carnivalesque” (Frye 53), but more importantly, it introduces the decay and degradation of Knoxville and establishes the presence of an underworld that spans time. Alchemy embraces a world that is termed, “*mundus inferior*, the corruptible world which is reality,” (von Franz, *Alchemy* 135), for it is from this world that the alchemist must deliver himself. His soul is tied to this transference. Therefore, the corruptible world is the root of purification. This is the world established by the opening pages.

Steven Frye describes the opening pages as a “dreamlike treatment of the physical world [that] blends a vivid realism with a surreal quality effectively rendered through a philosophically portentous biblical language,” (53). McCarthy’s language supports the alchemical stage of nigredo. It is a city of ruin: “*Old stone walls unplumbed by weathers, lodged in their striae fossil bones, limestone scarabs rucked in the floor of this once inland sea*,” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 3). The city is ironically described eloquently and poetically, which punctuates each dilapidated element. “It also furthers McCarthy's effort

to make the decaying and broken down city more beautiful by accentuating the sound techniques,” (R. Furey 55). The alliterative nature of the abject and derelict city contrasts the literal descriptions, which further establishes the parallel nature of good and evil. The city is falling apart, but there is a sense of beauty found within the decay.

McCarthy immediately follows this invitation with detailed descriptions of architecture before delving into his descriptions of character traits. The city is described as having, “*curious marble architecture, stele and obelisk and cross and little rainworn stones where names grow dim with years*” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 3). The imagery defined in the opening presents a world completely aware of death and degradation. McCarthy elects to inundate his opening with a whirlpool of melancholic imagery. Ironically, McCarthy uses vibrant agricultural terms such as, “*warrens*” and “*weeds*” to describe the degradation of Knoxville. Both of these words define luscious growth; however, here, McCarthy uses them to describe a city that is falling apart. “*Warren*” is from the early Middle English period and originates from Old French (OED). The use of this term indicates a recollection of the past. The narrator connects Knoxville of the middle of the 20th century to the early Middle English period. Through this one word, McCarthy ties the past and the present, evoking the alchemical concept of unification. The world of the past is the same as the world of the present.

McCarthy continues to develop the nature of the underworld in the prologue with a description of its layout. Knoxville is described as, “[*e*]arth packed with samples of the casketmaker’s trade, the dusty bones and rotted silk, the deathwear stained with carrion” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 3). The consonance used with the repeated ‘k’ sound in packed, casketmaker’s, silk, and carrion ties each element to the next. Packed is first associated

with the Earth, but then transfers its connection from the natural world to the world of man through the repetition of the ‘k’ sound. Casketmaker’s uses the ‘k’ sound twice to further develop the nature of Knoxville. This word shifts into the realm of the dead, returning to the thematic concept of degradation. Embracing the self-explaining compound structure of Old English, McCarthy ties images of death to images of productivity and mankind. The casketmaker is a man who creates objects for the dead, thus ironically connecting creation and death. The sentence finishes the consonance with the word “*silk*,” which connotatively ties death to beauty, and carrion, which returns the sentence to its rightful tone. The sound devices allow McCarthy to control the movement of description, forever falling further into the realms of hell.

Towards the end of the prologue, McCarthy moves from the land of Knoxville to the river. He describes the river as following: “*Here at the creek mouth the fields run on to the river, the mud deltaed and baring out of its rich alluvial harbored bones and dread waste, a wrack of cratewood and condoms and fruitrinds,*” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 4). The alliteration within this sentence ties the creek mouth of the Tennessee River to condoms through the repetition of “c.” McCarthy also embraces the alliteration of “w” with the words *waste* and *wrack*. Each of these words connotatively ties to the idea of destruction and degradation expressed in the opening of the prologue. What is most interesting about this alliterative pairing is the duality of meaning presented using *wrack*. The word *wrack* stems from the Old English *wræc*, which means wretched or sorrowful. However, this usage is rare and “except for its use by southern writers between 1506 and 1690, the form is predominantly northern and Scottish” (OED) and used to describe shipwrecks.

“McCarthy incorporates alliteration and assonance that lend a measured amount of beauty... forc[ing] the reader to acknowledge the abject” (R. Furey 55).

McCarthy embraces the creativity of self-explaining compounds, embracing this construction to show the dynamic nature of the world. His compounds fall into two categories: descriptive nouns and shifted adjectives. Words like “*casketmakers*,” “*deathwear*,” and “*cockheels*” create an image of death. This is reminiscent of the looming sense of decay described within this prologue. Each of these words has the functional nature of defining something that does not have a simple name, thus reminding the reader of the very tangible presence of danger. The self-explaining compounds created through metaphoric pairings remind us that “the abject-filth, detritus, excrement, the slime of life that pulls us ineluctably toward what Freud calls the “reality principle” of death” (Canfield 665) is unavoidable. In *Suttree*, the reader, or *friend*, is forced to be made completely aware of death. This recalls the concept of courage. The reader and the protagonist, Suttree, must face this degradation with courage and awareness or else he will fall into the same pit of despair in which the citizens of McAnally Flats exist.

Finally, McCarthy introduces the citizens of Knoxville that further embraces the element of the underworld. The citizens noted in the opening hearken the medieval period. The word “*teutonic*” calls attention to the ancient people, probably of Germanic or Celtic origin, who lived in Juteland until about 320 BC (OED). The usage of this term connects the 20th century Knoxville to the past. Similarly, McCarthy references “*lean Aryans*,” which is reminiscent of the medieval period in which alchemy thrived. The prologue inundates the reader with these descriptions that parallel the nature of alchemical texts. The beauty of alchemical writing, Marie-Louise von Franz asserts, is

that in reading, “you fall into the world below, into the *mundus inferior*, the corruptible earth, which is reality, concrete reality, and the whole drama naturally begins there,” (*Alchemy* 135). It is fitting, therefore, that McCarthy allows us to enter Suttree’s world through this introduction, setting the scene of the underworld, however, closing the prologue with an element of hope: for, “*Ruder forms survive*,” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 5).

In his book, *Authority and the Mountaineer*, Gabe Rikard describes the landscape of the Appalachian lands. He draws attention to its isolation. While Knoxville is a city, and at the time *Suttree* is set a growing metropolitan city, it remains separated from other cities because of its natural surroundings. This is McCarthy’s initial alchemical setting. Rikard’s understanding of Knoxville and regional segregation is pertinent in understanding the below nature of Suttree’s real prison—Knoxville. In order to achieve purification, the alchemist must first embrace the prison of the original form. Therefore, Suttree’s exile in Knoxville is symbolic of the alchemical prison or dungeon. According to Foucault, discipline requires organized enclosure, controlled activity, and surveillance. Suttree’s Knoxville contains all of these attributes, and his placement in McAnally Flats, an area inhabited by a “grotesque community of exiles and escapees from the modern social order” (Cawelti 309), accentuates his imprisonment. John Lewis Longley Jr. describes Suttree’s Knoxville as follows: “Suttree is in Hell, and by his own volition. Make no mistake; this is no hippie lying on his back, growing hair and blowing grass... His is an active life; the rules are hard but simple; exploit no one and be not exploited, avoid money and steady employment, kiss no one’s ass,” (Longley 80). His consciousness is his prison, and as Foucault states, “[t]he soul is the prison of the body” (*Discipline* 30).

The second setting of the novel is the river, which is immediately emblematic of both decay and perseverance. Suttree is introduced on the river; however, the novel actually begins with an introduction of the river first: “Peering down into the water where the morning sun fashioned wheels of light, coronets fanwise in which lay trapped each twig, each grain of sediment, long flakes and blades of light in the dusty water sliding away like optic strobes where motes sifted and spun” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 7). McCarthy’s settings are characters themselves, and the river is introduced elementally much like the narrative structure of alchemical texts. For instance, “In alchemy, water was either the great healing factor, or poisonous and destructive,” (von Franz, *Alchemy* 101). In *Suttree*, water serves both purposes. The opening introduction calls to mind the alchemical image of the *opus circulatorium* through the description of the “wheels of light.” Alchemy uses the image of the circle to denote the “continuous distillation of liquid for the purpose of refinement” (Abraham 137). McCarthy’s opening description of the water evokes a distillation of its own, for in this first sentence we see a punctuation of each element surrounding the river. The separation ironically creates a sense of unification. Alchemists described the process of distillation as a “process of transformation, of successfully converting the elements into each other,” or more informally as “the turning of a great wheel,” (Abraham 138). McCarthy’s river is connected to the sun, which reveals the elements within the river and along the shore and which promotes the parallel nature of the natural world.

The river of *Suttree* is filthy. In the opening of the novel a dead body is floating, and “[i]n the spring of his third year on the river” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 306) he sees a dead baby floating with “[b]loated, pulpy rotted eyes in a bulbous skull and little rags of flesh

trailing in the water like tissuepaper” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 306). Suttree does not harbor any pretenses in his chosen place of exile; he is completely aware of the derelict nature of this side of Knoxville. Suttree’s houseboat functions as his cell, as it is the perfect example of limited space. After concluding his stay in the workhouse, Suttree returns to his houseboat and the life he had before. He stays in this location even when it is “unendurable” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 65). His chosen home accentuates the nature of self-punishment: “Suttree’s choice of life on the river keeps the ‘twinned’ facts of life and death continually before him and ensures that he enact his own morality in the most personalized terms” (Young 102-103). In alchemy, punishment is the means to purification, for the symbol of the prison allows the alchemist to move beyond the state of *nigredo* and offers “the regaining of the consciousness of the divine self,” (Abraham 157). Suttree lives with the guilt and burden of surviving the death of his twin brother and therefore lives his ascetic lifestyle as a means of “twinning” the very nature of death. Therefore, the river then serves two purposes. It is the alchemical element of transformation and the alchemical symbol of the prison. In this contrived prison, Suttree is the convict, and his isolation allows for reflection. Foucault describes the purpose of isolation as follows: “the more the convict is capable of reflecting...the more lively his remorse, the more painful his solitude” (*Discipline* 237).

However, the river and the water offer more than decay and degradation. For Suttree, the river is also a means of survival, and as he moves closer towards enlightenment, the character of the river also changes its color. In alchemy, “rivers and streams are dual-natured,” (Abraham 191). Suttree’s river allows him to be in both the present and the past. This concept is known as *religere*, which means “careful

consideration” or “one that looks backwards to find out whether what is behind is coming too” (von Franz, *Alchemy* 98). At the beginning of the chapter in which Suttree visits his Aunt Martha, Suttree finds himself on the river which McCarthy’s narrator describes as, “the river like a giant trematode curling down out of the city,” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 119). This description evokes the parasitic nature of the river; however, it also reveals the interconnected relationship between the river and the city. The river is Knoxville, and the past, the present, and most likely, the future are tied to this element. This is yet another connection between *Suttree* and alchemy. The river brings Suttree closer to the truth. Alchemy defines this knowledge as, “the sense of understanding...that would be water,” (von Franz, *Alchemy* 102).

The river parallels Suttree’s dual nature. It represents his kindness and desire for connection. As a fisherman, Suttree uses the river to feed himself and those for whom he feels he needs to provide. Alchemical literature describes the fish or more specifically, the fish’s eyes as a symbol of “perpetual attention,” (Abraham 78). This concept is seen in both the creation of the river and the nature of Suttree. Both are always aware of the world around them, and both embrace the fluid nature of time. Neither Suttree nor the river leaves the past behind them, and this serves as both their blessing and curse, for Suttree, like the river, carries the filth of the city within his nature, yet searches for ablution, the stage in alchemy in which “the blackness of the *nigredo* is washed and purified,” (Abraham 1). This is the final stage in alchemy, and it is this freedom that Suttree seeks.

At the end of the novel, Suttree, receives a drink of water from a boy described as follows: “pale gold hair that lay along the sunburned arms of the waterbearer like new

wheat and he beheld himself in wells of smoking cobalt, twinned and dark and deep in child's eyes, blue eyes with no bottoms like the sea," (McCarthy, *Suttree* 471). This boy parallels the alchemical nature of the novel, for there is a twinning of purity and darkness, and the image of the sea returns. This time, however, the sea brings hope rather than degradation. And that is what Suttree needs.

The third distinctive setting in *Suttree* is the woods that surround Knoxville. Suttree's woods are described as barren, yet they initially offer sounds of the city. It is not until Suttree leaves the trails that he finds the reflective quiet he needs. This journey into the woods parallels the alchemical symbol of the labyrinth. Alchemists believed that a dangerous journey was a means to purification. "The alchemists use the image in a symbolic way to designate a place of confusion, geographical or mental, which has to be negotiated with great care in order to avoid becoming lost without thread or clue," (Abraham 113). Suttree's journey is marked by his confusion, which leads him to questions such as, "could you eat the mushrooms, would you die, do you care," (McCarthy, *Suttree* 285). In this moment, the narration slips into Suttree's consciousness, revealing his fear and uncertainty. This setting allows Suttree to separate himself from his prison, Knoxville, while still allowing him his connection to the river, which is reminiscent of the city, for the river, is Knoxville.

The woods are a means of purification in which Suttree acknowledges

some doublegoer, some othersuttree eluded him in these woods and he

feared that should that figure fail to rise and steal away and were he

therefore to come to himself in the obscure wood he'd be neither mended

nor made whole but rather set mindless to dodder drooling with his ghostly clone (McCarthy, *Suttree* 287).

This moment of uncertainty offers two alchemical ties. First, the dual-identity that Suttree defines is reminiscent of the alchemical version of the self, for, “it is consciousness that creates the split and says either-or,” (von Franz, *Alchemy* 137). Enlightenment and wholeness are unattainable unless there is the initial split. Suttree’s venture into the woods provides a setting conducive to recognizing his duality. Secondly, the woods offer a return to the image of the punishment. While in the woods, Suttree is forced to the brink of starvation. However, this starvation is necessary for his transcendence. Suttree chooses to embrace the madness brought on by his starvation and dehydration, but this sacrifice does not release him. Instead, his journey through the labyrinth leads him only to an awareness that he is “lost or crazy or both” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 288). Suttree’s trial simply returns him to the prison of the knowledge he defines as, “At least I exist,” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 288) without a sense of purpose or clarity.

Much like the temptation of St. Anthony, Suttree seeks an end to his punishment (albeit self-inflicted) through his excursion into the woods. McCarthy uses his knowledge of St. Anthony in crafting the scene, calling it “visions of the new asceticism” (McCarthy, Box 19). Suttree’s wanderings are paired with imagery that accentuates his isolation: “The cold indifferent dark, the blind stars beaded on their tracks and mitered satellites and geared and pinioned planets all reeling through the black of space,” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 284).

In his notes on *Suttree*, McCarthy cites from *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* the following line: “Those who traverse the desert meet animals passing all conception”

(McCarthy, Box 19). Suttree's experiences in the woods surpass his understanding of the world and bring him towards "spiritual reintegration" (Foucault, *Madness* 7). The image of Saint Anthony is described as one of "madness" (Foucault, *Madness* 20), and the enlightenment he achieves, the knowledge that he must continue his life and return to his Christian responsibilities, is an enlightenment borne out of "the sterile madness that lie[s] in men's hearts" (Foucault *Madness* 21). Alone in the Gatlinburg mountains, Suttree contemplates his isolation and while he seems ready to admit that this purpose and responsibility are futile efforts, he chooses to return to Knoxville. This moment is chronicled by the following statement: "He saw with a madman's clarity the perishability of his flesh" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 287). Like Saint Anthony, Suttree finds himself returning to a society that is violent and helpless but of his own. Once again, Suttree embraces his prison, for the alchemist is not ready for his ablution.

Foucault describes a prison as an institution in which, "[a] utopia of judicial reticence: take[s] away life, but prevent[s] the patient from feeling it; deprive[s] the prisoner of all rights, but [does] not inflict pain; impose[s] penalties free of all pain" (Foucault, *Discipline* 11). Alchemists define a prison as a stage in the quest for enlightenment. The elements are imprisoned in their impure form and the alchemist's soul is imprisoned by its disconnection with the Self. "The only way the Self can manifest is through conflict: to meet one's insoluble and eternal conflict is to meet God," (von Franz, *Alchemy* 137). McCarthy's characterization of the prison at the beginning of the novel depicts both of these philosophies.

The prison or workhouse only houses Suttree for a short period, but its influence spans the entire novel. McCarthy's revisions to his "middle-draft" evoke the symbolic

nature of the prison concept, connecting Suttree's time in the workhouse to both Foucault's concept of prison and the alchemical symbolism of "putrefaction." The first noticeable revision is the addition of the "iron" door. In the earlier draft, McCarthy had described it as being "barred" (McCarthy, Box 22). His pencil markings show a scratching out of the word and a typed "iron." This small change accentuates the finality and power of the prison. "Barred" has the connotation of control, but it is limited. A bar can be removed; freedom is an option. However, "iron" is an elemental substance. It cannot be changed unless it successfully undergoes alchemical transformation. The inclusion of iron also addresses the alchemical concept of transmutation, which is "based on the theory that all bodies, including metals, are constituted of the elements [earth, air, fire, and water] in differing proportions, that these proportions are alterable, and that the elements may be transformed into each other" (Abraham 68).

Alchemists believed that the quest towards enlightenment must be met with struggle. Therefore, much like the river, the setting of the prison also functions as a character. In this case, the prison serves as an antagonist to Suttree, revealing his limitations and lack of power. The workhouse is not Suttree's true prison, but its presence serves as a parallel to what his own prison, Knoxville, can do to him. Thus, McCarthy's revisions of the section continue to develop the nature of the prison and its power over the prisoner, specifically, Gene Harrogate. His "middle-draft" shows pronoun changes. In this introduction to the prison, Harrogate is only minimally referred to by name. He becomes the nameless prisoner, a man without distinction. However, the earlier draft uses his name in two instances that McCarthy removed. His pencil markings cross out Harrogate's name as he moves "down the aisle looking left and right" (McCarthy, *Suttree*

39) and as he “[goes] to the end of the room” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 39). Each of these revisions supports Foucault’s conception of “the power to punish” (*Discipline* 89). When Harrogate loses his name (a loss resulting from fastidious revision), the narrator again asserts his power over the narrative and marks Harrogate as one outside of the “dominant class” (Foucault, *Discipline* 26), thus preparing the reader for his inevitable victimization.

Another aspect of revision involves the concept of light. In this “middle-draft” McCarthy had included the image of “fornoon light” (McCarthy, Box 22), but the image is crossed out. His revisions show attempts to find a word to describe the light, but the published draft shows the absence of any adjective. The light signifies the world outside of prison, and this is a world Harrogate can no longer experience. With this small revision, our narrator limits Harrogate’s perception of the world. In this way, the narrative voice takes over the role of the warden, and the subtle change evokes the nature of control and power. This is an example of what Foucault calls “infinitesimal power over the active body” (Foucault, *Discipline* 137). The muted light that is only seen through “welded iron windows” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 39) illustrates the principles Foucault sees in the modern prison because a “deprivation of light” (*Discipline* 117) is a means of subtle punishment.

Alchemists described sun and shadow as one of the most enigmatic symbols of the *opus*. These two symbols are tied, neither able to exist without the other, and both essential in completing the *opus*. The sun is the “symbol of gold, philosophical gold,” (Abraham 194) and its shadow symbolizes the soul. The light at the close of Harrogate’s first day in the workhouse: “It had grown dim within the room, the early winter twilight closing down the day” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 40) as depicted in the final draft depicts the

unification of light and shadow. This is reminiscent of the alchemical *opus*, for “the sun and its shadow symbolizes the balancing union of the two great universal energies,” (Abraham 196). In his earlier draft, this line read, “had grown darker in the room” (McCarthy, Box 22). Dim offers a glimmer of light, and this change allows for a hopeful contrast to Harrogate’s other experiences of the day.

After introducing the character of the prison, McCarthy develops its power through Harrogate’s further experiences. In the scene describing Harrogate’s first meal, McCarthy’s “middle-draft” shows revisions that accentuate the antagonistic nature of the workhouse. The “room” that held the “picnic tables” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 43) was originally a “hall” (McCarthy, Box 22) and “the prisoners” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 43) were originally an ambiguous “they” (McCarthy, Box 22). Both of these changes serve to accentuate the power of the prison system, for this scene draws attention to the use of space in the workhouse. In *Discipline & Punish* Foucault asserts that “[d]isciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 143). Here McCarthy shows the limitations of space in the workhouse. The “marching” the prisoners do to arrive at the “messhall” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 43) exposes their controlled movements, emphasizing their submissive state. Harrogate’s entrance is coupled with a description of the other prisoners who “wore pinched faces, apparently in pain, half shut with joy constrained” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 43). McCarthy inserted the phrase, “apparently in pain” in this “middle-draft.” This addition highlights the tortured souls of the men in the workhouse. This image of repetition is seen in *Suttree*’s daily wanderings around McAnally Flats and calls to mind the circular, repetitive nature of the alchemical *opus*.

The prison continues to exert power over Harrogate as the novel continues. Food is limited, particularly by an absence of meat, which parallels Foucault's idea that "[penal] detention must have as its essential function the transformation of the individual's behavior" (*Discipline* 269). The act of limiting food options exerts the prison's power. The very nature of the workhouse conveys its power over Harrogate; however, he refuses to learn from it. He rejects the notion of labor when he is told to work in the kitchen washing dishes. He steals from the other prisoners, and as Rikard states, "[he] wants to get rich quick without having to work for it" (124). McCarthy creates a prison that is intent upon changing the prisoners into docile beings who will reenter society with a proper respect for social norms. It fails with Harrogate, and only minimally succeeds with Suttree.

While Harrogate distinguishes himself in the workhouse with his antics and escapades, Suttree tries to be unnoticed. He is the perfect docile prisoner who adheres to the expectations of the workhouse. This attribute is most apparent in his advice to Harrogate about escaping the workhouse. For Suttree life inside the workhouse is a thing to be tolerated. While he feels the "[b]arrenness of heart and gothic loneliness" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 50), he does not give in to the desire to escape. Thomas Young Jr. defines this time in Suttree's life as a time where "[h]e is at pains, in word and deed, to deny his intellectual and cultural endowments" (98); however, it is clear that Suttree is completely aware of his situation but simply does not desire an escape. This awareness is indicative of the alchemical belief in the *opus*. The alchemist cannot rush the elemental changes. Timing is everything, and the alchemist is always aware of the need for patience.

Suttree's stay in the workhouse closes with a Christmas visit from his mother. The scene evokes the loneliness and broken nature of our protagonist. This point enters through the narrative voice: "[but] the son she addressed was hardly there at all. Numbly he watched himself fold his hands on the table. He heard his voice, remote, adrift" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 61). Here Suttree is seen as a fragment of a man. This image contrasts with the man shown earlier in the novel. However, his emotions are not products of guilt as much as they are the expected byproducts of a prison stay. His experience in the workhouse reduces his soul through punctuated, subtle oppression. However its power is limited, because Suttree's real prison is outside of the constructed walls of the workhouse.

The city is Suttree's true prison, and it is from this place that he must obtain his freedom to complete his *opus*. Here he moves around, delivering fish, philosophizing with friends, drinking to excess, and fighting without purpose. He describes this city as a "gallery of indolents" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 246), and while he remains partial to the patrons of McAnally Flats, seeing their sinister natures clearly, he allows them to be his responsibility. This parallels the alchemical nature of duality. Suttree's Knoxville is pregnant with filth, but his chosen family is also loyal to him and he to them, revealing the possibility of purity within this prison. Knoxville is the alchemical underworld; however, as Steven Frye asserts, "blending with this unambiguous underworld scene are features of the grotesque, as well as beautiful images of primordial nature transformed as if permanently into seemingly crystalline aesthetic objects," (58). Like a true alchemical setting, the underworld corresponds to the heavens and all things are one.

According to Robert Rudnicki, Suttree has “[chosen] instead self-exile and the life of an outcast”; however, he is never without connections in McAnally Flats. Suttree collects compatriots in every one of his actions. He is a caretaker to the rag picker. He is Ab Jones’s voice of reason. He is a defender of the weak and a protector of the wasted. Vereen Bell describes his understanding as a “paradigm of a dead-end, paradigmless world” (32). This is the nature of Knoxville for Suttree, for it provides him the setting for a “directionless journey through the external wasteland of urban Knoxville and the interior wasteland of Suttree’s tortured consciousness” (Frye 55). But more importantly, Knoxville’s McAnally Flats is a symbol of his *opus*. The alchemists believed that their work, or *opus*, was tied to elements. Land was not land, but rather a placement for work. The elements of the space defined that which needed purification. Therefore, in this space, Suttree seeks to reveal the purity embedded within the filth. His failure to do so is both his burden and his alchemical *opus*.

Foucault describes prison as a place where there is a system of “establish[ed] rhythms, impos[ed]...occupations, [and] regulat[ed] *cycles* of repetition” (*Discipline* 149 [my emphasis]). Each day is reminiscent of the previous day. Suttree embraces a cyclical path to his days. Every time it seems as though he will do something different (search for mussels, “marry” a prostitute), he returns to his life before his attempted escape. Suttree acknowledges the “repetition of its [Knoxville’s] own images” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 246) in his daily life. Even when his fishing produces no positive results, he simply “cut[s] the droppers and watch[es] them slide and sink” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 107). There is no question of severing his connections with his chosen place of exile. He allows them to force him into a limitation of activity. As Steven Frye asserts, “the world he confronts

becomes more than a material realm of degradation” (58). It is beyond singular definitions and embraces the alchemical belief in duality.

McAnally Flats’s enclosed nature creates the second aspect of Suttree’s prison—he is constantly watched. Another element of the panopticism is the concept of surveillance. A prisoner “is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication.” (Foucault, *Discipline* 200). In McAnally Flats, Suttree is never able to escape the eyes of its inmates. He is victimized by these eyes in situations that seem, at least at first, friendly excursions. He begins a typical evening drinking and embracing the merriment of his friends and ends the same evening thinking, “I’m an asshole, he told a wall. He turned, seeking a face” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 77). Suttree, as a prisoner, seeks a witness to his punishment. The panoptic set up of the city allows Suttree to feel the presence of the prison, which parallels the alchemical symbol of torture. “In order to be renewed, the matter of the Stone (body) must first be killed and reduced,” (Abraham 202). This particular setting serves as this torture, for Suttree can only complete his *opus* if he is able to move beyond this stage.

The ruination of this world, however, serves a dichotomous purpose. K. Wesley Berry describes McCarthy’s Appalachia as follows: “McCarthy’s Appalachia is revealed as a place both beautiful and ruined, a land of scant patches of virgin woodlands juxtaposed with the scars of more than two centuries of pioneering,” (47). This is Suttree’s world. He is forever aware of the “bloodred water carrying the fecundity of the mountains,” (Berry 69), but this awareness does not shatter his belief in the beauty of the land. Suttree, like a true alchemist, embraces the duality of all things. He sees the possibility of purity present in his chosen prison (Knoxville and its surrounding woods)

and searches for release, not because he does not love this world but because he knows he must complete his *opus*. The novel closes with Suttree's escape from Knoxville: "Behind him the city lay smoking, the sad purlieus of the dead immured with the bones of friends and forebears," (McCarthy, *Suttree* 471). McCarthy's settings are not changed, but their function is completed. Suttree leaves on the highway, picked up by a stranger. This small act at the end of the novel parallels his own task (offering kindness to strangers), for Suttree's perceived alchemical *opus* initially lies not in the changing of the natural world, but rather in the changing of men's souls. His inability to do so is his justification for his punishment.

IV. NIGREDO

Alchemy relies on the ability to change the elemental nature of substances. Essentially, alchemists seek to move elements out of the darkness and into the light. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Suttree does not seek to evolve his surrounding elements – the city, the woods, the river, nor the prison – but rather searches for a way to evolve the people placed within these constructions. This task, however, proves difficult for him because his chosen group is described as a “gallery of indolents” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 246). The struggle to help the citizens of McAnally Flats becomes Suttree’s battle between nature and ideology. His alchemical quest is tainted by his Christian guilt, and it is this guilt that leads him away from this *opus*. The power struggle is what Foucault describes as a “power [that] is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network” (Foucault, *Power* 142) making every interaction Suttree has with the people of McAnally Flats an example of punishment, contributing to his madness. Thus, his moral design of purifying the citizens of McAnally Flats exemplifies his disassociation with the self, and as his labors intensify, so does his need for atonement. The symbolic transmutation Suttree seeks through his acts, however, is necessary for him to prepare for his actual transmutation. Therefore, the imprisonment and punishment received from the power struggles pave the way for the alchemical transmutation of the soul. This change is most clearly evident in Suttree’s interactions with those he calls his friends and those he meets on the streets of McAnally Flats.

Although the idea of helping others is mostly considered honorable, this morality, according to Friedrich Nietzsche, is merely an inhibition of our “wild nature” (Nietzsche, *Twilight* 467). Suttree’s desire to help the citizens of McAnally Flats presents the

unrealistic nature of complete sacrifice. His adherence to this mythology reveals a limitation of nature. As Joseph Campbell contends in *The Mythic Dimension*, “Man is not free...to establish for himself the social aims of his life and to work” (221). Suttree’s latent Catholicism places him within this constraint. Like an alchemist, he cannot quit his *opus*, no matter how unrealistic it may seem. Thus, his adherence to his alchemical *opus* establishes a prison as his spirit is imprisoned within the confines of his latent Catholicism much like Mercurius² is defined in matter.

To understand Suttree’s desire to help the citizens of McAnally Flats, we must first understand the nature of the mountaineer, as I mentioned in Chapter One. In his book, *Authority and the Mountaineer*, Gabe Rikard describes the people of the land as, “an image [that] was created and has been subsequently employed to disfranchise the mountaineer, causing the rest of society to view him as an ‘other’” (25). The mountaineer, then, represents an antithetical version of capitalistic ideology. He is that which society wishes to contain and reform. Societal power constructions, however, are ineffective to the mountaineer, because while the Appalachian man sought survival, he only did so on his own terms. Therefore, the power of the state that Foucault identifies as “the right to seizure” lacked authenticity (*The History of Sexuality* 136). The mountaineer essentially controls his time, his morality, and his sense of justice. The state remains an outsider.

Another element of McCarthy’s mountaineers (Suttree’s compatriots) is their intentional rejection of outsiders. Rikard cites Natalie Grant’s essay on *The Orchard Keeper* as evidence that the geography of the area serves as a basis for cultural and ideological isolation. *Suttree*’s characters are caught within the boundaries of Knoxville,

more specifically McAnally Flats, and travel is limited to only a few places. The roads in *Suttree* serve as symbolic limitations rather than pathways to freedom. As Rikard points out, “the dwellers of McAnally Flats had no resources to get out of the way of progress, much less to take advantage of it” (44). Travel and mobility remain out of reach for Suttree’s friends. Instead, they create their own sort of panoptic civilization. Each day is filled with repetition – wander, drink, fight, sleep. They form their own community beyond that of modern America. The people of McAnally Flats are racially diverse, culturally varied, yet they are unified by their commitment to each other. Their rejection of capitalistic values and other organizing principles reveals their rejection of docility. Thus, it is somewhat ironic that Suttree finds his way into their inner circle, for “Suttree is no true mountaineer” (Rikard 81).

Not only do the characters subvert the influence of outsiders, but they also subvert the expectations of modernity. McCarthy’s descriptions of the people accurately describe their relative simplicity. Some live in shanties some in dilapidated houseboats. They are of different races and ethnicities. As Rikard points out, “McCarthy’s Knoxville is so stratified” (60). This community on the surface seems Utopian, but no matter how much they attempt to remain outside the jurisdictions of modern America, they are victims of the authoritative system. They are within “the realm of the fallen, with elements of pathos and dark comedy blended with moments of unmediated horror and stark images of the grotesque” (Frye 50). Their solidarity is ideal, but limited. Thus, Suttree’s acceptance of “gestures of friendship offered by drunks, thieves, mussel hunters, prostitutes, transvestites, bar owners, and even a reputed witch” (Frye 53) present not only his desire for inclusion (since he has rejected his own family) but also his need for transformation.

His *opus* begins with friendship but results in punishment. Thomas Young Jr. describes Suttree's connection to the citizens of McAnally Flats as an allegiance with "the sprawl of peddlers, psalmists, blind singers, beggars, and wild street preachers" (98). However, Suttree's preference more closely resembles a responsibility. He chooses this life not because he finds it more pleasing – in fact, it is quite the opposite. Suttree's exile into McAnally Flats offers a rejection of modern American values and presents him with an attempt to help the victims of modernity.

To begin, Suttree embraces three different roles with his inherited family of criminals and miscreants: confidant, ally, and mentor. Each role, however, adds up to what Frye defines as, "an unlikely parental figure, the one human being these outcasts can turn to in moments of desperation" (54). In the first pages McCarthy establishes Suttree's somewhat wondering narrative and unlikely connection to the ragpicker and Ab Jones. Both of these relationships offer a blending between confidant and ally. Suttree's ragpicker (or ragman) is first introduced within a "dark carven beneath the vaulted concrete with rocks piled about the entrance and a crudely lettered keep out sign slashed in yellow paint across a boulder" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 11). This initial setting is reminiscent of an alchemical tone. It is literally an underworld. This brings to mind what *Suttree*'s narrator calls the "terra damnata of the city's dead alchemy" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 306). In alchemy, the *terra damnata* or *faeces* are "the impure parts which the alchemist separated from the pure matter of the Stone" (Abraham 73). This initial contact is brief: Suttree brings the ragpicker a fish to eat and the old man offers him a potato. His familiarity with the ragpicker, however, establishes his connection. He is aware of the ragpicker's desire for repayment – the offer of potatoes and the number of times he needs

to refuse – three. Therefore, Suttree is not just a man trying to help another person, but he is a man helping one of his own, an ally against the forces of modernity and nature. Much like the archetypal hero described in Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Suttree is “dedicated to the whole of *his* society (133). His society, however, is formed out of those previously deemed as outsiders.

Their conversation takes a turn when Suttree mentions the suicide (the body found in the river in the opening pages). The ragpicker’s insistence that death is desired contrasts the earlier sense of comradeship between the two men. Neither man can define the motivation for suicide, but both seem to linger with the idea. The ragpicker chooses to embrace death when he asserts, “They say death comes like a thief in the night, where is he? I’ll bug his neck” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 12). At this point in the novel, Suttree’s questions about death are distant and his observations are impersonal. Yet, the ragpicker’s insistence that, “They’s worse weather to come” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 12) evokes an initiation into the underworld previously established by the setting. This initial example of Suttree’s attempt to help others is reminiscent of the initial stage of the *opus*. Here he functions as a confidant, receiving the old man’s thoughts on death. He does not judge this fixation, but only lightly encourages him to avoid jumping in the water any time soon. Like the archetypal hero, Suttree enters the underworld of McAnally Flats, beginning his journey.

Suttree’s connection to the ragpicker is sustained throughout the novel. In the dead of cold, he continues his obligation to the old man, for the ragpicker is unable to overcome the forces of nature. This small scene parallels the previously mentioned scene. Like before, the ragpicker is introduced with an element of decay. This time he is

introduced with a, “warm odor of filth hung in the room cut through with a reek of urine” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 174). Suttree does not bring fish to comfort the ragpicker but instead pays for a room for him to weather the cold. Suttree’s attempt to establish housing for the ragpicker is not permanent, but his decision is emblematic of his desire to improve the old man’s comfort. Therefore, Suttree attempts to *purify* the ragpicker’s situation. Again, calling attention to the duality of alchemy, Suttree seeks the heaven within the hell of the ragpicker’s life.

Each of these encounters seems small and insignificant, for the ragpicker is merely one member of Suttree’s inherited family. However, the ragpicker is symbolic of the “antisuttree.” Their encounters follow the same pattern as described above: Suttree finds the ragpicker, offers him something that the old man is lacking, they discuss death in some philosophical way, and then Suttree leaves. Suttree never actually improves the ragpicker’s situation. In fact, each attempt only addresses the immediate need. Their conversations are of an existential nature, most notably seen in the ragpicker’s recount of his childhood and belief in God. About halfway through the novel, Suttree encounters the ragman at work. Again evoking the underworld aura of alchemy, the ragman enters “beneath the mound of ripe bedding in which he had entombed himself for sleep” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 256). Their conversation covers the ragpicker’s youth and moves to his current reality – he seeks release from this life. This contrasts Suttree’s perspective as he asserts that, “[n]o one wants to die” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 257). As before, the ragpicker contends that death is a release and that there is nothing on the other side of it. His nihilism contrasts Suttree’s alchemical desire for transformation. Yet the ragpicker earns the final word in the conversation when he asserts that God would not have an answer to

the ultimate question, “What did you have me in that crapgame down there for anyway?” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 258). Suttree does not offer any closure or counterargument, but rather the scene moves on and time passes. Thus, Suttree is unable to repair the existential damage the ragman has received over years of abuse. And if he cannot repair the old man’s life, he must inherit the burden of this truth. He must create the prison that is his life in McAnally Flats.

However, the ragman is not the only person Suttree attempts to raise above societal limitations. Suttree’s relationship with Abednego Jones varies from his relationship with the ragman. Ab Jones is independent and self-reliant. Thus, from his introduction, Ab Jones establishes himself as a confidant to Suttree. He is initially introduced by the presence of his houseboat: “The smoky yellow windowlight in the houseboat of Abednego Jones went dark” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 29). This scene occurs after Suttree’s night at the end of the first narrated drinking episode and calls attention to both the alchemical underworld and the persistent presence of authority with the inclusion of the “warped purlieus of tillage in dead spaces shaped by construction” and the “police cruiser pass[ing] slowly” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 29). These images definitively tie Suttree to Ab Jones, for Suttree desires to save Ab Jones from the overbearing authoritative figures that control the people of McAnally Flats, and Ab Jones is a reminder of the duality of alchemy.

In his middle-draft notes on *Suttree*, Cormac McCarthy composes a series of images, questions, and descriptions that eventually come to define Ab Jones. The images McCarthy creates are shaded, evoking the dichotomous nature of alchemy and the questions that appear to form the consciousness of Ab Jones are colored by existential

anxiety. Most notably, the image of “a medley of slime” and “the mammoth black skull” (McCarthy, Box 19) suggest the alchemical underworld. The alchemical stage of *nigredo*³ is essential for purification and is denoted by a “smell of the stench of graves” and “the skull” (Abraham 135). On the other hand, the notes include images of light, such as “A face that shone like wet paint” and “light the color of washwater” (McCarthy, Box 19). McCarthy’s images subtly conjure the concept of alchemical heaven or the “alembic quintessence, the philosopher’s stone” (Abraham 97). This duality presents a clear understanding of Ab Jones’s character: on one hand, he is a reminder of the darkness present in the world, but on the other, he symbol of the possibility of transcendence. And that is his importance for Suttree. Ab Jones reminds him that “the way of the transgressor is hard” but also offers the concept of “deathlessness against all right reason” (McCarthy, Box 19).

The first interaction with Ab Jones happens at his house. Typical of the narrative timeline of *Suttree*, Suttree finds himself wandering into interaction. Each of his conversations with Ab Jones begins with a ceremony of communion – the two share a beer or some other drink. Unlike Suttree’s interactions with the ragpicker, Suttree usually accepts Ab’s offer. This affirms the difference of these two relationships, for they are equals in Suttree’s eyes, and therefore he is obligated to receive what Ab offers him. Likewise, Ab’s term of endearment for Suttree, “Youngblood” further defines their relationship. Ab functions as somewhat of a father-figure offering Suttree a vision of the world.

Yet, Ab Jones remains another anti-Suttree. Like the ragpicker, he presents a version of consciousness that is antithetical to Suttree’s. Suttree desires to understand, or

as George Guillemin describes, Suttree is on a “modernist quest for truth, a baroque style with existential despair” (52). His alchemical *opus* ties him to a concept of absolute knowledge which Marie-Louise von Franz calls “synchronistic events [that] point towards a *unitary aspect of existence* which transcends our conscious grasp which Jung called *unus mundus*” (*Psyche and Matter* 40). Ab Jones, however, offers Suttree a vision of isolationism. He accentuates Suttree’s differences, telling him to “Look out for *your own*” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 203 [my emphasis]).

The question, then, is from what is Suttree trying to save Ab Jones? If Ab Jones has his independence and he is more of a bearer of wisdom and is strong both emotionally and physically as depicted through Suttree’s observations, then where does Suttree’s responsibility lie? The answer is both simple and obvious: the “same old shit” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 202). This is the truth to which Ab Jones passively attests and Suttree only tangentially understands. Ab is strong and independent and self-reliant, but he is also black and poor and aged. Thus he is a victim of time and society. While Suttree turns to him for advice and true friendship, he also acknowledges the difference between them, which ironically unifies them. They are tied by a desire to avoid the forces of the authority limiting their autonomy. Thus when Ab Jones asserts, “I wouldn’t fight em [the police] at all if I could keep from it,” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 204) he offers the truth that defines Suttree’s alchemical *opus*: it is a necessity derived from external opposition, but inherent in one’s soul.

Time and again, Suttree finds Ab exposed to forces of authority. Towards the end of the novel, Suttree encounters Ab on the streets. In this instance he is not the strong, wise man of the houseboat, but rather he is a stumbling victim. In this scene Suttree is

reasonable while Ab is contentious. Suttree attempts to intervene, but Ab Jones rejects his help. Suttree's desperation is seen in his pleas: "Goddammit Ab. Straighten up now. Ab" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 440). Each punctuated command, however, is rejected, for Ab understands the reality of the relationship between man and authority. Ab knows that to fight this battle would be futile because another battle is simply waiting for another day. Thus, "power is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network" (Foucault, *Power* 142). This moment in Suttree's life ends with him pushing the police car into the river and with Ab's dying. Both of these occurrences cement Suttree's failure in his *opus*. Since his work is tied to establishing relationships with his chosen family and protecting them from forces with which they contend, Ab's rejection of assistance and resulting death reveals his inability to reconcile his ideal world with reality.

The most important beneficiary of Suttree's kindness, however, is Gene Harrogate who is the only character introduced into the novel without a prior connection to Suttree. Harrogate serves to exemplify the otherness present in Suttree's world. Harrogate's crime, watermelon "mounting," establishes the initial connection, for it unites the "country-mouse" with Suttree. This parallel serves as a reminder of reality. Harrogate's ignorance juxtaposes the overt power of the deputy and by extension, society. When Harrogate enters the workhouse, the deputy refers to him as a "sadsack" and does not make eye contact with him. He defines their respective roles: punisher and punished, warden and prisoner.

Harrogate is not being punished for his watermelon debauchery in this instance, but rather he is being punished for "social failure" (Foucault, *Madness* 259). In fact, his

crime is an example of his madness. Foucault asserts that individuals who flout authority and refuse to adhere to the agreed upon rules of society are the very same individuals victimized by prison. In fact, prison is the chosen institution for rehabilitation. Gabe Rikard makes the following observation: “The real crime of Harrogate’s watermelon escapade is not his sexual perversion—that alone is not enough. He is brought to the workhouse for crime against property—theft, one might assume. . . . He lands in the workhouse because he has broken the bourgeois rules that govern personal property” (122-123). His placement in the workhouse serves as an antithetical version of Suttree, and while Rikard’s claim that his imprisonment is symbolic of the “bourgeois” desire to quell the antagonistic nature of the mountaineer is plausible, Harrogate’s experiences serve more clearly as examples of the overt power of the prison, for his introduction to the workhouse conveys a limiting of the world, an inescapable existence.

As the introduction continues, Harrogate is ordered to move down the hall towards the showers. McCarthy’s deputy “[does] not look at Harrogate” and treats him as someone less than a man. The guards force him to shower, an act with which he is unfamiliar, and refer to him as a “dumb-ass” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 37). Harrogate’s ignorance of the shower is an example of his connection to “the mountain people” (Rikard 115), and the deputy’s dismissal and insults force him into a submissive role. This act establishes prison’s supremacy—it has more than power; it has knowledge of the world beyond the mountains. One of Foucault’s most prevalent contentions is that “power produces knowledge” (*Discipline* 27). Harrogate’s introduction to the shower is more than a means of cleansing his body; it is a display of and introduction to the unknown. Thus, it is an example of the power and knowledge of the society that has

imprisoned Harrogate. As a final act of degradation, the deputies spray his naked body with water to “[get] them crotch crickets” (38), which solidifies his weak standing in the prison. Once Harrogate completes this small act, he is initiated in to a world that has showers, money, women, and crime. This is where Suttree enters.

Their relationship is defined by Harrogate’s ignorance and Suttree’s knowledge. Unlike his relationships with the ragpicker and Ab Jones, his relationship establishes a void in Harrogate’s life: a mentor. While in prison, Suttree advises Harrogate on the rules and protects him against antagonistic forces. He advises Harrogate not to try to escape and protects him from Byrd Slusser. This act launches the relationship that defines Suttree throughout the rest of the novel. Byrd’s words, “I didn’t know he was yours” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 52) come to define Suttree’s connection to Harrogate. He does not claim Harrogate sexually, but subconsciously, he claims him as one of his own. Harrogate also understands this connection, for after being released from the workhouse, he searches for Suttree in Knoxville.

Their following interactions are defined by Harrogate’s needs and Suttree’s willingness to comply. Harrogate finds trouble, initiating escapades such as catching pigeons with an electric fence and killing bats with strychnine. Suttree serves as a voice of guidance, softly encouraging him to avoid these acts, but Harrogate is his foil, another anti-Suttree. Their relationship culminates in Harrogate’s decision to rob the telephone company and dismissal of Suttree’s sage advice, “You’re on your way up to the penitentiary is where you’re on your way up to” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 420). This, again, illustrates the futility of Suttree’s endeavors. Suttree’s interactions with Gene are colored

by his desire to reform his counterpart, yet each attempt at reform is met with obstinacy much like his interactions with the ragpicker and Ab Jones.

Suttree's failure to keep Gene out of trouble, however, does not make him sever his ties to him. Part of Suttree's role in McAnally Flats is servant to the weary and weak, and his final interactions with Gene, the "city rat...look[ing] frail and wasted with defeat" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 435) demonstrate this learned desire. He allows Gene to hideout in his house. The only truth Suttree understands in this moment is that "[a] fugitive's life is a hard one" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 435) and that leaving Knoxville is Gene's only option. This scene is reminiscent of McCarthy's early notes on the character of Ab Jones where his notation reads, "[t]he way of the transgressor is hard" (McCarthy, Box 19). However, Gene, ironically like Suttree, chooses not to leave. He asserts his helplessness, stating that he would be alone and would not know what to do even if he found a way to escape the detection of the police. Harrogate is eventually caught, antagonized by a police officer to move so that he could shoot him, handcuffed, and placed in the back of a police car. The narration of this moment accentuates the openness of the world juxtaposed by the limitations of one man's place in the world. Vereen Bell states in "Ambiguous Nihilism": "To think of Harrogate dispersed into the world and then to remember him free, contriving his endless baroque schemes, is to perceive the real and metaphorical horror of prison life, of passivity and inaction, and to consider how it is that schemes and scheming hold the world at bay" (38). Harrogate's return to prison, with "the steel bracelet on his wrist" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 439) represents the true power of discipline. Like Suttree, he is limited by his choice; however, his imprisonment is the result of a break in social order, while Suttree's is the result of misplaced responsibility.

Highlighting three important relationships for Suttree, I have established the tenor of his *opus*. He defines his life in McAnally Flats by these and other relationships. Suttree repeatedly attempts to help his friends and is repeatedly met with opposition. Like other alchemists, who according to C.G. Jung must “reiterate that the *opus* proceeds from the one and leads back to the one, that it is a sort of circle like a dragon biting its own tail” (*Psychology* 292), Suttree engages in this failed repetition in order to form what he defines as the *prima materia*⁴. He is not searching for gold, or even truly trying to diminish the power of authority. Instead, Suttree desires to liberate himself from “the archons and evil worldly powers” (von Franz, *Archetypal* 148). The goal of the alchemist is always tied to his own soul, and in Suttree’s case, he creates his prison to assist him in purging his guilt.

Foucault describes a prison as an institution in which, “[a] utopia of judicial reticence: take[s] away life, but prevent[s] the patient from feeling it; deprive[s] the prisoner of all rights, but [does] not inflict pain; impose[s] penalties free of all pain” (Foucault, *Discipline* 11). Suttree’s life in McAnally Flats is defined by this concept. His actions are limited and controlled. The repetition of his daily activities accentuates the power that controls him. Suttree is not contained by the authorities with whom he contends on behalf of his friends, but rather he is contained by his subconscious *opus*. This power is stronger than the external forces because as Foucault asserts in *Power & Knowledge*, “what makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply one fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (119).

Another element of the panopticism is the concept of surveillance. A prisoner “is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication.” (Foucault, *Discipline* 200). In McAnally Flats, Suttree is never able to escape the eyes of its inmates. Suttree is victimized by these eyes in situations that seem, at least at first, friendly excursions. He begins a typical evening drinking and embracing the merriment of his friends and ends the same evening thinking, “I’m an asshole, he told a wall. He turned, seeking a face” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 77). Suttree, as a prisoner, seeks a witness to his punishment. This concept is also seen in Suttree’s dream in the hospital after fracturing his skull.

He slept and in his sleep he saw his friends again and they were coming downriver on muddy floodwaters, Hoghead and the City Mouse and J-Bone and Bearhunter and Bucket and Boneyard and J D Davis and Earl Solomon, all watching him where he stood on the shore. They turned gently in their rubber bullboat, bobbing slightly on the broad and ropy waters, their feet impinging in the floor of the thing with membraneous yellow tracks.

They glided past somberly. Out of a lightless dawn receding, past the pale daystar. A fog more obscure closed away their figures gone a sadder way by psychic seas across the Tarn of Acheron. From a rock in the river, he waved them farewell but they did not wave back. (McCarthy, *Suttree* 189-190)

Suttree’s interactions with the people of McAnally Flats are colored by his guilt and responsibility; however he remains outside of them. He cares for them. He watches

over them. But he is not truly one of them. As Rick Wallach states, his connection to these people “place[s] [him] within a meaningful extended family and social context. Without them we are not so much unique as alone.” However, Suttree does not control his connection with this adopted family. He brings them in and his subconscious allows their eyes to watch his emotional defeat, thus completing the panoptic nature of Knoxville. He accepts their power and control over him because it allows him to remain connected to both other people (an inherited family that replaces the one he has rejected) and his *opus*.

George Guillemin asserts that Suttree’s goal is defined by the idea of unification: “the grotesque, too, is of an egalitarian quality in so far as it is designed to level hierarchies and join incompatible aspects together and to be, above all, infinite, depersonalized, and dynamic” (59). Ab Jones’s death and Harrogate’s incarceration conflict with this concept of “transcendental *oneness*” that is inherent in alchemy (*Psyche & Matter* 40). After these occurrences, Suttree is forced to face reality. Thus he evolves his punishment into madness.

V. ABLUTIO

He saw himself in a swandive, heedless, lost.—*Suttree*

In his book, *Psychology and Alchemy*, C.G. Jung discusses the lack of clarity with which the alchemist deals. Essentially, the alchemist is burdened with trying to define his actual goal. This truth, or lack of truth, is further established by the incomplete nature of the alchemist's goal. Since the work was never actually completed (and as I have discussed before, the work is inherently impossible), the process by which the alchemist would have used is full of variations. These variations tend to support the idea that permeates all alchemical texts: "*obscurum per obscurius, ignotum per ignotius*" (Jung, *Psychology* 227). Therefore, "it is quite hopeless to try to establish any kind of order in the infinite chaos of substances and procedures" (Jung, *Psychology* 288). The alchemist is forever destined to seek enlightenment not just as a goal but also as a means or process. He is never certain of his method, but the chaos and uncertainty that arise from this state is necessary for him to complete his *opus*⁶. Therefore, alchemy is rooted in confusion, or in the case of Cormac McCarthy's novel, *Suttree*, alchemy is both the pathway into and out of chaos. The lack of definition contrasts the typical logocentric path towards enlightenment of Christian dogma. This battle defines Suttree, for on one side, he has rejected his Catholic sensibilities, but on the other, he seeks a sort of enlightenment that can only result from the symbolic rituals of his latent faith. Consequently, he is an alchemist, seeking enlightenment through a muddled process and embracing the chaos ensuing from a lack of definition. The natural result of this chaos is the madness that engulfs Cornelius Suttree each time he doubts his placement and tries to punish himself for his predicament. His madness and melancholia are seen distinctly throughout the

novel. Each occurrence shapes Suttree's sense of self, as he battles his confusion and moves toward *rubedo*, the final stage in the undefined alchemical process.

To consider the madness present in *Suttree* we must first establish the nature of his madness. Suttree is an outcast, having exiled himself from his well-to-do family, and yet he remains an outsider to the society that he has chosen. Accordingly, his outsider status marks him as an unfit member of modern society. He rejects modern capitalism, ignoring the development of Knoxville except for few sideway observations commenting on the "Gnostic workman who would have down this shabby shapeshow that masks the higher world of form" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 464). This indifference solidifies his rejection of capitalism, thus cementing his rejection of society's power. And it is this final rejection that establishes his madness. For as Michel Foucault asserts, "it is in the nature of power—particularly the kind of power that operates in our society—to be repressive, and to be especially careful in repressing useless energies, the intensity of pleasures, and irregular modes of behaviors" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 9). Suttree's placement within the fringes of society is the first indicator of his unconscious madness.

The second marker lies in Suttree's "refusing to admit the bleakness of the universe or the incoherence of rhetorical comfort in life's mysteries" (Watson). This lack of comfort establishes the depth of melancholy that lingers in his soul. The madness that ensues is a product of his personal failure. He sees death all around him and recognizes his inability to thwart its progress. This recognition substantiates his need for punishment, thus causing a need for atonement. His atonement then leads to his madness. Much like the alchemist's failure to change the elemental nature of substances, Suttree faces the failure of completing his task. The alchemist's burden (and Suttree's, too) becomes this

battle of wits. Each must find a way to continue through a seemingly futile process, having only faith as his ally. This situation drives Suttree's actions, for although his actions seem wayward and pointless, he is driven by his unconscious alchemical quest.

The overall tone parallels the unconscious battle in which Suttree is most entrenched. The melancholic narration embraces Suttree's unconscious awareness of his lack of placement. George Guillemin describes Suttree's predicament as a battle between the liminality of the allegorical narrative and the pastoral narrative. *Suttree's* narrative tenor embraces both the "self-deprecation" of the allegorical narrative and the desire for "escape into a better, simpler world" of the pastoral narrative (Guillemin 50). Yet because Suttree embarks upon an alchemical quest to reconcile this dichotomy, the free-indirect narration embraces the melancholy that the protagonist is unable to acknowledge completely. This melancholy is the root of his madness.

Madness and melancholia have an inseparable history. If madness is an outward depiction of a humankind's break from reality, then "melancholia is viewed as antithetical to reality, 'an essential break with truth'" (Foucault, *Madness* 121). As I have already discussed, Suttree's melancholy is tied to his recursive yet futile existence. He tries to save the ragman but cannot. He wishes to keep Harrogate out of trouble, but Harrogate runs toward trouble each chance he has. In numerous cases, he faces the truth that he cannot help those he feels called upon to help. The melancholia then offers two forms: punishment and madness. Since Suttree chooses the madness of his alchemical quest, he essentially chooses what Joseph Campbell identifies as inherent in all mythologies: a purpose of "redeeming human consciousness from its sense of guilt in life" (Campbell, *The Mythic Dimension* 220).

The melancholic voice of the narrator captures Suttree's awareness of the fetters that taint his *opus*. Offering observations such as that Suttree "felt little more than yet another artifact leached out of the earth and washed along, draining down out of the city, that cold and grainy shape beyond the rain that no rain could make clean again" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 306), the narrative voice defines Suttree's melancholic temperament that furthers his intensifying madness. Suttree is never alone in his madness, for he has the narrative voice to amplify the feelings that he only partially understands. Thus Suttree, as alchemists have done, builds himself into an "individual edifice of ideas" (Jung, *Psychology* 289). Ironically, the voice created through his madness becomes the voice of reason and reality.

This melancholic awareness penetrates Suttree's consciousness and leads him to embrace his madness during his drunken escapades. Soon after his release from the workhouse, Suttree delves into the madness of his soul. The narrative voice describes his actions without judgment: "I'm an asshole, he told a wall.... Dark faces watched him through the smoke" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 77). This moment is riddled with the melancholic temperament that marks Suttree's madness. His addled mind allows him to straddle the line between reality and truth. He both seeks and evades his purpose. Consequently, the act of "seeking and running away seem to be interchangeable aspects of the same desperation of spirit" (Cawelti 310). Suttree welcomes his drunken nights because they allow him to reject the rationalism that defines his days and accept the madness that lingers in his soul. "The mind of the melancholic is entirely occupied by reflection" (Foucault, *Madness* 125); thus, Suttree's mind is stymied by his need for insight, which

his mind (in its madness) cannot reach, yet he does not become overwhelmed by this condition. Instead, Suttree continues to search for clarity.

Further punctuating the burgeoning madness of the night, Suttree's consciousness captures the reality of his surroundings – the “breeding with rhythmic grunts” – but turns them “dream riots” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 78). This evolves into distinctly symbolic hauntings that separate Suttree from his surroundings. The evening concludes with a musical harmonic closure:

In crescendo coupling by coupling to an iron thunder that rattles sashwork all down McAnally Flats. By this clangorous fanfare dull shapes with sidling eyes and pale green teeth congealed with menace out of the dark hemisphere. A curtain fell, unspooling in a shock of dust and beetlehusks and dried mousedirt. (McCarthy, *Suttree* 79-80)

Suttree's madness takes him from his dream stupor out into the world, and as he balances between the liminality of these two worlds, he returns to his internal conflict – the burden of a dichotomous existence. His assertion that “I have seen my image twinned and blown in the smoked glass of a blind man's spectacles I am, I am” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 80), literally conjures the image of his deceased twin but also suggests his dual identities. Suttree is aloof and exiled, yet he is also irrevocably tied to McAnally Flats. He consciously accepts both these identities but receives little clarity.

Alchemy sought to establish order in the universe. Suttree seeks to establish order in his life. However, like an alchemist, his “exploring consciousness [is] confronted by the dark void of the unknown” (Jung, *Psychology* 228). This moment does not garner any wisdom, but instead the images of decay and the spectacle of purging force him into the

battle between his two selves. Marie-Louise von Franz describes this alchemical state in scientific terms as a battle between entropy and negentropy: “In order to make such an ‘ordering interference’ (= decrease of entropy or negentropy) our psyche need only switch from a passively contemplating state into an active volitional attitude” (*Psyche & Matter* 50)⁷. As Suttree awakes from his drunken stupor he recognizes “a raw landscape where half familiar shapes reared from the slagheaps of trash” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 80-81), reaching for knowledge or entropy in that which is tangible, but returning to his melancholic truth that he is without a clear purpose: “tottering to his feet he stood reeling in that apocalyptic waste like some biblical relict in a world no one would have” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 81).

This night, however, continues, and as Suttree embraces the uncertainty and madness of his drunken mind, he distances himself from absolute knowledge and embraces the muddle of his madness. The culminating image of Suttree’s madness is that of a jail cell and animalistic violence. Here the melancholic narrative voice returns to frame the dream consciousness that Suttree’s mind can only somewhat grasp. Images of the grotesque chronicle and mark Suttree’s dreams. The image of the “flayed man with his brisket tacked open like a cooling beef and his skull peeled, blue and bulbous and palery luminescent, black grots his eyeholes and bloody mouth gaped and tongueless” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 86) evokes images of the underworld. This is almost a return to the *nigredo* alchemical stage, but instead it intimates the comic truth Suttree can only understand in his madness. The exponential descriptions lighten the grotesque elements. The dream reveals Suttree’s unconscious awareness of his own sacrifice but provides little more than that as clarity. The brutality of the image also cements his madness, for

“madness discloses a secret of animality which is its own truth” (Foucault, *Madness* 75). Likewise, his mind conjures the image of a sacrificial figure laden with Christian symbolism but described in a manner that reduces the imagery to its utilitarian purpose – man is meat. But no matter how graphic and grotesque this dream sequence is, it remains the ravings of the mind of a drunken madman. Guillemin cites this contrasting tonal nature as a “sense of rivalry between a tragic view of life and a comic one” (57). However, the bond between Suttree’s madness and his alchemical quest implies not only that he has broken from reality, but also that a break from reality is necessary for transcendence. As Joseph Campbell offers, “In our dreams the ageless perils, gargoyles, trials, secret helpers, and instructive figures are nightly still encountered; and in their forms we may see reflected not only the whole picture of our present case, but also the clue to what we must do to be saved” (*The Hero* 84-85). In Suttree’s case, he understands his need to continue moving forward, thus taking him to his literal mad escape into the Gatlinburg Mountains.

In Cormac McCarthy’s notes prior to drafting *Suttree*, he sketches a description of what becomes Suttree in the Gatlinburg Mountains. His handwriting denotes “SUT-MTNS” (McCarthy, Box 19), and the typed page presents images of decay: “marbled brine,” “Zagreus barbarous goatgod⁸,” and a “goatskin tunic” (McCarthy, Box 19). These images offer the roots of the madness that Suttree embraces when he loses himself in the woods. However, McCarthy provides two distinct visions into the idea of madness. The first relates to the concept of Utopia, and the second represents the idea of obsession. About halfway down the page of notes, Cormac McCarthy typed the phrase “Licensed lunacy Max Nordau degeneracy” (McCarthy, Box 19). These words are not used

anywhere in the novel⁹. The significance does not lie in this phrase's absence from the novel, but rather from the idea of Zion being an idealized harmonious community. The placement of this concept in Cormac McCarthy's notes establishes an historical example of Suttree's *opus*. Suttree struggles to form a Utopian existence in which every man cares for one another, but his ideal is never fully actualized, and therefore his *opus* becomes an unconscious obsession.

The element of obsession is what characterizes the other root of Suttree's madness in the mountains and is denoted by Cormac McCarthy's notes:

Visions on the new asceticism

'Those who traverse the desert meet animals passing all conception.' P159 The Temptation of Saint Anthony

'All the fearful pictures on the all started into hideous life.'...

Nous allons au nord. Le cote de la & le niege. Dan le plateau blanc le hippopodes veugle coupon avec les termines des sont pieds le plant ultramarine¹⁰. (Le tentation de St. Antoine [handwritten]) (McCarthy, Box 19)

The image of Saint Anthony has been a symbol of madness for many generations. Saint Anthony's pilgrimage into the woods and his battles with the countless temptations evoke the gothic and grotesque and have been described as "born of madness, of its solitude, of its penitence, of its privations; a wan smile lights this bodiless face, the pure presence of anxiety in the form of an agile grimace¹¹" (Foucault, *Madness* 20). This vision of a man disconnected from the world defines Suttree in the mountains. His mountain journey

denotes an alchemical passage towards purification. The ensuing madness is the byproduct of his quest.

John Lewis Longley Jr. describes Suttree's journey into the mountains as an example of the "metaphysics of death" (86). Focusing on the brevity of Suttree's excursion, Longley identifies it as a "brief span in the total pagination of the book...[that] implies and subsumes the motif of the quest, the Grail legends, and the matter and vocabulary of chivalry" (86). However, the journey that begins, "[i]n late October he pulled his lines," (McCarthy, *Suttree* 283) marks more than the beginning of a simple quest; it is his movement and full embracing of his madness. Like St. Anthony, Suttree moves methodically into and through the wild setting, but his is without purpose. The opening pages of this section mark the winter setting that serves to purify Suttree's consciousness: "The first few dawns half made him nauseous, he'd not seen one dead sober for so long" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 203). This sobriety paves the way for the clarity Suttree needs in order to reach his enlightenment and transcendence.

Suttree moves through the mountains aimlessly. As his journey progresses, so does his madness. His solitude drives him towards a disconnection with his previous life, noting that he cannot distinguish between dreams and reality. He continues to wander higher and deeper into the mountains. He sets fires, eats when he can, and sleeps more than usual. Although the conditions are harsh, Suttree does not seem to feel them. Instead, he disconnects himself from the tangible affliction of existence searching for a more enlightened sense of subsistence. The initial clarity melds into a burden and a confusion. The narration details his rejection of his corporality: "He could scarce tell where his being ended or the world began nor did he care" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 286).

Thus, his identity evolves into a muddle of elements. This mixture evokes the key element of alchemy. His only companion and thought, really, is that of “Some doublegoer, some othersuttree” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 287) who eludes him more than comforts.

His visions become more fragmented the longer he remains in the woods. His mannerisms mark his devolution: “He crouched like an ape in the dark under the eaves of a slate bluff and watched the lightening” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 287). Madness has been attached to base animalist behavior and “the metamorphoses of evil” (Foucault, *Madness* 76), but in Suttree’s case, it is a movement towards clarity. After this storm, he has changed his sense of the world. The narration describes this shift as “madman’s clarity,” yet his clarity presents a return to the grotesque images of McCarthy’s notes. The harlots are described as being part of an “alchemical game” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 287), but the reality is that Suttree is stuck in an alchemical process. Although he embraces his madness, allowing it to consume him, it fails to produce clarity. Thus, this journey into madness and the mountains does not offer Suttree a complete transcendence, and therefore he must return to his prison, for he does not have a complete sense of self.

When Suttree begins his return to civilization, he faces the reality of his state. He first tells the hunter, “I think I know what state I’m in. I doubt you can direct me out of it,” to which the hunter replies, “You’re lost or crazy or both” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 288). This first interchange affirms Suttree’s reliance on madness. His purposeless journey had an unconscious purpose – ascertain Suttree’s identity. Thus, Suttree’s claim, “At least I exist” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 288), reveals the depth of his need and the frailty of his answer. The only truth Suttree understands at this point is that he is real. This knowledge only

offers fleeting comfort, for it does not validate his purpose, nor does it solidify his completion. Instead, his journey and madness serve as a reminder of the cyclical nature of alchemy, the “‘rotating’ circular order of heaven into matter at the very beginning of creation and, in the mystery of his resurrection after death, man becomes one with this whirling circular substance” (von Franz, *Psyche & Matter* 41). He has not reached the end of his quest – and in truth there may never be an end – so he returns to McAnally Flats and returns to his *opus*.

Following his descent from the mountains, Suttree receives money from his uncle and mostly returns to his life before leaving McAnally Flats. He watches Harrogate and drinks to excess. Although his life is seemingly uneventful, he falls in love – or at least loves two women. The first, Wanda, is innocent and pure, but upon her death, Suttree rejects the possibility of a wholesome life and connects himself to Joyce, a prostitute and a violent woman. Their relationship revolves around their sexuality and gluttony. If Suttree’s life before Joyce is indicative of a quest for knowledge, then his time with Joyce is noted by a quest for pleasure. As James Watson points out, “his time with Joyce is marked by artificiality.” The pleasure he receives from Joyce is always tinged with sadness. He disconnects himself from his friends, thus disconnecting himself from his *opus*. This point in the novel indicates a rejection of his work, washing away the gains he has made through his earlier endeavors.

Ironically, Suttree’s time with Joyce is the most conventional: “Together they enjoy caricaturing the pleasant rituals of bourgeois courtship: eating out, going to movies and nightclubs, taking vacations” (Young 118). However, these rites are impure. Joyce embraces her profession, and Suttree does not question her actions while he goes along

for the ride. This action indicates his madness. He essentially plays at life. Instead of moving towards his alchemical quest, he behaves in the manner that is expected of him. Therefore, he essentially stops thinking about who he is and becomes what Joyce asks of him. His loneliness constricts his will to knowledge: “Pleasurable feeling based on human relations generally makes man better; shared joy, pleasure taken together, heightens this feeling; it gives the individual security, makes him better-natured, dissolves distrust and envy” (Nietzsche, *Human* 68), but Suttree’s relationship juxtaposes this sentiment. After months of distancing himself from his friends, Suttree eventually leaves Joyce on a highway. The scene closes with her violent outbursts and his indifference. He does not fight for his honor or reject her claims but instead moves his bruised ego away from her vitriolic outbursts.

This relationship does not mark a change in Suttree’s character, but rather indicates a temporary madness. His loneliness drives him into her arms, and this same loneliness leads him away from her. Once his quest has called him back, Suttree returns to his previous life. His madness allows him enough clarity to know that his life of pretense is not life at all.

The final catalyst—the thing that changes Suttree’s path irrevocably—is his descent into madness because of his typhoid-induced fever. This section of the novel begins with Suttree’s rejection of fishing. His fever progresses quickly, beginning first with a nosebleed then developing into fever-induced delusions. The illness shifts his relationship with his McAnally counterparts as he becomes the weak individual and J-Bone delivers him to the hospital. This shift significantly reverses their roles. Suttree cannot save his chosen people because he cannot even save himself. Much like his time

in the mountains, Suttree no longer distinguishes between his dreams and the real world, “But the sounds he heard began to coalesce and rush and he no longer knew if he dreamt or woke” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 449). His hallucinations pull from his life – sexual dreams that represent his time with all the women of his life.

After J-Bone delivers Suttree to the hospital, his fever and delusions take a darker tone. The fever brings dreams characterized by their gothic tenor. Suttree’s sleep in this instance is described as “a morphine sleep” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 453), which initiates his madness. The first image Suttree conjures is that of the dead: “Callahan and Hoghead leering with their crazy teeth and little plugs stoppering the holes in their skulls and Bobby Davis on a slab with his torso peppered like a pox victim and Jimmy Smith with broken neck and Aunt Beatrice composed and sedate in grayblack gingham” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 452). These images of death present a return to alchemical imagery, for this second stage in the quest is only a hairline away from the underworld nature of *nigredo*. Suttree’s fixation on death indicates his subconscious desire. He longs for death at this point not because he is suicidal but rather because he does not know how to free himself from his quest. He does not know how to finish his quest.

Suttree’s dreams change tenor. He moves from visions of death to a trial in which he is being condemned of embracing “various low places within the shire of McAnally and there did squander server ensuing years in the company of thieves, derelicts... poltrools, spalpeens, crumudgenes, clotpolls, murderers, gamblers, bawds, whores... tosspots, ...and other assorted and felonious debauchees” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 457). The litany of derelicts and crimes is emblematic of Suttree’s awareness and helps him see his life as the world sees it. Suttree’s responses to his charges are pitiful at best but marked

by honesty. His madness allows him to see truth. Through this delirium, or as Davenport calls “a strange scene of transformation and rebirth,” Suttree learns that he is not the savior of all men, that “all souls are one and all souls are lonely” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 459), that he cannot turn the citizens of McAnally Flats into golden archetypes, and that he does not have to be a prisoner of guilt and misplaced responsibility. “When man deploys the arbitrary nature of his madness, he confronts the dark necessity of the world; the animal that haunts his nightmares and his nights of privation is his own nature, which will lay bare hell’s pitiless truth; the vain images of blind idiocy...” (Foucault, *Madness* 23). Suttree realizes this truth as he pulls himself out of madness and returns to the world of McAnally Flats.

Suttree’s stay in the hospital ends with a priest discussing Suttree’s illness. The priest comments on Suttree’s good fortune, stating that he very nearly died from his fever. Their conversation revolves around knowledge, Suttree claiming that “there is one Suttree and one Suttree only” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 461). The priest then offers his understanding, but Suttree replies that the priest does not understand the truth that Suttree knows. Suttree distances himself from the priest’s empathy because his truth is only gained through a descent into madness.

According to Longley, “Death is the controlling image: death as enemy, death as danger, death as omnipresent evil.” This truth is reminiscent of the conversation Suttree has earlier in the novel with the Ragman, who states that death is simply death; there is no heaven or afterlife. Both of these sentiments contrast with Suttree’s latent Catholicism, but it is not until the end of the novel that he releases himself from the bonds of his somewhat suppressed faith and chooses to move forward. After battling his demons and

his madness, Suttree finds that he can leave McAnally Flats and live his own life. This knowledge fuels his transcendence. All that remains is for Suttree to begin his exit. Thus, his madness is his purification or *ablutio*; his transcendence or *rubedo* is made possible by his exit.

VI. RUBEDO¹²

“*You aint goin noplace.*” – Suttree

The final stage of alchemy is a hidden mystery. The goal of transforming the elemental nature of substances to the modern eye is irrational. Yet, there is something that calls humankind to these unnatural and irrational tasks. Alchemists believed in their individual *opuses*. While their research eventually brought about the development of chemistry, their goal was rooted in identifying the essence of things. Therefore, early alchemists sought explanations for their work, looking back to even earlier mythologies to understand the nature of their effort. That many alchemical documents are unclear in their ending purpose is not as much an indication of hidden agendas or fear of competition, as it is an indication of confusion. Alchemists failed to transmute other metals into gold¹³. They never found the elixir of life.¹⁴ However, like all faiths, alchemy sought the “shaping [of] individuals” (Campbell, *The Mythic Dimension* 221). The purpose of alchemy was not a means of material wealth, but rather a desire for transformation. As Joseph Campbell asserts, the goal of mythologies revolves around man identifying “the reality of nature and himself as nature” (Campbell, *The Mythic Dimension* 53). Likewise, “the goal of the alchemist is not his own salvation through the grace of God, but *the liberation of God from the darkness of matter*” (von Franz, *Archetypal* 143).

Suttree’s role as an alchemist is defined by release from his typhoid fever, his rejection of his servitude, and his exit from the demolished city of the dead. While the conclusion of *Suttree* features the deaths of his friends and compatriots, Suttree’s decision to leave McAnally Flats symbolizes his rejection of the darkness of the

underworld¹⁵ and his willingness to embrace his freedom. Suttree reaches that which the alchemist sought – transformation. His break from McAnally Flats represents his spiritual transformation. Thus, he transforms his own elemental nature, evolving his form from a man defined by his responsibility to the derelict and dejected into a man motivated by the possibility of moving forward. Suttree’s escape begins with his recovery from his fever. This madness brings about the clarity his mind sought after – identity.

Much like epic heroes of earlier mythology, *Suttree* embraces the “process of dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past” (Campbell, *The Hero* 84). Thus, the concept of renewal and rebirth serves as a connection between the hero’s past self and his future self. In alchemy, the concept of the self indicated a union between death and the Anthropos in matter. However, this idea of self-knowledge was not easily achieved. The essential knowledge was only gained through focused meditation and study. The alchemist, like the mythological heroes of early legends had to battle the darkness of misunderstanding and forge their way towards enlightenment. This enlightenment was the goal of their work, or *opus*, which meant that there was a magical moment in which the alchemist’s knowledge brought him to some sort of transcendent understanding, or as Marie-Louise von Franz explains, “[O]nly if the alchemist has through meditation established a relationship to his inner self, that is to the Anthropos in matter, can he produce the right kind of transformations” (*Psyche & Matter* 149).

Ironically, the alchemist was often comforted by the difficulty of this process. Like other arcane tales, the stories of alchemy present characters struggling with the oblivion of darkness. The most important symbol in alchemy, Mercurius, embodies this

duality of existence. Mercurius is “simultaneously the matter of the work, the process of the work, and the agent by which all this is effected” (Abraham 125). He is tied to so many roles that he is unable to define his actual existence. However, this symbol embraces his complex identity and completes his tasks. Through the struggle of definition, the alchemist is able to reconcile the many facets of Mercurius’s identity into one – the *prima materia*. This struggle was another example of their complex work, for “the agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth” (Campbell, *The Hero* 163). However, the growth could only be attained when the alchemist found his own understanding of the process, for all knowledge had to come from within. The alchemist could not inherit his understanding, but rather had to cause his own death (entrance into the underworld) and his own rebirth. Therefore, the struggle of the *opus* was depicted by the uroboros, a snakelike creature shaped in a ring, shown to be devouring its own head, and a labyrinth. The uroboros signified the responsibility of the individual alchemist, while the labyrinth represented the “confusion, geographical or mental, which has to be negotiated with great care in order to avoid becoming lost without thread or clue” (Abraham 113).

The alchemy of *Suttree* uses these two symbols to define his situation¹⁶ and means of transformation. The overbearing presence of death indicates his suitability for his alchemical quest. As James Watson notes, “[D]eath is the constant companion of the metaphysically astute person, and the most appropriate response is not despair but action”(Watson). Alchemists believed that *rubedo* represented the soul’s release from death and reconnection with the body. Therefore, Suttree’s completion of his alchemical quest begins in the hospital. After receiving his Last Rites, Suttree comes to his

epiphany¹⁷ and understands the authenticity of his own identity. However, directly before this understanding, he arrives at a more important truth: “Nothing ever stops moving” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 461). This wisdom is the beginning of the end of his alchemical quest. Having survived his own near-death experience, Suttree knows that he must move on; he must release himself from his station of servitude; he must find his own identity.

Of course, Suttree does not leave his prison immediately. In fact, he takes time to finalize some of his connections. He returns to J-Bone and watches the “Gnostic workmen” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 464) destroy McAnally Flats. This vision represents the first of Suttree’s final farewells. The roads signify the possibility of a new direction. Referring back to his epiphany, Suttree views the new roads as signs of release: “New roads being laid over McAnally, over the ruins, the shelled facades and walls standing in crazed shapes, the mangled iron firestairs dangling, the houses halved, broken open for the world to see” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 463). As the essence of McAnally Flats changes, so does Suttree. Robert Rudnicki defines this moment as emblematic of Suttree’s “recognition that the personal stories he knows are merely transient and temporally bound repetitions of the tropes of literature past” (Rudnicki). However, if we are to view his end in alchemical terms, then this is not a repetition of previous stories, but rather a transcendence from literary tropes. Therefore, Suttree’s recognition represents his freedom from his placement within McAnally Flats.

Suttree’s final visions of McAnally Flats signify the end of his alchemical quest. Each description holds images of a dying underworld. Its call and interest represent his awareness of the changing world. Thus, Suttree’s view reveals the *unus mundus*, “a transcendental experience of wholeness which occurs in the mystery of resurrection after

death” (von Franz, *Psyche & Matter* 57). The narration depicts the detritus and waste of the fallen city, but his connection and survival indicate a resurrection. He is not among the fallen; therefore, he can free himself from the “fields of rubble, twisted steel and pipes and old conduits...the broken slabs of masonry” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 464). Finally, as Rick Wallach asserts, “the ongoing destruction of the districts of the city he knew best to make room for an expressway parallels the dismantling of an incarcerated selfhood.”

Yet this is not Suttree’s end. His exit forces him to return to his houseboat, which represents his rejection of death. This act is briefly narrated but symbolically forms the final element of his transcendence. Finding the dead body in his bed signifies his spiritual transcendence. The first mention of this experience is marked by the act of covering his nose against the stench. This small act represents Suttree’s growing separation. What follows is Suttree’s shedding of responsibility: “After a while he sucked in a breath and entered the cabin again. He kicked away the covers. A snarling clot of flies rose. Suttree stepped back. Caved cheek and yellow grin. A foul deathshad bald with rot, flyblown and eyeless” (McCarthy, *Suttree* 465). The dead body denotes Suttree’s replacement. Having survived his typhoid fever, Suttree’s soul and body are still alive; however, his connection to this neighborhood is as dead as the man in his bed. Therefore, his final exit from his houseboat is anticlimactic and uneventful. The action reveals a man vertiginously overwhelmed with his newly found freedom, which parallels his release from the underworld.

Suttree’s final goodbye marks his release from his tie to Harrogate. The conversation between Suttree and Josie Harrogate does not go beyond the facts: Gene has been arrested for robbery and will probably be released at the end of eighteen months.

However, within these cursory words lies a final farewell. In providing Harrogate's sister with the information of his whereabouts, Suttree releases himself from his role as caretaker. This role had been the most clearly defined of all his roles, and Harrogate's arrest proved to be the impasse he could not cross, forcing him deeper into the madness that served as the impetus for his final release. As Vince Brewton notes, "In the end Suttree appears to bid farewell to some of his relentlessly uncompromising resistance to the organizing principles of his world, a stance he had long maintained out of some authentic alienation that refuses spurious consolation" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 70).

In short, he says goodbye to the world he has inhabited, the world he created. The only person to whom he says farewell, however, does not believe his intentions. Trippin Through The Dew responds to Suttree's announced departure with an absolute, "You aint goin noplac" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 468). And this is true. Suttree leaves Knoxville shortly after his conversation with Trippin Through The Dew. He has literally escaped death by Typhoid and symbolically escaped death through an exchange with the Ragman's demise in Suttree's houseboat; however, this is not the end of his imprisonment.

But Suttree survives. He does not return to his assigned responsibilities. Joseph Campbell defined the hero's cosmogonic cycle as "the moment in his life when he achieved illumination—the nuclear moment when, while still alive, he found and opened the road to the light beyond the dark walls of our living death" (Campbell. *The Hero* 222). For Suttree, this moment is defined by the road he takes as his exit. Moving into a distant perspective, the narrator first comments on Suttree's appearance. The most significant detail is found in Suttree's clothing: "He looked like someone just out of the army or jail" (McCarthy, *Suttree* 470). Contrary to Suttree's earlier exit scenes, this

closing scene presents an element of hope rather than despair. While Suttree's earlier goodbyes are reminiscent of the underworld he is leaving, this final scene resembles the heaven-like nature of alchemy. Since the alchemist's moment of transcendence is seen through his release from the prison of the underworld, or more symbolically, the prison of his unconscious guilt, then it is most fitting that Suttree's exit is paired with the gift of water and a friendly driver willing to carry him into the future.

However, the final image of the novel signifies a contrast to the seemingly positive imagery of hope:

An enormous lank hound had come out of the meadow by the river like a hound from the depths and was sniffing at the spot where Suttree had stood.

Somewhere in the gray wood by the river is the huntsman and in the brooming corn and in the castellated press of cities. His work lies all wheres and his hounds tire not. I have seen them in a dream, slaverous and wild and their eyes crazed with ravening for souls in this world. Fly them.

(McCarthy, *Suttree* 471)

It is this vision that fuels the nihilistic readings of this novel. Suttree's exit does not designate a complete win over the evil forces that imprisoned him for so long, for the huntsman's work continues, and his hound is still a part of the world. Closing on this note undercuts his awareness of the beauty of the world, which he interprets when he takes the watercarrier's gift. Likewise, this ending reminds us that Suttree does not receive any definitive wisdom. Vereen Bell remarks that "the clear, good water that recurs in the novel is a simple representation of what is desired of the world but is a provisional image

only, not a symbol of redemption” (38). His experiences and quest are without conclusive resolution. And if there is no meaning to be derived, then we must question his success and freedom.

However, Suttree’s water does represent a change for him, which signifies an alchemical distinction. The water denotes his replenishment and in his case, offers the only sort of closure possible: kindness. In some readings, this ending represents the duality of that which is pure and that which is tainted. Thomas Young Jr. refers to this ending as “the coextensiveness of the world of fact that plagues [Suttree] most, and which will be most difficult to shed” (121), indicating that Suttree’s escape from his life in McAnally flats is incomplete because the two worlds are essentially one. This principle is quintessentially alchemical, for every alchemical principle is rooted in the concept of the uroboros, the never-ending cycle of destruction and rebirth. Therefore, Suttree’s freedom, in alchemical terms, must parallel an image of imprisonment.

It is tempting to view this ending as incomplete. Suttree’s world no longer exists, but the final image of the hound offers a sense of foreboding evil. He accepts the kindness of the boy and the driver, but Suttree is essentially the same man, which means that no matter how far he leaves McAnally Flats, he will never shed his sense of responsibility. Trippin Through the Dew’s final words denote a realistic perspective that counters the idealistic reading of the end of *Suttree*. Yet, this seemingly nihilistic perspective is also quite alchemical. The *prima materia* is never far from its tainted beginnings. Thus, Suttree’s escape inevitably leads back to the beginning.

Guillemin asserts that Suttree’s “primitive life revolves around nothing at all, and its meaninglessness horrifies him just as much,” and while this seems like Suttree’s

constant state of existence, the very act of being is a purpose in itself. As Camus states, “[t]he final effort...is to manage to free themselves also from their undertakings: succeed in granting that the very work, whether it be conquest, love, or creation, may well not be” (86). This is not a new idea; however, the quest for freedom from prison—a concept Foucault presents as impossible—is, essentially, the quest of living. It is an attempt to embrace the irrational and absurd nature of living. It is a faith in the possibility that we can change the elemental nature of lead or any other metal into gold. Returning to the annotation on McCarthy’s middle-draft of “What is above is the same as what is below” (McCarthy, Box 22 [translation]), we can see the interconnected nature of life and prison. This moment is far from the end, but the annotation directly relates to the nature of dichotomies—freedom is illusory; prisons are everywhere. Alchemy is a failed science and a misunderstood philosophy, just as a life of meaning is illusory. However, the quest for meaning essentially is the boulder we all must push up the hill.

¹ Traditionally, lead (Pb) was the metal alchemists believed could be transmuted into gold or silver. However, for the purpose of this thesis, I have elected to address another transitional metal, iron (Fe). Both elements share this common trait with gold (Au). In addition, both elements are found in stars, which are the root of all life. Chemically, the elements react similarly, each having an unpredictable nature and impulse to steal electrons from other elements. Therefore, although the metal is purely symbolic, the commonality offers a justification for referring to iron as an alchemical element rather than referencing lead.

² Mercurius is one of the many names given to Hermes. Mercurius is the root of alchemical philosophy. His presence functions as a guiding force linking the alchemist’s work with the four different elements. His adventures function as the basis for the alchemical principles.

³ *Nigredo* is the first stage in the alchemical process. The alchemist must release the element from the underworld, or prison. Once released, the element can exist in its true form. This concept parallels the belly of the whale motif discussed in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

⁴ *Prima Materia* refers to the transformed, purified element. This was the goal of the alchemist’s work.

⁵ “The obscure by the more obscure, the unknown by the more unknown.” (Translation)

⁶ The *opus* is the purpose of the alchemist’s work. It is the process the alchemist uses to guide his work. In the case of Suttner, his *opus* is a philosophical process rather than a chemical process. His goal is to improve the lives of those living in McAnally Flats.

⁷ In her book *Psyche & Matter* von Franz researches the many ties alchemy has to our modern world. One of her points lies in the discovery and research of entropy in the mid-20th century parallels the alchemical quest for absolute knowledge. She asserts that entropy is a symbol of *unus mundus* (absolute knowledge) and negentropy is the term she uses to define the power to organize knowledge. She references scientists’

and mathematicians' notes and research in number theory to support her claim that although science, mainly chemistry, attempted to leave behind alchemy, the scientific process is tied to the symbolism of alchemy.

⁸ Zagreus refers to the mythological creature, Dionysus-Zagreus, who was dismembered before returning to life. He upon his return, he asks, "Hath time flown away? Do I not fall? Have I not fallen?" (Jung, *Four Archetypes* 52). These are important markers of the rebirth through pain. In *Suttree's* case, it is rebirth through madness.

⁹ The word degenerate is used once in the novel to describe Harrogate after killing the pig. However, there are no variations of the word lunatic. Max Nordau nor Zionism are also never mentioned.

¹⁰ "We're going north. To the height of the snow. At the white top, the hippopodes blind the ended ticket with the root of the water plant." (translation) Hippopodes are mythical creatures.

¹¹ This description is in reference to Lisbon painting, *Temptation*.

¹² This stage in the alchemical process involves the reddening of the purification of the albedo (the previous stage). This idea was seen in the medieval practice of bloodletting. McCarthy also embraces this process as Suttree's purification only happens after illness. Likewise, the process of bloodletting is seen in Suttree's fights which often happened after an emotional imbalance.

¹³ See the first endnote for clarification.

¹⁴ See chapter 1.

¹⁵ The underworld or prison represented the hell from which the alchemist needed release. This was the second stage in the alchemical process.

¹⁶ As discussed earlier, the prison functions as an established setting the paves the way for Suttree's eventual release. The prison, then, is essentially a representation of the alchemical labyrinth. See chapter 3.

¹⁷ See chapter 4.

WORKS CITED

- Abraham, Lyndy. *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.
- Atwood, M.A. *Hermetic Philosophy and Alchemy*. New York: The Julian Press, 1960. Print. Rpt. of *The Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery*. 1850.
- Bell, Vereen M. "The Ambiguous Nihilism of Cormac McCarthy." *Southern Literary Journal* 15.2 (1983): 31-41. *JSTOR*. Web. 31 October 2014.
- Berry, K. Wesley. "The Lay of the Land in Cormac McCarthy's Appalachia." *The Southern Quarterly* 38.4. Rpt. *New Directions*. Ed. James D. Lilley. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2014. Print.
- Brewton, Vince. "The Changing Landscape of Violence in Cormac McCarthy's Early Novels and the Border Trilogy." *Southern Literary Journal* 37.1 (Fall 2004): 121-43. Rpt. in *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Cormac McCarthy*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009 (63-83) Web. *Infobase eBooks*. 25 June 2015.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973. Print.
- . *The Mythic Dimension: Selected Essays 1959-1987*. Novato: New World Library, 2007. Print.
- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus & Other Essays*. Trans. Justin O'Brien. New York: Vintage Books, 1955. Print.

- Canfield, J. Douglas. "The Dawning of the Age of Aquarius: Abjection, Identity, and the Carnavalesque in Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*." *Contemporary Literature* 44.4 (Winter, 2003): 664-696. University of Wisconsin Press. Web. 25 June 2015.
- Cawelti, John G. "Restless Seekers." *Southern Writers at Century's End*. Ed. Jeffrey J. Folks and James A. Perkins. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. Rpt. *American Vein: Critical Readings in Appalachian Literature*. Eds. Danny L. Miller, Sharon Hatfield and Norman Gurney. Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2005. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 17 November 2014.
- Davenport, Guy. "Silurian Southern." *National Review* 31.11 (1979): 368-369. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Deborah A Schmitt. Vol. 101. Detroit: Gale Research, 1997. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 31 October 2014.
- Forbis, Christopher, Wesley G. Morgan, John Sepich. "A Concordance to *Suttree* by Cormac McCarthy." *JohnSepich.com*. 2nd Ed, *N.p.* 15 March 2010. Web. 10 October 2015.
- Forbis, Christopher, Wesley G. Morgan. "Cormac McCarthy's Words Unique to *Suttree*." *JohnSepich.com*. 2nd Ed, *N.p.* 2 July 2007. Web. 10 October 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish the Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. Print.
- . *The History of Sexuality - Volume I: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990. Print.
- . *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Vintage Books, 1988. Print.

- . *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980. Print.
- Frye, Steven. *Understanding Cormac McCarthy*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009. Print.
- Furey, Rachel. "Fragments, Sounds, and Setting in "Suttree" and "The Road"." *The Cormac McCarthy Journal*. 9.1 (2011): 51-65. Penn State University Press. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 June 2015.
- Guillemin, George. "Introduction: The Prototypical Suttree." *Cormac McCarthy, New Edition*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 2009 (49-62). *Infobase eBooks* Web. 17 November 2014.
- Jung, C.G. *Alchemy and Psychology*. 2nd ed. Princeton. Princeton University Press, 1990. Print.
- . *Four Archetypes*. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. Princeton, NJ: Bollingen Series, 2011. Print.
- Kaufmann, Walter. Ed. "Editor's Introduction to *Genealogy of Morals*." *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufman. New York: Random House, 2000. Print.
- Kean, Sam. *The Disappearing Spoon and Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of Elements*. New York: Black Bay Books, 2010. Print.
- Longley, John Lewis Jr. "Suttree and the Metaphysics of Death." *Southern Literary Journal* 17.2 (1985): 79-90. *JSTOR*. Web. 31 October 2014.
- McCarthy, Cormac. *Suttree*. New York: Vintage International, 1992. Print.

- . *Suttree* Middle-Draft. Box 19, Folder 14 Wittliff Collections. Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX. 3 November 2014.
- . *Suttree* Middle-Draft. Box 22, Folder 1 Wittliff Collections. Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX. 3 November 2014.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human all too Human*. Trans. Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986. Print.
- . *Thus Spoke Zarathustra. The Portable Nietzsche*. Ed. Walter Kaufman. Trans. Walter Kaufman. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. 463. Print.
- . *Twilight of the Idols. The Portable Nietzsche*. Ed. Walter Kaufman. Trans. Walter Kaufman. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. 463. Print.
- Periera, Michela. "Heavens on Earth. From the Tabula Smaragdina to the Alchemical Fifth Essence." *Early Science and Medicine, Alchemy and Hermeticism* 5.2 (2000): 131- 144. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 November 2014.
- Rikard, Gabe. *Authority and the Mountaineer in Cormac McCarthy's Appalachia*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013. Print.
- Rudnicki, Robert. "Turtles all the way Down: Foundation, Edifice, and Ruin in Faulkner and McCarthy." *The Faulkner Journal* 25.2 (Spring 2010): 23-43. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 31 October 2014.
- Sepich, John Emil. "Contents of Divisions in Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*." *JohnSepich.com*. 2nd Ed, N.p. November 2009. Web. 10 October 2015.
- "Teutonic." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. *Libproxy*. Texas State University. 2015. Web. 28 June 2015.
- von Franz, Maria-Louise. *Alchemy*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books, 1980. Print.

- . *Alchemical Active Imagination*. 2nd ed. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997. Print.
- . *Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1999. Print.
Rpt. of *Archetypische Dimensionen der Seele*. 1994.
- . *Psyche and Matter*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992. Print. Rpt. of *Psyche und Materie*. 1988.
- Wallach, Rick. "Ulysses in Knoxville: Suttree's Aegean Journey." *Appalachian Heritage* 39.1 (Winter 2011): n. pag. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 31 October 2014.
- Watson, James. "The Only Words I Know are the Catholic Ones." *Southwestern American Literature* 62.5 (2013): n. pag. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 31 October 2014.
- Wilmshurt, Walter. "Introduction." (1960) Atwood, M.A. *Hermetic Philosophy and Alchemy*. New York: The Julian Press, 1960. Print. Rpt. of *The Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery*. 1850.
- Young, Thomas D. Jr. "The Imprisonment of Sensibility." *Perspectives on Cormac McCarthy*. Eds. Edwin T Arnold and Dianne Luce. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2012. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 17 November 2014.