"He Hardly Knew If He Dreamt or Not": Altered States of Consciousness in Suttree

A Thesis
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DEDICATION

To my parents, Dr. J. Douglas Morris & Carolyn S. Morris for their unwavering support & belief that I can do anything I want to do as long as I dream, my sisters Ellie & Amanda for reminding me that family is number one no matter what, and to Dr. Chip Arnold for his inspiration & dedication to scholasticism & his students.

ABSTRACT

"HE HARDLY KNEW IF HE DREAMT OR NOT": ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN SUTTREE

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Cormac McCarthy's novels often relate the story of characters travelling through vivid landscapes populated by bizarre, sometimes even fantastical characters and images. As his characters journey through nightmarish Appalachian hollows shadowed by unholy triumvirates of thieves or ethereal desert mesas haunted by demons of a more personal nature little of their thoughts processes or emotions are revealed. The emotionally detached renderings of scenes of violence by McCarthy are rarely, if ever, accompanied by an emotional reaction from the characters. Characters witness and even participate in atrocities, yet their own revulsion to or affection for the horror is seldom revealed by a narrative exploration of their thoughts and emotions. McCarthy's characters' thoughts, motivations, and reasoning are not exposed to the reader via omniscient narrative but through the characters' varying experiences with non-linear, often symbolic altered states of consciousness. In McCarthy's first three novels, The Orchard Keeper, Outer Dark and Child of God, only occasional memory flashbacks or a fleeting dream reveal the more complex machinations of a character's mind. In his fourth novel, Suttree, the title character spends the majority of the story wandering through physical and mental landscapes in a dreamlike states brought about in turns by alcohol consumption, exhaustion, head trauma, and finally a debilitating illness that results in a psychologically and emotionally revelatory near-death experience.

While McCarthy's three books prior to Suttree generally use altered states to provide character history and some bare psychological insight, Suttree's use of altered

states is in itself the true story. Suttree abuses alcohol in an attempt to disassociate from his unhappy existence. As his defenses are lowered with beer and moonshine, the psychological war within him manifests itself in disturbing dreams and drunken hallucinations. As the novel progresses Suttree also goes to the other extreme and makes several important spiritual revelations on a vision quest in the Smokey Mountains, during which he suffers from exposure and starvation. At several points in the following thesis Suttree is compared to Herman Hesse's Siddartha, another man who experienced the extremes of decadence and asceticism while on a quest for personal enlightenment. Unlike Siddartha, however, Suttree is not consciously seeking his salvation, but in fact attempts to annihilate his feelings of guilt and discontent by getting drunk and denying his problems. Ironically, through the same altered states by which he attempts to obliterate his self he ends up subconsciously confronting his own insecurities, anxieties and identity, eventually reaching conscious resolution with his troubled past and forming a new path for his future.

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Chapter I.

Some cultures believe prolonged fasting cleanses the body and allows the mind to float free and experience newfound clarity. Meditation, a tenet of many eastern philosophies, centers on the idea that emptying the mind of the constant babble of thought and the senses can lead a practitioner to profound revelation. The notion of freeing the mind from bodily limitations and the constraint of routine thought as the path to "enlightenment" is central to many religions and theologies. In Christianity, the body is often seen as merely the rude vessel of the more elevated spirit. In Hindi, souls are often "recycled" many times through reincarnation until atonement for past sins is achieved, freeing the soul to experience Nirvana and ending the cycle of lifetimes. By adhering to the rituals, prayers and exercises of one theology or another, believers are often offered the opportunity to have contact with a higher power, to realize a unifying philosophy, or to achieve peace in their own minds. In many religions this divine knowledge flows from an external force, such as a god-like figure. In other theologies tranquility is found within oneself through careful introspection and contemplation of the world. Whatever the method, the quest for spiritual awakening is a journey people have been undertaking since times immemorial. In modern times religious enlightenment is often traded for a more personal and internal self-knowledge, with people exploring the self through psychological analysis and introspection rather than seeking external validation from religious systems.

In Cormac McCarthy's fourth novel Suttree, the title character wanders aimlessly through life, drifting on tides of alcohol & denial. Rather than reflecting on a past filled with loss to find a way to lead a better present, Cornelius Suttree escapes into the slums

of McAnally Flats in Knoxville, Tennessee & alcohol deliriums. In spite of his best attempts to dispel the images of death that haunt him by drinking himself into a stupor, his mind continues to recriminate him for his crimes against himself and others. Although Suttree does not reel drunkenly throughout the course of the novel, and in fact is sober the vast majority of the time, his inebriation and various other altered states offer the most interesting revelations and developments for his character. His sleep is tormented by dreams fraught with powerful and chilling symbols of death. His waking hours are haunted by visions of a "doppelganger", his stillborn twin brother, whom he sees whenever he looks at his reflection. Drunken rampages are punctuated by spates of self-loathing and abortive attempts to find meaning in the sea of human waste that populates the slums. Suttree is a man preoccupied with his own existence and the ever-present specter of death, which has claimed many in his life. The novel is, according to William C. Spencer in "Altered States of Consciousness in Suttree," Suttree's "spiritual journey to an acceptance of death…and life" (88). Bedeviled by guilt he will not acknowledge, Suttree undergoes a series of episodes in which his consciousness is altered by several means, including alcohol, physical deprivation, and a powerful near-death experience, which allow his unconscious mind, seething with turmoil, to seep through the haze and manifest itself in symbolic images he must confront. Although he wanders on and off the path to personal redemption and individuation several times throughout the novel, Suttree's journey to sobriety and mental stability occurs in three distinct stages, each of which imparts harsh self-knowledge. Like Siddhartha in Herman Hesse's novel of the same name chronicling the story of the man seeking enlightenment, Suttree lives both a life of sensual indulgence and one of extreme physical deprivation before finding

his own unique middle path to inner peace. For both the stories of Siddhartha and Suttree, dreams, meditations and various other altered states are used as devices to force the character to face unpleasant truth about their lives. Visions and dreams full of symbolic meaning surround the two men, taunting them with the lack of spiritual and emotional fulfillment in their lives, thus sending each one on a journey to self-realization. Only after experiencing extreme states of physical existence, utter indulgence and severe deprivation, and nearly surrendering his life to an intense illness does Suttree finally confront his own failings and shed his former life of self-destruction and denial to start his life over again. It is a journey of, according to William C. Spencer in "The Seventh Direction or Suttree's Vision Quest," of great "spiritual and psychological progress" (100). He acknowledges his past, no longer bitterly expressing the pain but accepting it as a part of his life, one which makes him "one Suttree only" (Suttree 461), a unique man with the experiences of an individual, a man who is, according to Calvin Hall & Vernon J. Nordly in A Primer to Jungian Psychology, "a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'…knowing oneself as completely as possible" (34). The man he was is not destroyed, but rather remains an integral part of him, a reminder of his human frailty. Even his drunkard friends know that the man they knew as good old Sut, who hung around Ab Jones's store and chatted up the transvestites, still resides in him, that "Old Suttree aint dead" (Suttree 470).

Altered states of consciousness abound in the novel as a means of allowing the audience to peep into Suttree's head without becoming fully aware of all his thoughts. McCarthy's style throughout all his novels rests firmly on "detached [limited] third-person point of view" (Spencer, "Altered States" 87). McCarthy's narrative style, while

omniscient of place and action, never reveals detailed cognizance of the inner workings of the characters' minds. In McCarthy's novels the reader often witnesses monstrous and antisocial actions of characters, like Lester Ballard's necrophilia in Child of God or the Glanton gang's gruesome massacres in Blood Meridian. Suttree engages in barroom brawls and, in several sections of the novel, lurches through some humorous and sometimes dangerous drunken episodes without the narrator or any characters condemning, judging or justifying the behavior. McCarthy does not allow a release of the tension caused by the conflict between the reader horror at the unfolding acts and the morally neutral narration in Suttree. There is no narrative statement of or allusion to moral outrage by other characters at Suttree's destructive and antisocial acts, except for the brief scene in which Suttree is driven out of town by the sheriff after attending his son's funeral.

Although the limited third person point of view does allow for a level of detachment from the atrocities of his fiction, McCarthy's approach in Suttree also draws the reader closer to the title character. The point of view is compressed throughout the novel so that only one character's experiences and personal hell are revealed. At some points in the novel, the point of view appears to shift to Gene Harrogate and long passages explore his almost subhuman existence, particularly when he is engaged in some mad scheme to rob a bank by blowing through a basement wall or collecting bounties on dead bats. While this focus on Harrogate does allow the reader to peer into the head of the "city mouse" these mental explorations often do not reveal more than his reactions to the world around him and his disbelief at the failure of his get-rich-quick capers (277). This compression, as explained by Louis H. Palmer III in his Master's

thesis "The Use of the Double of Doppelganger in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy, gives the reader "an extraordinarily intimate [picture of Suttree]…which causes the reader to identify more closely with" him (46). Since the novel centers on Suttree's confrontation with his conscience and consciousness, an even closer view than that of the compressed third person is critical to reveal the full scope of his struggle. It is necessary to delve into Suttree's mind to see exactly against what he fights, but McCarthy will not assume an omniscient narrative view. Instead, McCarthy allows the reader to be cognizant of Suttree's thoughts only when he is experiencing an altered state of consciousness, such as inebriation, a traumatic head injury, or an extreme physical hardship. According to Edwin T. Arnold in "'Go to sleep': Dreams and Visions in the Border Trilogy," McCarthy often uses dreams to "provide insight into both characters & experiential possibilities" without actually voicing the character's thoughts (35). The reader is privy to the dream as Suttree dreams it. The reader watches Suttree as he stares in the mirror at what he perceives not as his reflection but as his stillborn twin brother's haunting form, his doppelganger. The reader falls into a typhoid delirium with him and stands mute witness to the tribunal in his head as he lies near death. It is in these states of diminished consciousness that Suttree reveals the conflict within. The reader is no longer dependent on only what Suttree says and does to form his or her opinions of him, but travels into the character's mind when it is most vulnerable. As this document will explain, the uses of dreams and altered states of consciousness is more than "a convenient literary trope" but an attempt to elucidate man's eternal struggle to comprehend something beyond his rational mind and physical desires, "some godhead perhaps [that] exists beyond the range of our normal waking knowing" (Arnold 42).

Chapter II.

In order to analyze fully the roles altered states of consciousness and the manifestations of the unconscious play in this novel, it is necessary to examine the psychological function of these states. The theories of Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud both offer valuable insight into Suttree's mind. A great deal is learned about Suttree through dreams and hallucinations, on which subject both psychologists have theories. Freudian ideas of dreams as subconscious wish fulfillment and Jungian dream theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious contribute much to the analysis of Suttree as a troubled man treading a cautious path to self-knowledge and acceptance. It is necessary to explicate briefly a few of the most important theories of Jungian and Freudian psychology in order to demonstrate how they apply to McCarthy's creation of Suttree.

In Jungian psychology there is the conscious, awake and rational mind and there is the unconscious, both personal and collective, which serves as the repository for all things that do not currently reside in and are "incongruous" with a person's present awareness (Hall & Nordly 35). The personal unconscious is the unconscious of the individual where ideas and intentions that are "supplementary to those ideas and intentions of which man is aware" reside (Cox 96). Jung posited the theory that thoughts and emotions threatening to a person's self-perception are often "repressed," pushed into the unconscious part of the mind. A good thumbnail description of repression is that it "is the way in which we evade moral problems; instead of admitting that there is a clash between aspects of our nature, and seeking to cope with it we simply reject one side in favor of the other" (Cox 59). For example, a man who has always pictured himself to be the model of generosity and kindness towards others will simply mentally shut out urges

towards selfishness or violence. This is not to say that he will control these negative urges, but that he completely denies their existence in himself because these thoughts and desires are a "threat to the stability of consciousness" and his mental image of himself (Cox 60). According to Jung, these repressed thoughts are not compartmentalized and tucked away into the deepest recesses of the mind, as if the unconscious were a mental garbage can for undesirable thoughts (Cox 28). On the contrary, as revealed in his text The Interpretation of Dreams, Jung believed that the "unconscious mind is capable at times of assuming an intelligence and purposiveness" that often prepares unconscious thought for entry into consciousness (96). Repressed thoughts and desires cannot be squelched indefinitely, as it is necessary to mental health for an individual to acknowledge undesirable thoughts and accept them as a part of himself, even if he does not act on them. The growth and development of the self is "only possible as the result of new conscious psychic elements [such as ideas, judgments, attitudes, etc.], and it can be understood as the coming into consciousness of things which were previously unconscious" (Cox 161).

Of course, if the unconscious mind regurgitated all at once all the repressed thoughts it contained the conscious mind could not withstand the shock of such information and a person could suffer a dangerous mental breakdown. Rather, since the unconscious is the place where undesirable and repressed thoughts and aspects of the self reside, Jung felt that its function is to preserve mental stability (Cox 60). The unconscious, while attempting to force the individual to acknowledge repressed thoughts, brings them to the surface in many ways, often in dreams or other states not consciously regulated. Because there is often a great deal of resistance in the conscious mind to

darker aspects of the self, material from the unconscious will "turn up only when one is relaxed and off-guard in dreams or day-dream & also in serious cases of mental disturbances" (Cox 81). Dreams and fantasies are rarely controlled by "a conscious sense of the limits of real life"; thus elements of the self threatening to the "real life" perception of oneself often manifest in these altered states (Cox 83).

Jung believed, as did Freud, that those mental images present during altered states of conscious, such as dreams and hallucinations, are actually symbolic representations of repressed thoughts and desires. Here, then, is where Jung's well-known theory of the collective unconscious comes into play, as well as Freud's famous ideas on dream analysis. Although both psychologists agreed that dream images were fundamentally symbolic and represented thoughts that existed outside consciousness, this is where the similarities in their theories end.

In order to understand Jung's theory of dream analysis it is also necessary to explain briefly Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and archetypes. According to Jung, the collective unconscious is instinctual knowledge that "is learned through experience by previous generations…inherited by future generations, and does not need to be learned" again (Hall and Nordly 40). There are many examples of the collective unconscious manifested in humans: laughter to indicate pleasure, crying to indicate sadness or frustration, and the "fight or flight" reflex to name a few. These are behaviors that manifest themselves almost identically across cultures and time periods. Jung believed that these behaviors all stem from a deep well of unconscious knowledge shared by all human beings. Within this well there are not only behaviors but also "predispositions or potentialities for experiencing and responding to the world the same

ways his ancestors did" (Hall and Nordly 39). These collective unconscious elements also manifest themselves as symbols called archetypes that translate universally across cultures. Images of birth and death, the hero, the earth mother, the child, the wise old man, gods and demons, the sun and the moon are all such archetypes (Hall & Nordly 41). Each of these symbols, while taking on specific meanings in particular cultures, carries the same basic meaning to all peoples. The sun, the earth, the mother and many other things in nature, such as trees and water, all denote life and growth. Archetypes are basically instincts denoted by symbols, and since every human has instincts (Hall 40), no matter how repressed they may be by the trapping of the modern world and humanity's removal from nature, man recognizes archetypal symbols. But one must keep in mind that archetypes exist only when the symbol is recognized. A tree in the forest is just a tree. However, when it is made into a symbol by a mind, whether consciously via artistic craft or unconsciously through the imagination of a dreamer, then the universal meaning becomes clear (Cox 137). Jung believed that archetypes are often manifested in a person's dream because when he is asleep his conscious mind, unencumbered by modern thought and skepticism, is quiet and thus more receptive to ideas seeping from the unconscious (Cox 81). Although Jung did acknowledge that archetypes have universal meaning, he did not use them as hard and fast interpretations of dreams. Rather, he theorized that the true meaning of a dream could be explained only through the dreamer's own personal experience and context with the symbol (Hall and Nordly 122). As Jung himself stated in "Approaching the Unconscious" from Man and His Symbols: A Popular Presentation of the Essential Ideas of Jungian Psychology,

> It is plain foolishness to believe in ready-made systematic guides to dream interpretation, as if I could simply buy a reference book and look up a particular symbol. No dream can be separated from the individual who dreams it. (53)

Sigmund Freud, on the other hand, while not favoring using dream dictionaries in which a person could look up a dream image and find a simple explanation of its significance, did appear to favor placing dream interpretation into a "preconceived theoretical mold" (Hall 122) similar in its rigidity. Freud acknowledged the existence of what he, himself, called "'archaic remnants'...forms whose presence cannot be explained by anything in the individual's own life and which seems to be aboriginal, innate, and inherited shapes of the human mind"; yet, he did not agree with Jung's theory that these images were archetypal and pregnant with universal meaning hearkening back to caveman days (Jung 67). Instead, he posited that the universality of symbols across cultures was the result of an "affinity between an emotion or thought and a sensory experience...rooted in the properties of our body, our sense, and our mind, which are common" (Freud 17-18). The sun, moon, trees, water and the mother are universal symbols of life, for example, because men physically perceive the direct relationship between these symbols and growth in everyday life. The sun and water make things grow; the cycles of the moon help to determine planting and harvesting seasons; women give birth to children. There are wise old men and heroes physically present in every culture; therefore, they populate mythology. Freud states that the presence of these figures in dreams are not archetypes representing inherited knowledge from the collective unconscious. He clearly states in The Interpretation of Dreams that "the only possible interpretation of a dream was that of wish fulfillment" (95). He insisted that dreams give

free rein to the inner "impulses whose existence we do not want to or dare not to recognize" (Freud 52). Dreams evolve from subconscious desires and are often "stimulated by a present event" (Freud 71); thus, the dreamer may recognize a dreamed occurrence as something that happened recently in real life. Base desires, often sexual or irrational, arise from the subconscious mind, what Jung called the personal unconscious, and present themselves in unguarded moments of sleep and relaxation. Thus, if a generally kind and peace-loving man had a nightmare about committing a violent act, he would be viewed by Freudian psychology as a person with a subconscious desire to be more aggressive, even violent, even if his dream terrified or disgusted him. His negative feelings towards the dream would merely indicate that his conscious mind was not ready to receive the aggressive impulses of the subconscious.

To account for the bizarre nature of dreams, in which time and place seem suspended and weird images stream by, Freud speculated that the mind censored the content of the subconscious. He stated that a symbol in a dream was not a gateway to universal meaning but merely "a disguise to distort the wish" of the subconscious (Freud 68). This censor acts to distort the symbolic images of the unwanted desires into something less disturbing; hence, the abundance of phallic and feminine symbols that populate Freudian theory to force dream to conform to the theory of often-sexual wish fulfillment (Freud 63). According to Freudian psychology, a woman's desire to have a penis either sexually or anatomically may manifest itself in a dream in which she carries an umbrella everywhere she goes. Of course, sometimes an umbrella is just an umbrella, to mangle Freud's famous quote. Freud admitted that occasionally dreams are only a

replay of recent events and sometimes mean solely what their content indicates (Freud 34).

Jung fundamentally disagreed with Freud's analysis that dream images are subconsciously censored or deliberately misleading in their presentation of a subconscious wish.

> Why should [dreams] mean something different from their content? Is there anything in the world that is other than it is? The dream is a normal and natural phenomenon…The confusion arises because the dream's contents are symbolic and thus have more than one meaning. (Jung 90)

Of course, it must be acknowledged that to apply psychological theories to a fictional character is tricky. When theories of the unconscious (which is the preferred term for this document) are being applied to the same character, an interesting paradox is posed. How can the unconscious mind of a character be examined when that character and that unconscious are the products of an author's conscious mind and purposeful craft? Also, only the thoughts deemed significant by the author are revealed, thus rendering an incomplete picture of the character. Even Sigmund Freud himself saw the difficulty in applying such theories to the fictive realm. In The Interpretation of Dreams he states that

> the artificial dreams contrived by the poet are intended for some such symbolic interpretation, for they reproduce the thoughts conceived by the poet in a guise not unlike the disguise which we are wont to find in our dreams. (9)

While Suttree's dreams may appear confused or disjointed and, at times, their meaning veiled, McCarthy consciously uses images that are readily recognizable and decipherable

by both Freudian and Jungian psychological theory. On occasion, McCarthy's meaning behind a symbol is so thinly veiled that the information revealed about Suttree and the dream's intent, within the context of his journey, is hard to miss. Merely analyzing Suttree's individual dreams and hallucinations, though important, is not the sole purpose of this study. The dreams and hallucinations, brought about by a variety of circumstances, weave a picture struggling to reconcile his unconscious desires, guilt and doubts to "transcend his dividedness and achieve…a sense of unity "within himself and with the rest of the world (Spencer, "Altered States" 89).

Chapter III.

In the first section of the book, Suttree is just beginning his journey to self-knowledge, although he is consciously unaware of it. When we meet him, he is a college-educated man who has abandoned wife and young son and lives the life of a drunken fisherman in the slums of McAnally Flats in Knoxville, Tennessee. This much information about his past, however, must be gleaned throughout the body of the novel as we are primarily introduced to the title character "and his circumstance with very little attention to what precisely happened in the past…McCarthy simply shows Suttree in his present social and physical contexts," according to D.S. Butterworth in "Pearls as Swine: Recentering the Marginal in Cormac McCarthy's Suttree" (97). Throughout this first stage of his development, Suttree indulges almost all his desires, acting without forethought or reflection. He drifts from place to place and friend to friend, sometimes stumbling through a nightmarish drunken episode, in the first part of the book, without examining why he lives this way or if he is happy. According to Vereen Bell, in The Achievement of Cormac McCarthy, Suttree's current life is an existence as far removed from his previous life of marital convention and his "father's snobbish tyranny" as possible (72). He often acts on impulse, without bothering to examine the purpose to be served by such an action. When he reflects on his wife and son, he neither acknowledges his actions nor accepts responsibility for them, except, perhaps, at his son's funeral, to be discussed later. Suttree's life is solely determined by his desire "to live authentically, even in suffering and deprivation, rather than to live in falsehood of comfort" (Bell 72). According to Daniel Traber in "'Ruder Forms Survive,' or Slumming for Subjectivity: Self-Marginalization in Suttree", the character "chooses…to associate with the very

bottom of the social hierarchy to develop his own sense of self" (36). Our first glimpse of Cornelius Suttree in the novel is revelatory of this current mental state. He floats down the Tennessee river, lazily swept along on its currents as he "watched idly surface phenomenons, gouts of sewage faintly working, gray clots of nameless waste and yellow condoms roiling slowly out of the murk like some giant form or fluke or tapeworm" (7). He fishes with trotline rather than actively casting, "entailing only a minimal commitment of ingenuity and resource" (Bell 73). This scene is the first of many that will depict Suttree as a man going through life without anchor, purpose, or intent, preferring instead to allow life "to prove its worth on its own terms" (Bell 73). When asked by another fisherman, Joe, why he took up fishing the river, Suttree replies, "I don't know…It seemed like a good idea at the time" (10). Suttree fishes and he does not know why, nor does he question his lack of decisiveness. Suttree's inability to commit to superficial or significant life-altering action is a staple of his character at the beginning of the novel. This dearth of self-awareness is further revealed as the novel progresses, and at times it appears that the reader knows Suttree more by the things he denies about himself than what he recognizes (Palmer 15). According to Matthew Guinn in "'Ruder Forms Survive": Cormac McCarthy's Atavistic Vision," the facet that Suttree's "past is anti-nostalgic…[and] provides no refuge from the present," only emphasizes that his character is often defined by what he hides rather than what he reveals (109). The only thing of which Suttree is aware is the constant presence of death around him and his obsession with his own duality (Spencer, "Altered States" 89). The first conversation he has in the novel is a passing discussion about a man who committed suicide the night before by throwing himself from the very bridge Suttree passed under earlier that day in

his boat (9-10). Here, then, McCarthy begins to establish Suttree's preoccupation with death and "at least the potential for suicide" or self-destruction, according to Frank Shelton in "Suttree and Suicide" (72). Suttree sees the river as a confluence of death and decay, full of pollution and trash. Suttree's choice to live by the river reveals a subconscious wish to immerse "himself in the destructive element" (Shelton 76). It is no wonder this man obsessed with images of death lives in a houseboat at the river's edge. As he first falls asleep in the novel, he is looking out a hole in the boathouse wall and watching "The river flowing past out there…Death by drowning, the ticking of a dead man's watch" and thinking about when his grandfather passed away (13). He dreams, and this altered state of consciousness provides the first glimpse into Suttree's troubled mind, talking to the dead.

> In a dream I walked with my grandfather by a dark lake and the old man's talk was filled with incertitude and I saw how all things false fall from the dead. We spoke easily and I was humbly honored to walk with him deep in that world where he was a man like all men. From the small end of a corridor in the autumn woods he watched me go away to the world of the waking. (14)

In death Suttree sees an honesty that is impossible in the living. He feels that death is the only certainty and universal truth. He admires death as a great equalizer of men. Suttree, however, is not dead and returns to the world of the "waking" via a long corridor, not unlike the tunnel or hallway described by many victims of near-death experiences. The fact that Suttree's unconscious reveals death in the archetypal figure of the wise old man, his grandfather, reveals his respect for death. The dream then evolves into a grotesque reverie on Suttree's own intimate connection to death through his stillborn twin brother.

Fascinated by and respectful of death, Suttree still fears it, for it lingers close to him in the shape of his ghostly twin:

> The infant's ossature, the thin and brindled bones along whose sulcate facets clove old shreds of flesh and cerements of tattered swaddle. Bones that would no more fill a shoebox, a bulbous skull. On the temple a mauve halfmoon.
>
> Suttree turned and lay staring at the ceiling, touching a like mark on his own left temple gently with his fingertips. The ordinary of the second son. Mirror image. Gauche carbon. (14)

Suttree's belief that his double, his doppelganger, exists in the physical world is a symptom of another altered state of consciousness called autoscopy. According to Ronald K. Siegel, a person suffering from autoscopic syndrome may have "a hallucination of his own body image projected into external visual space…Autoscopic hallucinations can be brought about by…a variety of psychological conditions…severe emotional distress, anxiety, depression, even physical exhaustion" (229). Although Suttree has yet to demonstrate any of the aforementioned psychological conditions, it is revealed further on in the book that Suttree does indeed suffer from extreme emotional disturbance and depression, and he abuses alcohol.

Suttree's double, which McCarthy calls his "fetch," is in reality Suttree's reflection. However, the doppelganger does not exist solely in Suttree's mind, but has a firm basis in genetic morphology of identical twins. There are three types of identical twins, siblings who are divisions of the same fertilized ovum: identical, mirror image and conjoined. Identical twins which result when the fertilized egg divides within the first week of gestation are literally identical. Their hair parts on the same side; they are both

either right-handed or both left-handed; birthmarks appear on identical parts of the body. Conjoined twins are children whose bodies are still physically joined when born, resulting in varying degrees of physical and mental deformity. Conjoined twins are the result of the egg attempting to divide after 2-3 weeks of gestation, when it can no longer complete the division due to hormonal changes. Suttree and his stillborn brother are mirror image twins, the result of the egg successfully dividing between 1-2 weeks of gestation. For some reason, which science has yet to explain, mirror image twins have the identical genetic makeup, yet they have a high degree of physical opposition. One will be left-handed and the other right. The hair on one child's head will swirl clockwise while the others will swirl counterclockwise. Even major organs will often be in "inverted positions, meaning their heart might be on the right side instead of the left" (TLC: Twins 1). Birthmarks will also appear on opposing sides of the body, like Suttree's halfmoon on his left temple and his brother's on his right. They are called mirror-image twins because when they face one another, the effect is the same as an individual looking at his reflection in the mirror (TLC: Twins 1). Thus, when Suttree looks into the mirror, he sees not only himself but also his brother. For a man utterly preoccupied with the singularity of his existence, "twins challenge…the notion of personal identity-or…any definition of humanness which would distinguish it from the unindividuated and unsignified proliferation of other life forms" (Young 117). This visual effect is amplified in Suttree's distraught mind and becomes his doppelganger, stalking him from every pool of water, mirror and reflective surface. Although he is able to distinguish that he and his brother are two separate people, Suttree still becomes confused by the reflection and sees himself as a dead man (Spencer, "Altered States" 89),

"for we were like to the last hair" (McCarthy 14). This confusion threatens Suttree's very existence as an individual, as he feels that his twin's stillbirth tainted the very beginning of his life with death. As a result, birth and death appear inextricably linked in Suttree's mind: "his subtle obsession with uniqueness troubled all his dreams. He saw his brother in swaddling, hands outheld, a scent of myrrh and lilies" (113). McCarthy utilizes imagery in this dream that further reinforce the notion that birth and death are merely opposite of the same coin. The infant in "swaddling," his arms held out, cannot help but evoke a connection to the infant Jesus, an image pregnant with thoughts of salvation or redemption. The addition of the "myrrh," a gift from the Three Wise Men to Jesus, only reinforces this interpretation. Lilies, on the other hand, are flowers commonly displayed at funerals. Birth and death are conflated in Suttree's mind:

> In fact, one might say that with the awareness of his dead twin, he is born with the knowledge of death in his bones. His preoccupation with his doubles and questions of identity suggest a radical incompleteness; there are times when he feels completion can only be attained through the death he desires and fears, through union with his twin, his other half. (Shelton 75)

Whenever Suttree sees his reflection he feels intimately connected to death, as though a part of him is already in the grave, and this terrifies him. Anywhere he goes death follows him as

> a darkly looming shape in the glass of the depot door. His fetch come up from life's other side like an autoscopic hallucination, Suttree and Antisuttree, hand reaching to the hand. (28)

> Suttree's doppelganger is not only a visual hallucination designed by McCarthy to amplify the character's obsession with and fear of death, but also to represent an "unacknowledged aspect of the self"(Palmer 14), the "Antisuttree" as McCarthy termed it.

As previously stated, aspects of the self that are repressed will sometimes manifest themselves as visual images to the individual, whether in the altered state of conscious of sleep or in the waking hours as hallucinations. McCarthy's images of death and duality populating both Suttree's sleeping and waking hours are designed to reveal the character's unconscious discontent with his current life and his obsessive fear of death. Like Siddhartha, who thirsted for the answers to his questions about the nature of the universe and the individual, Suttree first demonstrates "the seed of discontent within him" (Hesse 3) through his troubled dreams. Siddhartha, just before he left his father's house, where he was admired and revered by all around him, to begin his own quest for self-knowledge and enlightenment, was troubled:

> Dream and restless thought came flowing from the river, from the twinkling stars at night, from the sun's melting rays. Dream and a restlessness of the soul come to him. (Hesse 3)

While Suttree and Siddhartha are similar in that they both travel their own unique and individual path to inner peace, Suttree in the first part of the book prefers to escape from his nightmares and double visions by seeking refuge in alcohol. On a Sunday, when many people questing for spiritual renewal sit in church or quiet prayer, Suttree goes to Jimmy Smith's house and ragtag tavern to find solace in the bottom of a bottle among a "fellowship of the doomed…In the drift of voice and the laughter and the reek of stale

beer the Sunday loneliness seeped away" (21, 23). The bar becomes his place to worship the fleshy pleasure and his friends enact a mockery of a pious congregation. The fact that Suttree is lonely on Sunday of all days is one of many subtle indications in the beginning of the novel that he feels a spiritual void. Even as he leaves Smith's watering hole, where he thought to escape his loneliness, and walks through the slums of McAnally, the physical landscape around him recalls a troubling dream. He passes

> An alleymouth where ashcans gape and where in a dream I was stopped by a man I took to be my father, dark figure against the shadowed brick. I would go by but he stayed me with his hand. I have been looking for you, he said. The wind was cold, dreamwinds are so, I had been hurrying. I would draw back from him and his bone grip. The knife he held severed the pallid lamplight…and our footsteps amplified themselves in the emptiness of the streets…Yet it was not my father but my son who accosted me with such rancorless intent. (28)

Only by examining the dream within the context Suttree's whole character, in the Jungian fashion, can one begin to penetrate the meaning behind the symbols. Suttree's confuses his father with his own son in the dream; thus he also becomes a father and son to the mysterious figure seeking him. The knife held by the father/son figure could symbolize the severing of familial ties between Suttree and his own father and son. Freud would probably see the father/son figure confronting Suttree with a knife as a symbolic threat of castration and Oedipal anger. Although the dream is filled with ominous images of darkness, cold and potential violence, Suttree is "accosted with such rancorless intent," and no harm befalls him. The father/son figure is simply looking for him, with no clear intent as to what will be done to Suttree now that he has been found. This dream

demonstrates Suttree's ambiguous relationship with his family, which appears to unsettle him unconsciously, perhaps accounting for the dark images in the dream. The figure holding the knife can be construed as mildly predatory, but ultimately without "rancor," perhaps a warning that his abandonment of his family may come back to haunt him, like the father/son figure and his fetch who dog his steps. Although Suttree has just spent his Sunday attempting to drown his loneliness and fear in drink, he seemingly cannot avoid his ghostly twin and the losses it represents as it haunts him from every street corner. As Suttree so succinctly put it, in his own words: "I have seen my image twinned and blown in the smoked glass of a blind man's spectacles I am, I am" (80).

Some of Suttree's dreams appear to offer a temporary escape from his current existence, such as the dream he has of

> fairgrounds where young girls with flowered hair and wide child's eyes watched by flarelight sequined aerialists aloft. Visions of unspeakable loveliness from a world lost. To make you ache with want. (50)

Rather than provide Suttree with temporary refuge from his life on the river this dream serves to highlight the meanness of his "Barrenness of heart and gothic loneliness" (50). Although Suttree constantly attempts to escape this "sad and bitter season" by getting drunk (50), it is in these drunken states that he often makes stark admissions about himself. As he consumes more alcohol, the barriers in his consciousness that blocks out his more negative self-perceptions begin to crumble. His mind, now off guard and intoxicated, begins to churn up recrimination from his unconscious. At the B&J bar, a very drunk Suttree stumbles into a filthy men's restroom where he stares at a man using the toilet and then vomits in a corner exclaiming only the word "Sick" (76). Suttree

simply may be referring to either his own intoxication or the man's bowel movements. On the other hand, his statement could also be seen as an extremely understated summary of his current existence. On the following page, Suttree again mutters that he is "Sick. Sicky sick" (77); and as he's being walked about by one of his drinking buddies in a vain effort to sober him up, he make the frank admission, "I'm an asshole…I'm an asshole, J-Bone" (77). In all likelihood it is not the fact that Suttree is helpless when he's drunk that causes him say this, but simply that his mind is in such an altered state that he has no choice but to be honest. He's simply too drunk to lie or hide from the truth about himself. During the course of the night he passes out in an alley, dreaming of "a ragestrangled face" and "riots. A window full of glass collapsed in a crash. He thought he heard pistolshots. He struggled to wake but he could not" (78). The very drinks he imbibes to escape his life amplify the horror of it in his mind, and when his mind can no longer bear the chaos around him,

> A dream of shriving came to him. He knelt on the cold stone flags at the chancel gate where the winey light of votive candles cast his querulous shadow behind him. He bent in tears until his forehead touched the stone. (78)

This description is perhaps one of McCarthy's more unsubtle attempts to show that Suttree's dreams reveal more about his character than do his actions and waking life. The images of repentance and prayers immediately following on the heels of debauchery and inebriation can hardly be interpreted as anything other than Suttree's not- so-unconscious desire to absolve himself and put his guilt behind him, like the shadow. The religious implication of the votives, the chancellery and the kneeling position positively reinforce the notion that Suttree is seeking some form of salvation.

Suttree has several dreams during this stage of physical excess, that reveal his unconscious dissatisfaction with his existence. Almost immediately following on the heels of the dream of shriving, Suttree has another dream which reveals that, in addition to a desire for redemption, he has grave doubts about his ability to achieve it. After being urinated upon by a stranger during a drunken stupor, quite possibly his lowest stage of degradation, he lapses into another altered state:

> I'd like these shoes soled I dreamt I dreamt. An old cobbler looked up from his lasts and lapstone with eyes dim and windowed. Not these, my boy, they are too far gone, these soles. But I've no others. The old man shook his head. You must forget these and find others now. (79)

This dream is another example of one of McCarthy's more thinly veiled symbolic dreams, where the comparison of "sole" to "soul" is obviously intended. Freud noted that a dream created by an author may have a resemblance to an actual dream, but it is really a crafted product of a conscious mind, not the unconscious mind of a sleeper. Suttree's dreams sometimes lack the disjointed quality of true dreams, which often meander from image to image without coherent connection, except those imposed by the dreamer or analyst later upon reflection. Suttree's dreams usually appear as tableaus or little coherent stories, with a beginning middle and end, which reveal their deeper meanings all too readily, as in the case of this particular dream. Once again the archetype of the wise old man appears, telling Suttree his soul is worn out and he must renew it; he must "find" a new way of living. Freud's theory of the dream as subconscious wish fulfillment is certainly applicable here, as this dream demonstrates Suttree's repressed desire to rehabilitate himself and shed his old habits of indulgence. Ironically it is when he is most

intoxicated that Suttree's mind recoils most vividly from his drunkenness. Even though it seems that Suttree's unconscious mind is literally bubbling over with desire for redemption, to put an end to his escapist tendencies, consciously Suttree still rejects help. At one point he encounters a "biblecamp" performing baptisms in the river (121), and he strikes up a conversation with an old man about salvation. The old man says, "A feller can repent shod or barefoot either one. Jesus don't care…I was seventy-six for I seen the Lord's light and found the way…I was awful bad about drinkin" (123). The old man, yet another instance of the archetype but outside of a dream, speaks of quitting drinking and discovering a new life at his advanced age, perhaps giving Suttree cause to hope for his own chances for substantial change. He's even told that he doesn't need shoes to stand a chance, that he can "forget these [soles] and find others now" (79). Suttree, however, is not consciously ready to accept the proffered chance to "find the way" and instead asks, "You don't have a little drink hid do you?" (123). In response to the invitation to go into the river and be baptized, Suttree instead wants to get drunk, the very altered state which tends to excite his longing to be saved from himself. Perhaps he is also suggesting that the saved man's repentance is less than absolute.

Many of the revelations about Suttree that flow from his unconscious are filled with images of repentance and the seeking of absolution. It is not, however, merely his current existence of the fisherman and the spate of drunkenness, but also the abandonment of his family. Although it is described in only one comparatively small section of the book, his relationship with his former wife and particularly his son fills Suttree with guilt. When Suttree goes to see his family before his son's funeral, he is violently attacked by his ex-wife's mother and other relatives, at one point even having a

shotgun thrown down on him (150-151). Suttree, truly cast out by his family, continues on to the cemetery alone, standing apart from the other mourners and wondering to himself:

> Pale manchild were there last agonies? Were you in terror, did you know? Could you feel the claw that claimed you? And who is this fool kneeling over you bones, choked with bitterness? And what could a child know of the darkness of God's plan? Or how flesh is so frail it is hardly more than a dream? (154)

Rather than comfort himself with happier thoughts of his son, Suttree instead dwells upon "agonies" and "terror" of death. Even in this time of profound sorrow for his son's too short life, Suttree's mind once again circles back to himself, conflating his child's death with his own foolishness and relentless fear of death. Suttree is "able to rationalize the self-absorption of his sorrow by supposing it is really the living who suffer death" (Young 110). It appears that Suttree's queries as to his child's final moments are not so much about his son as they are about his dread of his own final moments. Suttree's filling in his son's grave may superficially appear to be a respectful gesture, but symbolically he is burying his past and with it his guilt, repressing with each spadeful of dirt he throws on the small coffin. The dénouement of Suttree's disastrous trip back home is his police escort to the bus station to ensure he does not cause any more trouble. The sheriff's final words to him reiterate what Suttree's unconscious has been struggling to unearth, that his life matters, that his actions have consequences that stretch beyond his own existence, that,

> Everything's important. A man lives his life, he has to make that important… You might even understand that one day. I don't say you will. You might. (157)

It is not only remorse or inebriation that causes Suttree's mind to confront his fears. In a particularly violent barroom fight, Suttree is hit with a heavy floorbuffer and suffers a severe head trauma. After receiving his injury, Suttree, bleeding from his ears and quite dazed, struggles with his battered drinking buddies to get out of the bar. The tableau of violence is then described through Suttree's distorted view, colored by the violent blow to the head he just received.

> Making his way toward the door he realized with a faint surge that fairyland feeling from childhood wonders that the face he passed wide eyed by the side of an upturned table was a dead man…they stumbled on like the damned in off the plains of Gomorrah. Before they reached the door someone hit him in the head with a bottle. (187)

Suttree attempts to escape a biblically hellish situation and is ironically prevented by the very alcohol, a beer bottle to the head, he normally uses to escape mentally and emotionally from himself. The chaos and bedlam in the bar and the wounds inflicted on Suttree physically and metaphorically in that fight essentially sum up his vain attempts to repress his fear and guilt: one big mess. It appears that this episode is literally a wake-up call as Suttree falls "foul of yet other hands" and he wakes up in the hospital with broken teeth, ribs, fingers and a fractured skull (188). In his pain-induced haze, he perceives his body as a "boat of flesh" being carried by attendants to "the deadcarriage…Perhaps the wrath of God after all" (188). His agony is so great that it seems, in his addled brain, a divine blow from the Almighty himself, perhaps in retribution for previous sins. This pain-filled existence appears to be too much for Suttree, and in his dreams he banishes his former life of debauchery and drunkenness to the river, the very symbol of death:

> In his sleep he saw his friends again and they were coming downriver on muddy floodwaters…all watching him where he stood on the shore. They glided somberly past. 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…From a rock in the river he waved them farewell but they did not wave back (189-190)

Suttree's dream symbolically represents his desire to begin a new day; with the "lightless dawn" (190) without his drinking buddies and the life they represent. While they float, aimless as he appeared at the beginning of the novel, Suttree stands firmly on the shore and upon a rock. He is not on the river with them; he is not a part of the polluted and deadly waters. This dream allows Suttree finally to stand apart from the tides of alcohol and the "fellowship of the doomed" (21) with which he had surrounded himself and begin to distance himself, mentally and physically, from his life of bodily excess and indulgence. This dream clearly falls in line with what Jung saw as the "compensatory" nature of dreams, whose "general function…is to restore psychological balance by producing…material that re-establishes, in a subtle way, the total psychic equilibrium" (Jung 50). Freud would also view this dream as a symbolically-expressed desire to remove himself from the life his friends represent. However, the expression of the wish is not the same as the wish fulfilled. Later in the book, inebriated, Suttree "negotiated with a drunk's meticulousness the wide stone steps of the Church of the Immaculate Conception," and falls asleep in a pew. When awakened by a priest Suttree refuses confession, the one thing he appears to need most, and firmly states to the priest that the church is "not God's house" (255), thus negating the significance of the institution from which he could receive forgiveness.

When Suttree escapes from the hospital a few pages later and returns to his houseboat at the edge of the river, "He looked at the open gray sky but it did not change & the river was always the same" (194). The river may still be dirty and the sky may still be dingy but Suttree is beginning to evolve beyond the man he was at the beginning of the novel: a man without purpose or direction, floating rudderless on the river of life.

Chapeter IV.

Although Suttree's desire for self-reform appears to manifest itself more strongly in his later dreams, indicating it is hovering at the edges his conscious mind, he does occasionally slip back into despair and alcoholic escapism, as evidence by his sleeping off the aforementioned bender in a church pew. However, his next steps on the journey to self-knowledge and individuation take him from a life of physical indulgence to an experience of extreme bodily deprivation. The altered states of consciousness that he experiences as he subjects himself to starvation, exposure to the elements and isolation from his fellow men will prove just as revelatory as his drunken dreams. In the autumn, Suttree packs up some belongings and "hiked up into the mountains" on the Tennessee/North Carolina border (283). He lives in the woods, without shelter, substantial clothing or sufficient food for a few weeks; the exact length of time remains unclear. According to Shelton, it is "reasonable to assume on one level that he is attempting to purify himself through contact with nature" (77). According to William Spencer, Suttree is seeking "insight and spiritual power by going alone and unprotected into the mountains, where he connects with nature" ("The Seventh Direction" 100). Suttree's willful subjection to the elements and near starvation in an apparent attempt to reach some personal clarity about his life is not so long a step from his recently debauched existence. Siddhartha, the son of a wealthy Brahmin, gives up a life of ease and luxury to become a Samana aesthete in an effort to uncover the meaning of his life:

> Siddhartha gave his clothes to a poor Brahmin on the road and retained his loincloth and earth-colored unstitched cloak. He ate only once a day and never cooked food. He fasted fourteen days. He fasted twenty-eight days. The flesh

> disappeared from his legs and cheeks. Strange dreams were reflected in his large eyes. (10)

By depriving his body, Suttree, like Siddhartha, attempts to overcome his physical urges in an effort to uncloud his mind, which is not easy: "The first few dawn half made him nauseous, he's not seen dead sober for so long" (283). Slowly, lack of food, although entirely deliberate on Suttree's part as he did attempt to fish, begins to affect his mental status. Rather than be tormented by hunger, as one would speculate, Suttree beings to shed his perceptions of physical discomfort, "He'd no food…and he thought his hunger would keep him awake but it didn't…He'd forgotten he was hungry" (284, 285). In this altered state, akin to a meditative trance, "he did not even make a fire" in spite of the chilly weather of late fall in the Smoky Mountains, and "he should be cold but had not been so for days" (287, 288). Siddhartha also overcomes hunger, thirst and fatigue, "through meditation, through the emptying of the mind of all images" in an effort to find answers to his questions by obliterating body and all its demands (Hesse 12). Suttree's extreme physical hardship and self-denial are his attempt to transcend his physical life and perceive reality from a new perspective. The hunger and exposure set up his mind perfectly for hallucinations which, while resulting from an abnormal physical and mental state, reveal heretofore unexamined aspects of Suttree's character. According to Siegel, hallucinations can happen to anyone, given the right circumstances, "when even ordinary people are subjected to extraordinary conditions…sensory isolation…hunger, thirst, loss of sleep, life threatening danger, and even loneliness" (6).

Suttree's hallucinations begin simply enough, with disjointed thoughts and rather unassuming visual mirages: he thinks elves may be resting under toadstools and later

sees "an elvish apparition" jog past him (285). His mind begins generating images that seems to be drawn from the forest around him because of his brain's decreasing ability to regulate the conscious perception of stimuli. Due to exhaustion and hunger his brain is unable to "sort through" all the incoming stimuli around him, thus allowing "all signals to enter with full power" (Seigel 49). According to Thomas Young, Jr. in "The Imprisonment of Sensibility," Suttree deliberately subjects himself to such deprivation in a conscious effort to court

> the more primitive realms of being he has sought on the river, and after some weeks of privation he induces in himself that state of visionary power that allows him to see the world as it is…He recognizes the fundamental indeterminacy of the universe. (105).

The longer he stays in the woods the more his conscious mind becomes confused as he wanders in "states half wakeful" and half dreaming, thus allowing his unconscious to manifest itself in thought and hallucination. Unencumbered by bodily demands, Suttree focuses with a newfound clarity on the world around him, rather than on himself as previously seen. The forest is not a cold, forbidding place, threatening him with physical harm, but a realm of powerful images and sensations:

> A newt, small, olive, paint spattered, arrowed off downside a rock…The water sang in his head like wine…A green and reeling wall of laurel and the stark trees rising…Pins of light near blue were coming off the stones…He looked at a world of incredible loveliness. Old distaff Celt's blood in some back chamber of his brain moved him to discourse with the birches, with the oaks. (286).

While talking to trees may appear to the outsiders as a sure sign of dementia, the reader knows that Suttree is about as far from mad as he has been in the book thus far. By drawing the reader into Suttree's trance-like state, McCarthy shows that Suttree's discourse with the woods is the result of a newly-recognized affinity with all creation, rather than a decent into madness. As Siddhartha learned from Gotama Buddha, "there is no will, no counterfeit, no effort, only unity with all the universe (Hesse 22), so Suttree experiences a oneness with the forest so profound that "He scarce could tell where his being ended or the world began nor did he care" (286). Suttree's mental unification with the natural world in this state is an attempt to annihilate his self; however, he does not succeed. In spite of his attempts to embrace the forest as a peaceful place, full of life, harmony and unity, his fears soon exert themselves, also in the form of visual hallucinations. Suttree's preoccupation with his "stillborn twin…becomes manifest" (Spencer, "The Seventh Direction" 103), and his doppelganger, stalking him in the dark and isolated woods, seems more menacing than ever

> In these silent sunless galleries he'd come to feel that another went before him and each glade he entered seemed just quit by a figure who'd been sitting there and risen and gone on. 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 this obscure wood he'd be neither mended nor made whole but rather set mindless to dodder drooling with his ghostly clone from sun to sun across a hostile hemisphere forever. (287)

On a practical level his mind, rebelling against the extreme isolation, could be manifesting its desire for companionship by populating the woods with imaginary people.

However, it appears more likely that once again, Suttree's obsession with death and his own duality exerts itself and populates the woods with his own personal bogeyman, his ghostly twin. He fears that if he were to confront his other self, his Antisuttree, all his fears about himself, his failings and guilt, he would go mad. His mind has allowed the Antisuttree to hover at the edges of his unconscious, in the shadows of the woody glens, to push Suttree closer to confronting himself, but not bursting fully into his conscious brain as he does not appear ready to accept all it holds. However, Suttree does come to some revelation, and "saw with a madman's clarity the perishability of his flesh" (287). Through the book Suttree has been haunted by images of death, the river, his stillborn twin, his dead son, his dreams, and now he comes to accept his own mortality, albeit with great fear, which he has repressed throughout the book.

Suttree encounters a hunter in the words and, in his altered state, "paid him no more mind that any other apparition and would go on but that the man spoke to him" (288). The hunter, huddled in a tree stand with a crossbow, seems unsettled by Suttree's wild appearance and seemingly deranged attitude and asks him, "What are you," as though Suttree were some bizarre creature unknown to man (288). Although Suttree carries on a semi-coherent conversation with the hunter, it is never clearly stated whether the hunter is a real man or another hallucination albeit more convincing that the others. The hunter exhibits cautious curiosity towards Suttree, verging on disgust and fear at him and his eyes, which were "black and crazed and smoking" (289). Perhaps the hunter is not really a man at all, but a projection of Suttree's rational mind exerting itself during this time of mental crisis and isolation, insisting that Suttree is "loony as a didapper" and "lost or crazy or both" (288). Suttree uses the hunter as a sounding board for his own

personal revelations and ironic examination of himself, insisting to the man that he, Suttree, is not "a figment…a friggin figment" of imagination (289). The irony is that while Suttree asserts his own existence as real and substantial, the hunter's is up for question as Suttree insists, "At least I exist…Are you for real?" (288, 289). During this conversation Suttree asks how many crosses the hunter has killed with his crossbow, perhaps commenting on his own personal rejection of religion (289). Suttree insists that the hunter cannot lead him out of this "state I'm in" and cannot bring Suttree back around to conventional thought and existence (289). However Suttree does ask, "How do I get out of here?…Out of these mountains" (289), which symbolizes his acceptance that his time in the woods is up and his eventual return to the guidance of rational thought. The parting words exchanged between Suttree and the mysterious hunter, while humorous on the surface, speak to a profound shift in Suttree's mentality:

> You run crazy in these woods regular do ye?
>
> No, said Suttree. This is my first time.(290)

Suttree reveals his acceptance of his altered state, his craziness, as something necessary and perhaps to be repeated.

Upon his journey out of the words, Suttree's altered state of pure thought recedes and his conscious mind begins to reassert itself in the form of bodily concern. For the first time in days he becomes aware of the cold and worries that he may freeze. He is again able to distinguish between waking and sleeping states, and "He dreamed sad dream and woke bitter and rueful" (290). His mind turns from the profound peace he found in loveliness of nature and exerts bitterness towards the world he is reentering. Siddhartha's life as a Samana, characterized by fasting and extreme self-denial, also did

not bring true inner peace but instead showed him that "everything lied, stank of lies…all illusions of sense, happiness and beauty. All were doomed to decay. The world tasted bitter. Life was pain" (Hesse 11). Likewise, Suttree's experience with deprivation leads him to experience a kind of shell-shock when reintroduced into civilization: a café he stops at for food seems "alien," newspapers are full of "incomprehensible events," and food tastes like "sawdust" in his mouth (291, 292). Suttree becomes angry that the world seems so empty, devoid of sensation when compared to the forest, and he lashes out at a waitress, insisting it is the food that is all wrong, not he. When he attempt to seek refuge in the bottle again, the man at the liquor store turns him away, presumably because he still looks like some crazed mountain troll, and Suttree begins to weep:

> He didn't know that he was going to and he was ashamed. The counterman looked away. Suttree turned and went out. In the street the cold wind on his wet face brought back such old winter griefs that he began to cry still harder. Walking along the mean little street in his rage convulsed with sobs, half blind with a sorrow for which there was neither name nor help. (294)

That Suttree is now capable of such a free expression of emotion, especially such "cathartic" sorrow (Spencer, "The Seventh Direction" 104), is quite a difference from the Suttree of the beginning of the novel who repressed everything. As a result of his intense isolation in the mountains Suttree is filled with a sense of alienation by the trappings and inhabitants of civilization; it overwhelms him when the counterman cuts off his one previous avenue of escape. Although the denial of alcohol is the catalyst for his sudden tears, to say that alcohol is the cause of his pain would be inaccurate. His alcoholism is

the symptom of his greater need to escape, and the denial during a time of such intense mental crisis is too much.

Even after the mountain journey is behind him and he resettles himself in Knoxville, he carries his revelations with him, "a sudden understanding of the mathematical certainty of death" (295). His acceptance of his own eventual demise dispels some of his fear of death, but replaces it with a curiosity as to the nature of life, "He felt his heart pumping down there under his hand. Who tells it so? Could a whole man not author his own death with a thought?" (295). Suttree's obsession with death appears to be evolving into a meditation on how a man chooses to live, rather than viewing life as a predetermined journey towards the inevitable. The thoughts that had been previously residing in his unconscious now emerge into his consciousness as a contemplation on personal choice and responsibility.

The section of the book following his return from the mountains is marked by a decisive decrease in Suttree's drinking. Ironically, soon after he returns to Knoxville, Blind Richard, a tenet of McAnally, says to Suttree, "You don't have a little drink hid away do ye?"; when Suttree answers in the negative, Blind Richard says, "Didn't much allow you did" (296). This exchange hearkens back to the conversation Suttree had with the seventy-six year-old saved gentleman at the riverside baptisms, previously noted. Although Richard didn't really believe Suttree had any alcohol, his query suggests that Suttree's slow rehabilitation is not complete. Suttree does indeed engage in one last memorable drunken revel with the patriarch of the mussel-gathering Reese family, complete with prostitutes and some gambling. Although Suttree gets blind drunk, he does not wander through hellish landscapes or blurt out self recriminations while

intoxicated. It is only the following day, in the throes of a screaming hangover, that he comes to any conclusions. "My life is ghastly," he gasps, after a prolonged trek back to camp on a hot Tennessee summer's day, severely dehydrated (348). Once again, McCarthy uses severe understatement to reiterate Suttree's dilemma. Alcohol appears to have lost its escapist significance to Suttree and he simply has a night on the town with Reese. Suttree's ill-fated romance with Wanda Reese, although ending with the girl's tragic death during a rockslide, is a pleasantly comforting relationship, that demonstrates Suttree's evolving ability to care for someone other than himself. Although their relationship is mostly sexual, there are some passages which reveal a more romantic view and a tenderness in Suttree's attitude towards her:

> She always found him. She'd come pale and naked from the trees into the water like some dream old prisoners harbor or sailors at sea. Or touch his cheek where he lay sleeping and say his name. Holding her arms aloft like a child for him to raise up over them the nightshirt that she wore and her to lie cool and naked against his side. (353)

Wanda takes on a dreamlike appearance, womanly and sensual, yet childlike. With her Suttree experiences an intimacy that appears to go beyond the physical, yet seems paternal at times, as though he were compensating for his lack of fatherly attention for his own child. Suttree and Wanda discuss the possibility of her becoming pregnant and at one point it appears possible that she may have conceived: "With his ear to the womb of this child he could hear the hiss of meteorites through the blind stellar depths" (358). When Wanda is killed by a rockslide, caused by several days of unrelenting rain, the conflation of birth and death once again confronts Suttree. His reaction to yet another

twinning of life and death results not in fear, as previously demonstrated, but a new and curious ambiguity. Suttree leaves the Reese camp in his rowboat and travels back down the river to Knoxville, her blood still on his hands, "a man with no plans for going back the way he'd come nor telling any soul at all what he had seen" (363).

Suttree's final significant episode of altered consciousness is certainly his most profound and brings his character full circle. Suttree began the novel with a man preoccupied with material desires who, in the mountains, briefly transcended the flesh and experienced brilliant clarity of thought. Deathly ill from an acute case of typhoid Suttree must now move beyond self-denial to the utter annihilation of self and selfish desires in order to reckon fully with his previously repressed emotions and guilt.
In the beginning of the illness, feverish, Suttree imagines his father has come to his bedside to comfort him, as he did when Suttree was a child (448). Freud would say that this altered state would indicate Suttree's desire to reconcile not only with his father but also to come to term with his own paternal role towards his own deceased son. The father figure sitting on Suttree's bed could represent Suttree's own guilt at not attending his child's deathbed. As Suttree's illness progresses and he begins to bleed rectally, his fever addled brain reaches a state akin to that which sparked the hallucinations in the forest and is unable to regulate incoming sensory stimuli. Suttree cannot process the world around him and mistakes footsteps in the hall for "parades in the street…What is this roaring? Who is this otherbody?" (449). Once again Suttree's mind revolves around his duality, but this time he attempts to dismiss the previously frightening doppelganger, insisting upon his own uniqueness, "I am no otherbody" (449). Suttree "no longer knew if he dreamt or woke" and his mind begins to churn up images he has previously

repressed, quickly whipping him back through his memories (449). A "sexual nightmare" in which a monstrously ravenous vagina dentata devours him resolves itself into a sensual and comforting image of his ex-wife "moving an aura of musk…her nigh-blue hair unbuckled in combs of tortoise, coming down out of her chamber in my unhealed memory" (450). That Suttree's memory is described within his own mind as "unhealed" indicates his conscious acceptance of his past and all its pain.

Ironically in the very state which will serve later as the dénouement to Suttree's emotional maturation, he tells his friend J-Bone that he, Suttree, is "Sick, sick" (450). This plaintive explanation of his illness precisely echoes Suttree's previous drunken frank admission that he is "Sicky sick," that his life is twisted and gross as a result of his own actions. In this instance, however, Suttree's sickness is not only a truly physical illness but also a indication of his helplessness. Exhausted by the disease's ravages, Suttree must be forcibly dragged to a taxi. His mind is also drained by his previous repression, his constant inner struggle to resolve his life to the worlds and Suttree is helpless before the bombardment of mental images streaming through his consciousness. As the cabby and J-Bone wrestle the delirious Suttree into the taxi, he mutters, "I was all right," (451) not so much a reference to his physical well being as, perhaps, to the man he used to be, before he descended into the slums of McAnally.

At the hospital, the buzz of activity around Suttree serves to feed his hallucinations and ravings that appear half-rational only to the reader, as the reader has been a mute witness to the internal progression of Suttree's mind. Wheeled down a corridor of the hospital, Suttree's mind forms the image of the tunnel common to near-death experiences, and he also experiences a sense of viewing the world from "incredible

heights" (453). Faces of family and friends, both dead and alive, slide past his inner eye, and Suttree believes, "I am going out of this world, a long silent scream on rails down the dark nether slops of the hemisphere that is death's prelude" (452). Once again Suttree's mind joins death and birth as his mind interprets the tunnel as the vaginal canal of "an enormous livercolored cunt with prehensile lips that pumped softly like some levantine bivalve" (452). This hallucination is no repressed memory of a traumatic birth experience, but Suttree's mental projection of his belief that his death and life began at the same moment, with the simultaneous birth of himself and the loss of his twin. At the same time that Suttree's death vision fashions him as aborted, this near death experience will also allow him to be reborn, beginning a new life after his near annihilation from this illness.

At the height of his delirium, Suttree's mind thrusts forth a complex vision that symbolizes Suttree's ultimate confrontation with his demons: a trial. Suttree stands in judgment of his own life, as both accuser and judge. Although the trial progresses in a chaotic fashion with the list of charges including murder of a bird called Tweetiepie and a charge of lycanthropy, or werewolfism, there is a method to the surface madness. Suttree is calling himself into account for all prior sins against himself and other, great and small. Aware that he is very likely dying Suttree wishes to unburden his soul and this trial is his confession, for he is "Outbound…beyond all wares" and beyond the seemingly superficial demands of his previous life (455). Suttree still attempts resistance, claiming "this is no path of my choosing" (455). He at first dissembles in the face of the charges brought against him, moaning "It was never me," one of his last attempts to avoid responsibility for his life. He envisions the Huddle, one of his

hangouts, symbolic of all the ugliness of his life conflated in hideous caricature of a bar. Blind Richard, murdered men of Suttree's previous acquaintance, whores, queers and one mangled nun populate the Huddle. The nun attempts to draw him away from this crowd of "Foul perverts one and the sundry," reflecting Suttree's repeated and abortive attempts to find succor in religion (457). Drawn away from the bar by the nun, Suttree is then deposited back into the courtroom where a litany of charges is leveled against him, absurd in the their specificity, but ultimately necessary to Suttree's successful confrontation of himself.

> Mr Suttree it is our understanding that at curfew rightly decreed by law and in that hour wherein night draws to it proper close and the new day commences and contrary to conduct befitting a person of your station you betook yourself to various low places within the shire of McAnally and there did squander several ensuing years in the company of thieves, derelicts, miscreants, pariahs, poltroons, spalpeens, curmudgeons, clotpolls, murderers, gamblers, bawds, whores, trulls, brigands, topers, tosspots, sots and archsots, lobcocks, smell-smocks, runagates, rakes and other assorted and felonious debauches. (457)

"I was drunk," he cries out at the same time realizing it is, and never has been, a good excuse for how he chose to live his life. That such a simple statement follows on the heels of such a lengthy inner diatribe against himself demonstrates that Suttree truly does realize how truly indefensible much of his behavior was . Suttree, as he is given the last rites in his hospital bed, has a terrifying vision of hell:

> A floodtide of screaming fiends and assassins and thieves and hirsute buggers pours forth into the universe, tipping it slightly on its galactic axes. The stars go

> rolling down the void like redhot marbles. (457)…These simmering sinners with their cloaks smoking carry the Logos itself from the tabernacle and bear it through the streets while the absolute prebarbaric mathematick of the western world howls them down and shrouds their ragged biblical forms in oblivion. (458)

Suttree sees his own damnation as a direct correlative to the unbalancing of the entire universe. Although this thought appears to be egotistical and Suttree's condemnation or destruction would merely upset his reality, this image of universal upheaval serves to reiterate the profound impact this near-death experience is having on Suttree. "He becomes aware that his way of life is the way of pure destructiveness, the unleashing of the anti-life on the universe" (Shelton 81).

Having been given up for dead by the hospital staff, who had called a priest to perform last rites, Suttree miraculously pulls through, and his fever breaks. He emerges from his illness physically shattered but emotionally and mentally emancipated from his guilt and fears of death and himself. He appears eager to share some of his revelations and reveals to the first person he sees, a nurse, that "I know that all souls are one and all souls are lonely" (459). Suttree's obsessions with his own problems and single point of view has been erased, and he now sees a unity not only between himself and the world, as he did in the mountains, but also with all of man. Although Suttree does affirm that there "is one Suttree and one Suttree only," this is not a statement that separates him from others: "By acknowledging his uniqueness, he relinquishes his fixation with the othersuttree. The gesture is vital; it is both realistic and life-affirming" (Guinn 113). According to William Prather in "Absurd Reasoning in an Existential World: A Consideration of Cormac McCarthy's Suttree," Suttree, by recognizing his connection to

the rest of the humanity, is "revealing the achievement of his desire for personal integration" (111). Suttree's ego now recognizes that loneliness is not his personal demon, but plagues all humanity, and the knowledge that he is not truly alone in this comforts him. He realizes that "It is through the inner-commonality of pain and sorrow that the human race is connected " (Traber 39). "We were never promised that our flesh" he starts, but is interrupted by the nurse, concerned that he is still excitable from fever. Although the thought is unfinished, it appears that Suttree's "mathematical certainty of death" is now complimented by a realization that a man is never guaranteed a life and, therefore, must take full advantage of such a precious gift. Although death is a certainty, Suttree realizes that life is not certain, and the precariousness of such an existence must be realized and the experience treasured. Suttree realizes that such sweeping realizations are a part of living and growing, "for life does not come slowly. It rises in one massive mutation and all is changed utterly and forever" (459). Although he slowly progressed, throughout the novel, in confronting himself, it takes a single, significant and devastating event to force him to accept responsibility for his past and look forward to actively creating his own future. His triumph over death and his own fear of living teach Suttree "how to live in the river of life and not merely be anointed with it" (Prather 106).

When Suttree leaves the hospital the evidence of rapid change is all around him, as well as within. "New roads [were] being laid over McAnally, over the ruins" just as new paths are being blazed with Suttree himself. Upon returning to his houseboat on the river Suttree discovers a "flyblown" corpse, but the dead man, although decomposing and rather disgusting, does not cut a frightening figure. If anything, it seems most appropriate that he be there in Suttree's bed, as though Suttree's old self, full of self-loathing and fear

were lying in the bed, a symbolic funeral bier upon the river. When the paramedics come to retrieve the body later, three black children wonder if it could be Suttree in that body bag, but ultimately one announces, "Shit…Old Suttree aint dead" (470). In one sense the man they formerly knew is gone, and the boy's conviction that he is alive reasserts that Suttree perhaps truly living for the first time in his life.

As Suttree leaves Knoxville, he is described as looking as thought he were "just out of the army or jail," which is true in a metaphorically sense; he is a freed man now. As he walks to the outskirts of town to hitch a ride to unknown places, he observes the construction crews tearing down portions of McAnally Flats, reflective of his own deconstruction of his interior defenses. Although the physical destruction of the slums is proceeding apace, the Flats and all they represented will never truly be gone to Suttree as long as he lives. "He knew another McAnally, good to last a thousand years. There'd be no new roads there" (463). Although Suttree has no clear picture of where he's going, maybe the destination doesn't really matter; perhaps all that truly matter is that he move on, physically as well as emotionally. Suttree steps forward into his new life, without fear or trepidation, having finally accepted his own past and present action, without creating doubles to subsume his guilt. Suttree now sees the world and himself as unified rather than divided, and leaves the novel on a note of positive growth. As though sanctifying his new life, he receives a humble communion from a boy bearing a water bucket along the dusty highway where the construction workers toiled. Suttree behold his image "twinned" in the child blue eyes and feels no fear (471). He then hitches a ride form a passing truck and disappears from Knoxville, profoundly altered himself but leaving only a barely perceptible trace of himself upon the place, as a dog sniffs "at the

spot where Suttree had stood" (471). As Young noted, the dog is a "familiar death-figure" in McCarthy's works (120). This dog emerged from the landscape "like a hound from the depths" (471), representative of the life of self-destruction Suttree has left behind. The last lines of the novel are replete with vivid imagery of the "destructive elements" that populated Suttree's previous life (Shelton 82).

> Somewhere in the gray wood by the river is the huntsman and in all 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 their eyes crazed with ravening for souls in this world. Fly them. (471)

The huntsman and his pack of mad dogs appear as ravenous devourers of souls, representative of all of Suttree's previous self-destructive tendencies and "the consolations of death" (Prather 113). However, they exist by the river and in the woods, places demonstrative of nature's cold indifference to man and his condition, place Suttree no longer inhabits, physically or spiritually. He is no longer self-absorbed or intentionally isolated from humanity, no longer indifferent to the sorrow of others. He acknowledges it as his own. Although the world has souls enough for the foreboding huntsman and his demonic dogs, Suttree's will not be one of them for his is a soul protected by the "talisman [of] the simple human hearth within him" (468).

Chapter V.

Throughout the novel Cornelius Suttree experiences various altered states of consciousness, ranging from intoxication to exhaustion-induced hallucinations to a feverish near-death vision. When in these states Suttree's vast interior defense mechanisms break down and disturbing information about himself slips into his conscious mind in various symbolic forms. His dreams and visions not only gather images from the world around him but also reach back into his memory to dredge up old guilt and force it upon him during times of mental vulnerability. The dreams and hallucinations do not fly about without design, but instead are carefully structured by McCarthy as a series of escalating powerful self-confrontations. In Jungian psychology, the preferred method to examine the dreams and symbolic manifestation of altered consciousness in an individual is to analyze not just one dream but all of them, for they

> are like chapters in a book; each chapter adds something to the new total narrative, and taken together they form an interlocking coherent picture of the personality just as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle form a picture when they are fitted together…dream series reveal the recurrent themes, thereby the principle preoccupations of the dreaming mind. (Hall and Nordly 119).

Certainly Suttree's altered states of conscious, even those that are not dreams, gravitate towards each other to form a portrait of a man obsessed with his own neurosis. By using the "pictorial language" or dreams and hallucinations (Jung 43), McCarthy takes the reader into the character's mind when it is most exposed and vulnerable to its darkest fears. The reader follows Suttree's mental and emotional growth from recognition of his self-destructive tendencies, to his realization that it is his own "horror of death" that

exacerbates his condition (Prather 104), to his final resolution to act, rather than exist, mute and passive. "The central conflict of Suttree is the protagonists struggle with nihilsm" (Guinn 112), and Suttree wins that struggle when he realizes that only he can imbue meaning into his existence. As Suttree progresses from flat denial of his past and responsibilities to gradual acceptance of his choices and his life, his altered states moved from nightmarish and threatening to somber and introspective and then to a final wild explosion of emotion and acceptance. Throughout the novel Suttree has alternately fled from, attempted to deprive and then nearly annihilated his self. Although religions images populate many of his altered states, Suttree ultimately rejects external succor for his pain, instead reaching deep into himself, at times most unwillingly, for enlightenment. Once in the mountains Suttree's altered states of consciousness progress from drunken mental regurgitation of remorse to a profound joy and "self-surrender" to the natural world (Spencer, "Altered States" 90). Only by freeing himself from his ego and insistence upon his own unique sorrow can Suttree realize that the pain and ecstasy of life are shared by all the world. By experiencing the almost complete annihilation of self at near death, Suttree realizes that coming so close to real death has eradicated his fear and he has "transcended" his self (Spencer, "Altered States" 92). In confronting his self-imposed alienation Suttree reaches the more fundamental realization that all man is unified by the simple common experience of living. Only by freeing himself from his ego and insistence upon his own unique sorrow can Suttree realize that the pain and ecstasy of life are shared by all the world.

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