20 March 2009

One night the end of January I started listing the names of characters and places in Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*.

Two months later, here are three ways of looking at the novel.

My copy is a Vintage Contemporary reprint of the 1979 Random House edition, and does match the pages of Wes Morgan's "Concordance" to *Suttree*.

At a compression of almost 500:1 is "Page Numbers, Divisions" in the novel.

At a ratio of 100:1 are five pages of "Contents of Divisions." As Suttree (and, once, Harrogate) "walks Knoxville," I mean to mark what seem walking tours of the novel's "Old Knoxville Town."

At 10:1 are fifty pages of "Worksheet" that embed the major divisions as green rows, and minor ones as alternating red and green markers in a column. People and places characters talk about, those not present but mentioned, are marked ">".

I believe that somewhere between the "Contents," the "Worksheet," and the "Concordance," is some orientation, some generic work already done.

Suttree four times hallucinates, dreams at-length, in the novel. Malnutrition, head-trauma, drugs, illness, are presented as triggers. And then there's the rest of the book.

Wes Morgan's work on a "Reader's Guide" to identify a great many of the actual places and characters McCarthy uses in *Suttree* will be of remarkable interest and value.

John Sepich.