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Considering the Human and Nonhuman in Literary Studies: Notes for a Biographic Network Approach for the Study of Literary Objects

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CONSIDERING THE HUMAN AND NONHUMAN IN LITERARY STUDIES:
NOTES FOR A BIOGRAPHIC NETWORK APPROACH FOR THE STUDY OF
LITERARY OBJECTS

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Edward Lee Bullock

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Jenny Rice

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

CONSIDERING THE HUMAN AND NONHUMAN IN LITERARY STUDIES:
NOTES FOR A BIOGRAPHIC NETWORK APPROACH FOR THE STUDY OF LITERARY
OBJECTS

In recent years critical projects spanning philosophy, the social sciences, science studies, and nearly everywhere that has employed the term ecology have engaged in thinking humans and non-humans together as collectively producing outcomes, where objects do work beyond how humans perceive or make use of them. Taking Zelda Fitzgerald's *Save Me the Waltz* as its focus, this thesis explores how this reorientation might contribute to literary studies and to literary criticism more specifically. The thesis considers a notion that novels constitute objects with biographies running "against" the biographic material of their authors, mobilizes actor network theory as a manner of mapping that biographic assemblage, and tentatively develops a biographic network approach as one alternative to traditional literary interpretative practices. Attending to the novel as an actor shifts critical focus away from its interior – the "text" or content – and expands traditional literary criticism's default practice – interpretation – and logic – mimetic representation – in hopes of facilitating a discussion of Zelda's novel in a manner which destabilizes the overdetermined themes that continue to scaffold her imaginary. Ultimately, this work argues that a biographic network approach can prove instructive as a "method" for dealing with other texts which remain relatively obscured at the margins of literary consciousness.

KEYWORDS: Zelda Fitzgerald, human and nonhuman, actor-network and assemblage, biography, interpretation and representation

Edward Lee Bullock
April 21, 2014

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OBJECTS

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Chapter1: Networks and Objects

The Thesis: Introduction

This thesis does not simply begin with this stretch of words. It has passed through the hands and emails of committee members and readers, changed and formed by the interventions and comments made by them. It has also been molded by conference presentations, conversations, and small epiphanies garnered from others still. Departmental requirements, formatting guidelines from The Graduate School, and word processing programs have also had their say. In places it has suffered or benefited because of other obligations, or states of mind. In all places, the document results from contingencies, connections and relationships with other beings, both human and nonhuman. In other words, the processes and engagements producing this document can be mapped – a *network*. Following Bruno Latour, the term network refers to "a concept, not a thing out there" like a city grid, a corporate management structure, or a subway system. As Latour notes, the term network operates as "a tool to help describe something, not just what is being described" (*Social* 131).

I am describing the thesis as a mutually constructed and constructing set of relationships, not all of which are visible, not all of which are human. For instance, this thesis will appear nowhere in the degree that will be conferred, framed and hung on my wall, deposited in a folder and placed in a trunk, or eventually misplaced and lost in a move; even so, the materialization of that degree depends on this document and cannot occur without it. Similarly, my committee and readers, Microsoft Word, The Graduate School building will also appear nowhere in this object, but they are central to its *appearance*. Even if absent, they are nevertheless, undeniably present: the committee and

readers appear in content revisions and the scholarly and creative fields from which that content is drawn; Microsoft and Word "reveal" themselves in the processing of the document, its typography; and, as this document will be read into and remain in The Graduate School's servers and would not have been accepted there if the margins were not 1.5" on the left and 1" on all other sides, these entities appear as well.

This thesis as an object, then, can be understood as "a pattern of absences and presences." *Absent-presences*, as John Law and Vicky Singleton call them, reveal objects "as sets of present dynamics generated in, and generative of, realities that are necessarily absent" (8). Describing the network of the thesis allows for an examination of the pattern of absences and presences that have generated it. These dynamics, realities, and the actors that operate with and because of them, all together, constitute a map of a network, or to use another term, an *assemblage*. Even if this preliminary description of this thesis' network is oversimplified and attenuated, as a few first lines of introduction it suffices. They begin to unfold the map of a thesis imagined as a network, the connections that have been formed amongst heterogeneous and irreducible actors, that even if absent, have presence in this document, in the history of its being here. In presenting my thesis in this way, I am after a view of the thesis that can itself be described as an object, beyond the sheets of paper, or scrollable virtual pages present before you, but also that exceeds its utility as a genre, or status as a medium for transmitting "the thesis," in what we might think of as its biography.

Reorientation

In recent years critics and theorists have increasingly engaged a project of reimagining the division between humans and non-humans, the ways in which they relate

and interact in the world. This revisioning involves, to borrow a phrase from Diane Coole and Samantha Frost, a project of "ontological reorientation," that is, affording non-humans an ontological weight, a place alongside and with humans where they are permitted and seen to do work beyond how humans perceive or make use of them (4). Such attempts have been seen widely in philosophy, the social sciences, science studies, and nearly everywhere that has employed the term ecology. What follows considers how this reorientation might contribute to literary studies, and to literary criticism more specifically; further, it attempts to articulate one possible approach to a critical literary practice in a world so conceived, what I am calling a biographic network approach. The exigence in developing such an approach is to consider how the critical examination of literary works might proceed differently when works themselves are considered as participants operating in a more ontologically robust world.

For this project I have chosen Zelda Fitzgerald's only published novel *Save Me the Waltz*. Relative to other literary works, particularly those of her husband F. Scott Fitzgerald, Zelda's novel has been little read. Even if not widely considered a literary figure, she remains iconic and her biographical material is well known. Zelda's novel, then, invites us to shift critical focus away from a traditional literary hermeneutic project of interpretation focused on the interior of the novel, "the text," and to more closely consider the literary object itself as an actor. An examination of *Save Me* as a novel object requires placing a particular emphasis on Zelda's biographical material, and more specifically the biographies themselves. The work that Zelda's biographies do is precisely to trace and follow her movements through shifting networks of associations with a multiplicity of actors – her childhood home in Alabama and World War I, flowers and

ballet, automobiles and dance halls, Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, mental institutions and psychiatry. In Zelda's biographies the novel itself comes clearly into view as a busy object around which multiple actors gather, organize and negotiate outcomes. Recognizing the literary object as an actor allows for an articulation of the novel's own biography, a biography read "against" Zelda's biography. By against I do not mean in opposition to, but alongside of and in conjunction with: an ontologically flat biography. Articulating the novel's biography – including but necessarily moving beyond its production and reception to consider how the novel continues to act in the present, in the continual formation and reconstitution of critical networks, for instance – expands the contents the term biography can hold.

Framing a critical discussion in terms of biography, or "life writing" – in all the senses of process, articulation and emergence that this combination conjures – allows me to ask how the life of Zelda *and* the life of her novel might appear differently in the context of a literary practice where attention is shifted from the inside of texts to consider the actual novel itself as an object around which networks are constructed and in whose construction it continues to participate. Considering the novel in this way, as I discuss in greater detail later, resists the bifurcation of human and nonhuman which a project of reorientation intends to adjust; and similarly, in some measure, it hopes to trade the tendency of interpretation to recreate the ideological assumptions of its methods in the prescription of meaning(s) for a reconsideration of ideologies themselves as objects, which participate in networks, but that do not necessarily determine their arrangement.

Network, Rhizome

As a tool for examining the *network* of Zelda's novel – its production,

appearance, circulation, and the work it does as it conjoins with and is taken up by other

non-human and human actors – I use the "actor network" approach developed by Bruno

Latour, John Law, and Michel Callon, among others. In addition to Latour's *network*, I

also mobilize Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's notions of *assemblage* and *rhizome*.

The terms carry roughly the same orientations and require the same procedures. As Law

points out, "Latour has observed that we might talk of 'actant rhizomes' rather than 'actor

networks,'" and *assemblage* and actor network share little difference: "[b]oth refer to the

provisional assembly of productive, heterogeneous, and… quite limited forms of ordering

located in no larger overall order" (Law and Singleton 146). Each requires mappings and

the identification of paths, circulations and flows, and the marking of connections and

associations made between multiform actors – humans, nonhumans, and discourses. I use

the terms *network* and *assemblage* and *rhizome* interchangeably throughout – both

network and assemblage are *rhizomatic*:

> any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other…[it] ceaselessly
> establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and
> circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles. […] A rhizome
> has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things…where it
> picks up speed…a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other way…
> (Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand* 7, 25 italics in original).

The multidirectionality, betweeness, and connectability the rhizome articulates provides a

way of conceptualizing the back *and* forth *and* across of circulations. It accounts for the

shifting character of a reader's resources that can be brought to a particular object or

context, and the ways in which that network itself is continuously remade and

retranslated as new connections come available or old associations dissolve. It can

account for continuity, change, and sites of rupture. "A rhizome may be broken, shattered

at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines"

(*Thousand* 9). Following Zelda's novel as it appears, disappears and reappears on both old and new *lines* in its publication history provides an illustration of rhizomatic work.

After its initial publication in 1932, Zelda's novel, selling less than 1,500 copies would almost entirely disappear, its line of publication broken. This line would start up again with its publication in England in 1953, and later in the U.S. in 1967. It has remained in publication since (in jumps and starts), and in 1991 it would surface in *The Collected Writings of Zelda Fitzgerald.* What is interesting about this collection is that her short stories, many of which were originally published either under Scott's name or with his name attached (his name fetched higher payments) appear in the volume with a footnote detailing its original attribution. Whether these footnotes are provided as historical detail or to attribute a certain academic ethos for the editor is uncertain, but the question arises: why, in a volume so titled, preserve the attribution? In any case, the footnoting points towards the identification of an entangled "authorship line" which has not yet entirely "shattered."

The novel also appears in the biographies concerning Zelda. While I do not trace this biographic line in a comprehensive way in this thesis, I do consider Zelda's biographies as objects and networks. However, I would mention here a recent extension of this line.[1] In 2011 a graphic biography of Zelda's life has appeared in Italy, and again, in English translation, in 2013.[2] No new information or resources come to light in this graphic rendition, but the form and media are in themselves interesting. Further, three novels about Zelda were published in 2013, articulating a derivative line that can be

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[1] For a detailed examination of the major biographies about Zelda, see Taylor xix-xxi.
[2] Lo Porto, Tizania and Daniele Marotta. *Superzelda: The Graphic Life of Zelda Fitzgerald*. Trans. Anthony Shugaar. Canada: One Place Books. 2013.Print.

considered.[3] The novel's publication, biographic and derivative networks begin to trace the ways in which the novel itself circulates in rhizomatic extensions – territorializing new spaces and itself territorialized by other works.

Since the project at hand seeks to work within a broadened ontological framework, what is meant by an object should be briefly discussed. Latour has used the terms "actor" and "actant" to stand in for "objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, 'nature,' ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements [etc.]" (Law 141). His terms impress upon us the notions of performance and activity that objects exert in networks. While I also use his terms, most often I simply use the term object, but with the understanding that the activity expressed in Latour's terms be preserved, and that the beings in the litany above are included in its scope of reference. I use the term object because it invites us to consider the ways in which any object we point to has being in the world, and to reflect upon its relationship to ourselves and to other objects, the entanglements within which it can be concerned. Towards this more metaphysical consideration of objects, I draw on the object oriented philosophy of Graham Harman which considers objects to have their own independent reality and ways of being, unexhausted by how humans use and perceive them (the novel on the shelf, as texts to interpret).The term *object*, Harman explains:

> …must include those entities that are neither physical nor even real. Along with diamonds, rope, and neutrons, objects may include armies, monsters, square circles, and leagues of real and fictitious nations. All such objects must be accounted for by ontology, not merely denounced or reduced to despicable nullities. Yet…I have never held that all objects are "equally real." For it is false that dragons have autonomous reality in the same manner as a telephone pole. My

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[3] Folwer, Theresa Anna. *Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald.* New York: St. Martins. 2013. Print; Robuck, Erica. *Call Me Zelda*. New York: New American Library. 2013.Print.; and, Spargo, Clifton R. *Beautiful Fools*. New York: Overlook Duckworth. 2013. Print.

point is not that all objects are equally real, but they are equally *objects* (*Quadruple* 5 italics in original).

If a rhizome can forge connections between "semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles," an object orientation can consider how these many entities and networks are also objects. While any term that does the work of ontological "flattening" – that is, figuring the human and non-human as mutually constituting in their relations while also resisting the grant of privilege to one or the other in any described network – is useful, not all terms, such as "thing" for instance, are equally so. What the terms object and thing *do not* do equally is reduce the *drag* that the categories of human and non-human possess in the process of thinking them together. The term actually works to create distance.

Before discussing how "thing" complicates this sense of relation and collectivity, it should be mentioned here that thinking humans and nonhumans together does not mean thinking them "the same." As Latour points out, the purpose of an actor network approach is not "the establishment of some absurd 'symmetry between humans and nonhumans.'" Rather, to think in terms of symmetry "means *not* to impose a priori some spurious *asymmetry* among human intentional action and a material world of casual relations" (*Social* 76 italics in original). In other words, objects, even if not "equally real," participate in "the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations" that network(s) attempt to map and follow.

However, to say that objects act and do work requires some kind of explanation. Susan Reynolds Whyte, Sjaak Van der Geest and Anita Hardon offer a very usable framework for dealing with the question in the context of medicine. I quote it at length, not only because it is well put, but because mobilizing their use of the term "thing"

provides a jumping off point to facilitate a further discussion of terms.

> …things alone do not have a social life. At most they can be seen as agents in the sense argued by actor-network theorists: they form parts of complexes that co-produce effects in particular situations; things and people both can be seen as actors in that they mutually constitute one another… But even if one does not accept the radical position that things and people are equally agents, it is essential…to describe the lives that medicines have with people and between people (14).

First, as Bill Brown has noticed, the term "thing" can act "as placeholder for some future specifying operation". In the passage above, Whyte et al. mobilize the word to stand for any*thing,* to hold a place later occupied by "medicines." Second, the word "thing" notes an ambiguity, not just in the matter of what is unspecified, but a sense of "what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their utilization of objects – their force as a sensuous presence or as a metaphysical presence, the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols, and totems" (5). Both senses of the term can be illustrated in a discussion between Scott, Zelda, and her then psychiatrist Dr. Rennie, which ran to 114 pages.

After *Save Me the Waltz*, Zelda produced a forty-thousand word manuscript on Nijinsky and insanity which infuriated Scott. Being in the middle of *Tender is the Night,* which centered on psychiatry and (Zelda's) madness, he considered the topic off limits. His insistences Zelda stop writing forms the occasion for the meeting. Scott repeatedly "called Zelda's novel 'the thing' or 'that thing.' (Rennie and Zelda followed his use of the word.) […] Scott's novel [*Tender is the Night*] was never called a thing" (Cline 333). On the one hand, Zelda's new novel, which has been "lost," when referred to as a thing becomes a place holder for the novel which in Scott's mind should not become a "future operation," and on the other, it invokes the threat, "its excess" which Scott perceived the

novel to represent to his own status as a "professional" writer and literary figure. Brown notes: "Things lie beyond the grid of intelligibility…outside the order of objects" (5). As we have seen in the passages above, no*thing* exists outside the "order of objects." What is excessive in objects is already a quality which they obtain. The term "object," then, points towards something concrete, even if that object is not immediately named, or tangible.

The project undertaken recognizes a more robust ontological field, attempts to follow and describe *the literary object itself,* and comes with a caveat for traditional literary critique: a dramatic pressure is exerted on two of its most central and codependent terms – interpretation and representation. At their most basic, these terms point towards the book as binary – the inside, a content interpreted by a mind as a correlation to the outside, the "real" world, a historical context, a structure, or set of power relations the content in some way *re*presents, or to which it is reduced as an effect. The "biographical" reading I propose resists these twin consequences of traditional literary hermeneutics: bifurcation and ideology.

<center>Bifurcation and Ideology</center>

What is common to all modes of literary critical interpretation remains the notion that literary texts are mimetic, that is, the interior of the text (content) offers a representation, or in some way reflects in its composition (either in faithful rendition or by purposeful distortion), a recognizable "real" world outside. Representational logic concretizes bifurcations – the inside and outside, the human and the non-human, the subject and object – which the notion of network and assemblage describe together and do not recognize as such. "Representation," as David Rudrum points out, "offers a single

conception of what narrative is that is simultaneously a prescription for what it does"

(202). In this "single conception," interpretation attends to what is represented in the

story world, presumably with a correlation to what is in the world which produces it and

which the text reproduces. The problem for this thesis, in its bid to bridge the gap

between inside and outside, the human and the non-human, is precisely the way in which

the circuit of representation and interpretation reproduce these divisions; we quickly

recognize bifurcation as the circuits' founding logic.

Although interpretations are always partial, they tend towards the prescription of

meaning(s), allowing some and prohibiting others, and in the process mobilize and

demobilize various ideologies. In as much as interpretative activity displays a tendency to

recreate the ideological assumptions of its methods, it exhibits a related tendency of

subsuming its exegetical object in its own discourse, disappearing the text in the

hermeneutic activity of the interpreter. In regards to literary studies, for instance, the

mode of criticism – new critical, new historicist, reader response, and so on – and a

critic's particular theoretical leaning – structuralist, post-structuralist, deconstructive,

psychoanalytic, Marxist, and so on – determine the parameters of what can be brought to

the discussion of a text – the historical context, the author's biography, social structure,

etc. – and in many ways determine the outcome of the criticism – the text as an

in(de)terminable play of signs, as a projection of authorial desire, as a reproduction of

cultural forms, etc.

The task in reimaging interpretative activity is not to deny ideology its place in

"the order of objects." Ideologies are objects, potentially active as actors in networks, but

not sufficient in themselves as explanations of meaning. Catherine Belsey points out:

meaning "is not spectral and singular, but substantial and plural" (182). The multiplicity

of meaning in and of itself is not problematic. A problem of meaning is not what a

network approach hopes to address, per se, but what Deleuze identifies as "a problem of

use" (qtd. in Smith xxii). Meaning attends to content, over-determining what is *in the text*

because it simultaneously under-determines what the text *does*. Or, as Susan Sontag

writes, "Interpretation, based on the highly dubious theory that a work of art is composed

of items of content, violates art. It makes art into an article for use, for arrangement into a

mental scheme of categories" in which the work of art itself disappears (as if it could)

(10). Further, and perhaps invariably, ideologies point towards structures, either by

building or attempting to disassemble them. A network conception provides an

alternative to the building and tearing down of structures (systems) which attend

ideologies, and that traditional interpretation reproduces.

<div align="center">Critique of Two Modes</div>

Graham Harman's critiques of New Criticism and New Historicism provide

illustrations of how the problems of bifurcation and ideology have troubled literary

criticism, at least in terms of these modes. Taking Cleanth Brook's *The Well Wrought*

Urn as representative, Harman takes issue with New Criticism's insistence that

interpretative activity must be confined to the world of the text itself, its own specific

contextual reality, where "its interior [is turned] into a relational wildfire in which all

individual elements are consumed." The walls of the story world must never be breached;

the text itself a fixed unity, interpretation must be kept to the inside (content). For

instance, a character changing their shirt in a text can become crucial to the meaning of

the text, a proposition that Harman counters by offering a scene from everyday life:

<div align="center">7</div>

changing my shirt at the last minute before boarding the bus certainly affects 'the overall context' of the bus ride, yet it would not have any discernible effect on the bus or most of the passengers riding it… What is truly interesting about 'contexts' is not that they utterly define every entity to the core, but that they open a space where *certain* interactions can take place and not others ("Hammer" 191 italics in original).

If, as Harman says, New Criticism "severed literary texts from the world but turned their interiors into contextual houses of mirrors where everything reflects everything else," then New Historicism "tacitly dissolves literary works into a house of mirrors that is now ubiquitous and is held to define the whole of reality" (195). Harman quotes at length from H. Aram Veeser's introduction to *The New Historicism* to show that New Historicism falters on two accounts. First, Veeser contends notions of an "autonomous self and text are mere holograms, effects that intersecting institutions produce; that selves and texts are defined by their relations to hostile others…and disciplinary power" (qtd. in "Hammer" 193). Harman notices "there are few traces of nonhuman entities amidst all this discussion of mutually conditioning forces," e.g. culture, society, and power. "What we find instead is a historicism of the human subject as shaped by various disciplinary practices." Harman argues that an attention to power and discourse, such as in Veeser's phrase "culture and society,"

> does not encompass an especially diverse range of entities. For the world also contains parakeets, silver, limestone, coral reefs, solar flares, and moons, none of them easy to classify as 'culture' or 'society,' and all of them interacting with each other whether humans discuss it or not (192-193).

Secondly, when viewed as effects of hegemonic power, culture and society, and Latour makes this point as well, all contexts become universal (195). It is not enough, then, to focus either on context or on historical and social conditions. Harman points out:

> The same social era produced [Zelda Fitzgerald], Jackson Pollock, Patricia Highsmith, Frank Sinatra, and President Truman, but to ascribe them all to this

era vastly understates the widely different temperaments and talents on this list. The call for 'the death of the author' needs to be complemented by a new call for 'the death of the culture.' Rather than emphasize the social conditions that gave rise to any given work, we ought to do the contrary, and look at how works reverse or shape what might have been expected in their time and place, or at how some withstand the earthquakes of the centuries much better than others (201).

What is resisted in a move away from interpretation, as Harman's accounts of

New Criticism and New Historicism attest, is the turning of Zelda's novel – or Zelda

herself – into one or another of these houses of mirrors. What is ultimately lost in the *mis*

en abyme of reflection is the object being reflected. In the case of New Criticism, the

novel, and in the case of New Historicism, it is both the novel and Zelda herself.

Resisting the text as hermetically sealed or the text as a historical product of power opens

other possibilities for considering Zelda's novel and her biography in new combinations.

While the novel must be a set of concerns, humans and nonhumans, differentially

powered social relations – Zelda and her husband, Zelda as amateur and Scott as expert –

and discourses – marriage and psychiatry – it is not only one of these at any one time; it

is materially, socially, historically, and discursively situated all at once and remains

irreducible to any one contextualization alone.

> Latour notes:
>
> […] we are always […] crisscrossing, as often as we have to, the divide that separates exact knowledge and the exercise of power - let us say nature and culture. […] To shuttle back and forth, we rely on the notion of translation, or network. More supple than the notion of system, more historical than the notion of structure, more empirical than the notion of complexity, the idea of network is the Ariadne's thread of these interwoven stories. Yet our work remains incomprehensible, because it is segmented into three components corresponding to our critics' habitual categories. They turn it into nature, politics or discourse (*Modern* 3).

By invoking Ariadne and the ball of thread she gave to Tiresias to navigate the

Minotaur's maze, Latour figures a network as a following: "a network is not made… of

words or any durable substance but is the trace left behind of some moving agent" (*Social*

132). System, structure, and complexity fail to account for the nuance, changeability, and

collectivity exhibited in the actual processes and engagements through which meanings

and practices materialize at all. Suggesting stability and unity, constructions such as

"social structure" and "systems of power," although recognized as complex, nevertheless

separate and then disappear both subjects and objects into categorical registers of "facts,

power, and discourse." Rejecting the notion that these registers are separable, networks

"are neither objective nor social, nor are they effects of discourse, even though they are

real, and collective, and discursive"(*Modern* 6).

> In nearly identical terms, Deleuze and Guattari explain:
> […an] assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material
> flows, and social flows simultaneously (independently of any recapitulation that
> may be made of it in a scientific or theoretical corpus). (*Thousand* 23).

Both concepts – network and assemblage – resist a mode of critique that focuses

too long on one register or flow –material, social, or semiotic – at the expense of another,

which are always simultaneously operative. Latour notices that attending only to facts or

"naturalized phenomena" – the material flow – causes "societies, subjects and all forms

of discourse [to] vanish." Likewise, a singular attention to "fields of power" – the social

flow – causes "texts and the contents of activities [to] disappear (*Modern* 6). Lastly, when

critique peers too long through the lens of discourse – the semiotic flow –the result is "a

society made up solely of false consciousness, simulacra and illusions" (64). The notions

of network and assemblage, then, work towards the analytic goal of keeping these

simultaneously occurring "flows" and irreducible categories confluent and related. They

enable the mapping of collectives, *gatherings* of entities, associations, and connections,

no part of which is solely reducible to "facts, power or discourse," or as importantly, their

effects. "It is the same thing," Deleuze writes, "to sin through an excess of reality as through an excess of imagination" (*Immanence* 2).

Again, we can follow Sontag:

> Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art, much less to squeeze more content out of the work than is already there. Our task is to cut back content so that we can see the thing at all.
> The aim of all commentary on art now should be to make works of art - and, by analogy, our own experience - more, rather than less, real to us. The function of criticism should be to show *how it is what it is*, even *that it is what it is*, rather than to show what it means (14 italics in original).

Much in line with Sontag's exhortations that criticism's function "should be to show *how it is what it is*, even *that it is what it is*," Harman has identified alternative critical projects that focus on the literary object itself. For instance, he suggests changing punctuation and words to see if the "feeling" or "overtones" of passages of the work itself changes. He expands this notion of modification to the cutting out and adding of parts, changing and shifting the contexts of the narrative (moving rural settings to urban ones for instance). In contrast to contextualization, Harman's suggestions "involve ways of decontextualizing works, whether through examining how they absorb and resist their conditions of production, or by showing that they are to some extent autonomous even from their own properties" (202).

In many ways any questions that might arise regarding the ability of *Save Me the Waltz* to "absorb and resist [its] conditions of production" are already built into the biography of the novel. The first publication of Zelda's novel in 1932 make clear that matters of word choice and punctuation affect the way a novel is perceived. Zelda's florid and highly figurative writing style combined with Scribner's "sloppy" proof editing resulted in comments from reviewers such as this from the *New Yorker*:

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It is not only that her publisher's have not seen fit to curb an almost ludicrous lushness of writing but they have not given the book the elementary services of a literate proofreader (prt. in Milford 263).

A "corrected" edition was published in England in 1953, and later in the U.S. in 1967 (this is the text presented by Matthew Bruccoli in *The Collected Writings of Zelda Fitzgerald,* and which I use here) (*Collected* 5). The text, according to Bruccoli, contains around "550 emendations" ("A Note on the Text"). It is difficult to know if more "competent" proof editing or a less stylized language would have altered the mixed critical reception the book received.

Further, Harman's suggestion to add and delete sections already poses contentious critical questions for the novel as it emerged in its published (1932) form. It is impossible to know the composition of the novel that Zelda wrote. Initially, after completing the manuscript in just six weeks, writing for an allotted 2 hours a day, Zelda had intended to send the novel to Scott, but instead switched the mailing address and sent it directly to Scott's publisher Max Perkins at Scribner's. Much enraged, Scott had the novel returned to him and insisted on heavily revising the book (Taylor 259). While the extensiveness of the cuts is unknown (the original manuscript has been lost), Zelda biographer Kendall Taylor estimates that "almost a third of the book [around 100 pages], including the entire middle section" was suppressed. She notes, the cuts "rendered the book far less coherent." Further, Taylor writes:

Only after the manuscript met with his approval did [Scott] finally give the go-ahead for publication. But it was a vastly different book from the one that Zelda had written, and badly disjointed because of the cuts. A member of Scribner's promotion department, who had seen the original version, confided to Tony Buttia, proprietor of the Intimate Book Shop in Asheville, North Carolina, that Zelda's version had been very provocative, including vindictive attacks on Scott as writer and husband and scandalous material about their private life (260).

Harman's claim that "we cannot identify the literary work with the exact current

form it happens to have" seems especially relevant to *Save Me the Waltz* ("Hammer"

201). Even in this brief tracing of the novel, as it passed from Zelda's hands in the clinic,

to Scribner's, and back to Scott, under whose supervision it was drastically remade (but

whose original form a confidence between a Scriber's employee and a book shop owner

sheds some light), the diagram of a network emerges, the novel as object assembled and

transformed in its passings. The question, then, of speculating on how the novel absorbed

or resisted changes and deletions is a lively one. Would the novel have been more

"coherent," less disjointed, better received? Can the lack of coherence and fluidity which

are sometimes noted as pathological markers in the novel be considered otherwise, as a

consequence of its material production?[4] In what ways does it articulate the world in

which it was and is a part?

<div align="center">Articulation and Emergence</div>

Narrowly conceived, traditional models of interpretation and representation lack

the critical agility to function well in a network or assemblage approach and require

expansion to encompass the notions of what I am calling *articulation* and *emergence*. I

derive the term articulation from Latour. Articulation moves beyond a subject centered

and explanatory vision of interpretative activity and comes from the other direction, the

emergence of a world that language voices and records, rather than reproduces. Latour

notes: "it is the *world itself that is articulated*" (*Modes* 256 italics in original). Put

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[4] Although not examined here in detail, another direction that Harman's suggestions can be exercised involve the addition and deletion of Zelda's writings from Scott's novels: how the reproduction of her diaries, which disappeared, and the excerpts from her psychiatric files, would affect the continuity and material make up of his novels. These considerations go beyond a notion of intertextuality I think, and are perhaps best understood in terms of a network of conjunctions, not only amongst the texts themselves, but as in the inter-associations of persons, novels, diaries, and medical files.

another way, the world gives utterance to itself.

The concept of emergence more closely approximates what Deleuze and Guattari have called *becoming*. They write: "Becoming is never imitating" (*Thousand* 305). Likewise, as Daniel W. Smith points out, for Deleuze "reading a text is never an act of interpretation," instead it comprises an "experiment," an attempt to grasp *writing as a process of becoming*, "a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived" (Smith li, *Critical* 1-2). The analytical power these augmenting terms afford derives precisely from their ability to imagine processes (translations) instead of separations (representations) and contingencies (networks) instead of effects (ideologies). They capture the notion of processes occurring simultaneously out of and into a world composed of minds *and* things rather than the process of a mind discerning what is outside of it; as such, these terms resist bifurcation, decenter ideology, and confer status to the novel as an object in the world with its own biography.

Expanding the conceptual and analytic capacities of interpretation and representation is especially important for Zelda's novel because of its connection to mental illness. The Zelda imaginary which privileges her "madness" still persists and finds currency in the critical and popular discourse that surrounds her and her novel.[5] Zelda figures as a Southern Bell turned proto-flapper whose claim to literary status rests not with her own accomplishments – her writing, her ballet, and her art – but in "the fact" that she was the insane wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald. The synopsis on the back cover of the bestselling 2011 reissue of *Zelda,* Nancy Milford's 1970 biography, portrays precisely

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[5] I have chosen to focus on the aspect of madness in regards to Zelda, rather than the equally as important and pervasive dysfunctional marriage narrative that attends her, although, this aspect is discussed in the section on Critical Objects. In any case, the two circumstances are undoubtedly deeply entangled, both as facts and perhaps, as some biographers and critics have asserted, causally.

what I call the Zelda imaginary:

> Zelda Sayre began as a Southern beauty, became an international wonder, and
> died by fire in a madhouse. With her husband, F. Scott Fitzgerald, she moved in a
> golden aura of excitement, romance, and promise. The epitome of the Jazz Age,
> together they rode the crest of the era to its collapse and their own. […] *Zelda*
> traces the inner disintegration of a gifted, despairing woman, torn by the clash
> between her husband's career and her own talent.

Whether read as sensational iconography, historical fact, or something in

between, the book jacket blurb depicts the strength and persistence of an imaginary that

privileges madness and disintegration. Reading a novel, especially one described as

"autobiographical" poses challenges for Zelda's readers. The term autobiography does

not simply point towards the similarity of a story world to the actual facts of an author's

life; it implies that the text in fact *re*presents them, stands in for them, can and perhaps

must be interpreted through the framework (in this case of pathology) they represent and

which has been reproduced by the author. In as much as Zelda and her life are

characterized in terms of pathology, there is a tendency to attribute the same

characteristics to the novel itself, that is, to pathologize the novel, a move which many

critics seem to make.

Mary Gordon points towards this problem in her introduction to *The Collected*

Writings of Zelda Fitzgerald. She writes: "real labor is required to read her without

prejudice of one sort or another, to read her not as a symbol of something but the creator

of works of art" (xvii). Certainly the fact that Zelda wrote the novel in an asylum does not

help reduce the "real labor required" on the part of readers to refrain from over-

determining mental illness in the context of the novel, to resituate its "baffling sentences"

and "puzzling words" within a discourse of language pathology and disturbed selfhood

(*Collected* 5). To do so, I would claim is an instance of what I call "aesthetic

pathologization." As Deleuze notes, "We do not write with our neurosis" (Deleuze, "Life" 3).

Situating the novel as an emblem of Zelda's mental illness within a discourse of diagnoses and adumbrated medical, social and cultural contexts, has the effect, as Latour notices, of disappearing texts and subjects into discourses themselves. The danger in "diagnosing" texts is establishing "the fact of mental illness," the instantiation of a circle of reference by which the text must refer back to the illness, whereby it figures as its product. In this manner of noncritical description, investigation of the work becomes dramatically delimited. The critical move to pathology assigns a primacy and truth value to psychiatric categorizations, often without properly examining the ideological assumptions underpinning them. In effect, Zelda the author surrenders her facility to communicate the normal, sane, and essentially unified individual extant therein. Similarly, the novel comes to exist as a stigmatized "other" discourse; sequestered, it is simultaneously excluded from opposed narratives of normalcy, mental health, and perhaps even literary quality, and included as that which would be diagnosed, in need of fixing. The resultant double bind reifies natural narrative's mimetic bias and instantiates a standard against which schizophrenic experience and thought, as psychosis, can be only that (Alber et al. 114). This is not to argue that psychosis does or does not *exist*. It is only to say, any story that a novel so diagnosed might articulate can only operate and mean in a circuit of self-reference pointing back to its author's schizophrenia, reflexively bound by its own ligatures. Consequently, it will be read as such.

Resisting interpretation and a mimetic logic of representation as organizational and operative concepts means disrupting the presumption of ideology, not only in regards

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to psychiatry, which I discuss in the next chapter as a network rather than a "discipline,"

but in general, and for literary studies in particular.

Chapter2. Alliances and Allies

Précis

Even though always at risk, networks can stabilize over time depending on the

strength of the connections and associations of which they are composed. Harman notes:

"actants do not draw their power from some pristine inner hearth, but only through

assembling allies" (*Prince* 20) Relative to the strength or weakness of the alliances they

make, objects persist or desist. As Latour writes:

> in order to spread far […] an actant needs faithful allies who accept what they are
> told, identify themselves with its cause, carry out all the functions that are defined
> for them, and come to its aid without hesitation when they are summoned. The
> search for these ideal allies occupies the space and time of those who wish to be
> stronger than others. As soon as an actor has found a *somewhat more faithful ally,*
> it can force another ally to become *more faithful* in its turn (qtd. in *Prince* 20
> italics in original).

Donna Haraway has noticed that in the alliance scheme Latour describes "all action is

agonistic" (qtd. in Gershon 172). There are winners and losers. This I think is true only if

we consider alliances and ally making in terms of a dynamics that predicates "power" and

"force" on their capacities to dominate and disenfranchise rather than in their potentials

to create and affirm.

> Latour goes on to say:
>
> Since there is nothing but weakness, power is always an impression. However,
> this impression is all that is needed to change the shape of things by in*forming*
> them *or* im*pressing* them. […] *We always misunderstand the strength of the
> strong.* …it is invariably due to a tiered array of weaknesses (*Pasteurization* 201
> italics in original).

The notion of recruiting and mobilizing allies and strengthening alliances to hedge risk

and increase the tenability of extension provides a useful way to consider how

associations encourage certain network configurations and not others. We have already

seen how certain actors worked together (or did not) in the publication of Zelda's novel

and speculated upon how this particular configuration may have influenced its obscurity

for more than two decades, but also how new actors have emerged resulting in

republications and its extension in derivative works, lending it strength and further

edifying its network. The same is true for the biographies that have appeared and made

possible new biographies, making alliances with previously unavailable material, thereby

increasing interest in the novel. This is discussed further below, as are the critical objects

which ally in bodies of criticism, both of which have largely taken on a project of

affirming Zelda, her novel, and her status as a writer, and particularly as a woman writer

deserving of recognition.

Acknowledgements

Even a casual glance at the "Acknowledgements" page of one of Zelda's

biographies makes clear that biographies are themselves networks. Academic institutions,

libraries, grant giving organizations, family members, friends, museum curators,

psychiatric institutions, photoduplicators, literary agents, legal departments, and other

biographers comprise just a sample of the actors recognized in the creation, production

and distribution of these books. However, just as these actors make some circulations

possible, they also throw up barriers, divert paths and precipitate occlusions.

Kendall Taylor, for instance, recounts that Zelda's daughter Scottie was so upset

by "conjectures about Zelda's sexuality" in Milford's *Zelda* manuscript she ordered "all

materials be returned, and all mentions of Zelda's sexuality deleted" (xix). Scottie

threatened Milford with her own suicide (Cline 406, nt.10). Accordingly, there are no

direct references to Zelda's "lesbianism" in the diagnosis of her schizophrenia, which

Bleuler considered a symptom, nor are several of her relationships fully explicated in Milford's text, but which Cline and Taylor explore in greater detail. Taylor notes that "until Scottie's death in 1986, biographers were forced to censor certain materials," but with the publication of Scottie's biography, written by her daughter Eleanor, other "suppressed information became available." Similarly, both Taylor and biographer Sally Cline would benefit from the release of hospital records at Craig House (Zelda fifth hospital), and unspecified "newly discovered biographical material at Princeton" (xix).

The (non)circulation of information allows for some biographical engagements and not others.[6] And certainly, no biography is ever entirely definitive. A "definitive biography," as Arnold Rampersad notes, "is palpably a virtual contradiction in terms. […] A facsimile or a precise definition of a life is impossible" (6). Zelda's biographies themselves constitute objects that not only circulate through "acknowledged" networks, but whose actual composition occurs differentially depending on the presence or absence of particular actors, both human – actual persons and their wishes – and nonhuman – hospital records and mislaid documents.

Even if Milford's biography could not yield sexuality as a possible heuristic, it did multiply, if not create, the availability of connections to other networks, psychiatry, in particular. Rampersad notes Nancy Milford as "the first writer to have access to a subject's psychiatric records." That Milford had access to Zelda's psychiatric records at all, and moreover that she used them in her book, generated considerable criticism. Milford wrote: "All hell broke loose. I had, I was told, violated medical ethics. But I

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[6] I have drawn mainly from the biographies of Milford, Cline and Taylor. Milford's is the most well known, and Taylor and Cline's are the most current. For a detailed examination of the major biographies about Zelda see Taylor, xix-xxi.

wasn't a doctor, I was a biographer and a psychiatrist's ethics were not appropriately mine" (qtd. in Rampersad 11). Biography and psychiatry come into contentious contact. Twenty-one years later, Dr. Martin Orne would release tapes from his sessions with Anne Sexton to biographer Diane Middlebrook. Both would be similarly criticized, he for medical ethics violations and she for publishing the materials at all (12). Interestingly though, I have found no recriminations (from psychiatrists anyway) of Scott for reproducing Zelda's medical reports in his novels.

Whether one finds currency in the notion that patient confidentiality survives death, or that too much detailed attention to mental illness results in what Joyce Carol Oates would call 'pathography," Milford's inclusion of these materials undeniably propagates points of connectivity and works to make possible the proliferation of new objects – biographies, diversified critique, and perhaps even this thesis. The biographies that followed Milford "act" similarly. Both Taylor and Cline's biographies, for instance, with their increased attention to Zelda's treatments, bring into focus what Lisa Appignanesi has noticed: Zelda Fitzgerald experienced nearly "the entire span of treatments" for schizophrenia as it was understood and that had been devised "in the twentieth century," up until the time of her death (251). Zelda's biographers, then, not only tell the story of Zelda's life, they also trace a moment in the life of psychiatry, a shifting network of diagnostic thinking and a changing regime of treatments to which Zelda was subjected, a conjunction of networks that become available for biographic and critical engagement. Before discussing psychiatry in particular, I first give a brief articulation of the novel's critical network (the network is itself rather brief), noting how it conjoins with the biographic.

Critical Networks

Just as biographies reorganize around the appearance and withdrawal of actors

and connections, critical networks also assemble and reconfigure in response to the

aggregation and subtraction of actors and shifting points of connectivity. Considering the

critical pieces below as engaged in a procedure of alliance making illuminates how when

taken together they begin to form a critical network motivated towards strengthening the

novel itself as an actor, providing it with new alliances, while destabilizing others. In this

way, they allow for tracing other aspects of the novels biography, in many ways working

against the imaginary that persists regarding Zelda. Mary Wood notices this as well:

> Zelda Fitzgerald's own largely unrecognized autobiographical novel challenges
> the version of her life that later would be set forth by her husband in the character
> of Nicole Diver. The canonical success of *Tender Is the Night* has helped obscure
> Zelda Fitzgerald's telling of her own story and contributed to her popular image as
> a strange, mentally disturbed character (249).

In 1979 Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin notes that when literary critics have "not

completely ignored" Zelda's novel, they have regarded it "as a literary curio, seeing as its

only value its relationship to F. Scott Fitzgerald's work and career" (23). In 1985 Sarah

Beebe Fryer notices "the feminist movement has given rise to a flurry of critical activity

focusing on women's forgotten writings" and that her novel, "with its uncommon

distinction of viewing from a woman's perspective events and characters made famous

by a male author, has recently received considerable attention" (318). Ten years later,

Simone Weil Davis regards *Save Me the Waltz* as "a semiautobiographical novel about

the troubled marriage of two creative, dissipated American expatriates is most often read

today as a biographical companion piece to Nancy Milford's 1970 study of the author's

subjugation and frustrated artistry" (327). In 2002, Sally Cline will mention that

"[b]ecause of its deeply autobiographical links, it is often read as a companion piece to *Tender is the Night*" (312). In this short survey of criticism, there is actually very little and most of what takes the novel seriously is written by women, the reception of Zelda's novel toggles between "literary curio," feminist literary artifact, and "companion piece."

In the first case, Zelda's novel garners little recognition aside from Zelda's status as Scott's wife. Tavernier-Courbin frames the novel as "simultaneously a response and a search:"

> a response to a personal situation (an unhappy marriage), to the social role its author was expected to play as a famous writer's wife and as the model for his heroines, and to the universal condition that comes from simply being a woman. It is a search for identity, a justification for the self, and an affirmation of it (24).

Similarly, Beebe-Frye explains:

> Zelda Fitzgerald, often casually dismissed as Scott's neurotic wife, deserves to be recognized at last as a spokeswoman for the women of her generation stranded between the old ideal of feminine subservience to men and the new ideal of equality (325).

The popularity of Milford's biography, which describes not only the couple's fraught lives together, but also Zelda's struggle with mental illness and institutionalization, draws readership to the novel and reconfigures its circulation. The appearance of each critical object enlarges existing parameters of engagement with the novel and creates new spaces within which Zelda's novel can circulate; perhaps more importantly, these objects also attempt to reconfigure the conditions under which considerations and circulations of the novel occur.

The network of the novel's criticism is seen to be organized by what John Law would describe as a "limited number of forms of ordering": marriage to Fitzgerald, feminist discourse, and the appearance of Milford's biography, which is often claimed as

"feminist biography." However, one can also add to these a burgeoning interest in "madness" and its experience. In 1992 for instance, Mary E. Wood reads the novel as participating in a shifting genre of women's asylum autobiography, a genre whose expectations "would shape and constrict her narrative" even as she tried to subvert them (248). Similarly, in 2008, Lisa Appignanesi treats the broader experience of women and madness, both in terms of their lived experience with mental illness, but also their entanglement with the psy professions more broadly, with who she calls "the mind doctors." Taken together, these four themes – marriage roles, feminism, biography, and madness –stabilize Zelda criticism, ordering a recognizable sociality of the criticism itself.

Aside from these limited forms of ordering, it is important to realize the ways in which the novel as an object, or in the case of Milford, the biography as an object, "bend" criticism and create the possibility of the explorations that occur. Criticism and biography that illuminate the particular circumstances of the novel's creation mobilize and are themselves mobilized in conjunction with the discourses that they claim as mediums for their circulation. Through critical endeavors, we can recruit and engage new allies, identify already active actors and insist (by "*in*forming or *im*pressing them") they behave differently. Such a procedure makes possible the opening up new lines of extension – actors sent into newly opened spaces motivated by different goals and under different terms. Zelda's biographers and critics make allies of certain actors – feminism, women's writing and identity, for instance – and point out where others have been less faithful – literary canons, gender roles, and madness. In this regard, it is clear that feminist criticism and a handful of biographers have done the heavy lifting in generating focused attention

for Zelda's novel and its sustained recognition.

Just as a powerful but relatively limited amount of criticism and critics have taken a strategy of decoupling the novel from its characterizations as "curio" or "companion piece," terms which limit the novel's mobility and in which Zelda and her novel are consumed, they also work in an extended relationship, especially with her more recent biographers, to try and recontextualize Zelda's madness in reference to the assumptions which psychiatry was then working, and the diagnosis of schizophrenia as it was then conceived. In many respects this project attempts to destabilize "the fact of Zelda's madness" as a defining factor for her, her imaginary, and the discussions that can be had of her. I focus specifically on Cline's characterization of psychiatry and its treatments as techniques of "incarceration and control," and her suggestion that Zelda's diagnosis in some part references not only a disease entity, but a corrective to what was perceived as an unruly feminity. Both of these assertions are in many ways probably true, and I do not wish to dismiss her claims in the manner of an apologist for psychiatry; however, I do want to suggest that these renderings of psychiatry, schizophrenia and its treatments, in as much as they compose complex networks and objects themselves, perpetrates a certain kind of oversimplification regarding the motivations behind how these actants themselves mobilized and recruited other actors, formed alliances to produce the actants in question, and extended themselves quite apart from "incarceration and control."

By attending to these objects and reading their history against those indexed in Zelda's biographical record, this thesis hopes to further illustrate what a network approach to biographical reading might reveal concerning the ways in which the presumption of contexts and power effects allows, to paraphrase Harman, for some

interactions to take place and not others. By following schizophrenia, psychiatry and treatments themselves as objects with biographies that run parallel, cross over and at places forge connections with those of Zelda and her novel, a fuller, more complex, and more extensive network begins to emerge. Historically speaking, Zelda's life runs nearly parallel to the appearance of the diagnosis and the treatments I describe.

Psychiatric Objects

I. Diagnosis

Born in 1900, Zelda was 11 years old when Eugene Bleuler introduced the term schizophrenia to rename dementia praecox, an entity Emil Kraepelin had first comprehensively described in his 1896 textbook *Clinical Psychiatry* (Woods 34). Bleuler suggested several reasons why he advocated the change in terms. Bleuler noted that dementia praecox (premature dementia) indicates both early onset and a resultant dementia, neither of which was always the case. He noticed that the older term "designates the disease, not the diseased [and] the 'splitting' of the different psychic functions is one of its most characteristic" (qtd in Woods 47). Nancy C. Andreasen explains on most points Kraepelin and Bleuler agreed. Both "stressed the importance of defining the illness by attempting to identify a fundamental 'morbid process'" and neither considered "psychotic symptoms, such as delusions and hallucinations…specific to schizophrenia." Both noticed that these, what are now called positive symptoms, occur in other disorders as well and that "the most important defining feature was impairment in the ability to think in a clear, fluent, and logical way" (107).

It was on the source of this impairment that Bleuler and Kraepelin would disagree. As evidenced in his advocacy for a change in terms, Bleuler took a more

psychological view and understood the disease as "a specific type of alteration of thinking, feeling, and relation to the external world" (qtd. in Woods 47). On the other hand, Kraepelin felt that there was a biological "disease process in the brain" perhaps linked to "processes in the sexual organs" and that it might be attributable to "defective heredity" (qtd in Woods 36). This disjuncture between a psychological and biomedical etiology was a main point of contention within psychiatry at the time. At the end of the day though, despite the discrepancy in models, both Bleuler and Kraepelin acknowledged they had no idea what caused the disease. This is still essentially true today.

Whether schizophrenia, what Angela Woods describes as psychiatry's "sublime object or disciplinary limit point" is even *equally real* to recall Harman's caveat for objects, is a point of contention (2). However, what is clear is that schizophrenia is an object, an actant which is allied to stabilize networks (psychiatry) and which other actors, in this case psychiatrists (and Scott in his penultimate novel), mobilize in order to extend themselves. Berrios, Luque, and Villagrán point out, "The history of schizophrenia can be best described as *the history of a set of research programs* running in parallel rather than seriatim and each based on a different concept of disease, of mental symptom and of mind" (134 my italics). By the time Zelda's institutionalizations began in 1930, psychiatry, hoping to shake off its articulation as an "administrative profession," was in the process of mobilizing schizophrenia and its treatments to extend and ally itself more strongly with biomedical medicine (Doroshow 208).

II. Treatment

While several treatments were in circulation, I describe two, "the Swiss sleeping cure" and insulin comma therapy (ICT), in order to draw parallels between them, but also

to illustrate in another register how viewing its dynamics in terms of agonistic actions

presents a certain kind of distortion. In addition to the "seclusion, sedatives, wet packs,

and hydrotherapy," while in Villa E'glantine, "a unit reserved for highly disturbed

patients," Zelda "was administered morphine and bromides rectally, preceded by an

enema" (Taylor 238 and Cline 272). Taylor explains:

> Referred to as the 'Swiss sleeping cure', these drugs induced a prolonged narcosis
> during which patients slept for one or two weeks, awakened only to eat and
> relieve bladder and bowel functions. Nurses controlled each patient's fluid intake
> and administered enemas every two days. Widely used throughout Europe during
> the 1920's and 1930's, the method had evolved from nineteenth-century 'rest
> cures' aimed at restoring exhausted nervous systems. In theory, rest cured the sick
> mind in the same way that inactivity cured the sick lung in a tuberculosis victim.
> The oldest therapy known to psychiatry, sleep treatments were effective in
> reducing anxiety, and provided temporary relief from depression and hysteria.
> The most common formula for inducing narcosis was called 'Cloetta's Mixture,'
> containing paraldehyde, amylene hydrate, chloral hydrate, alcohol, barbituric
> acid, digitalin, and ephedrine hydrochloride, diluted with water and made into a
> clear solution. Preceded by an enema 'Cloetta's Mixture' was administered
> rectally and induced narcosis within twenty minutes. After the long artificial
> sleep, patients usually awoke relaxed and restored (235).

The range of somatic treatments that Zelda experienced, although considered by

many as barbaric, tortuous, and shameful, can be regarded as a continuum; they were not

only increasingly "medical," they were are also regarded as increasingly "safe." Cloettal,

or Cloetta's Mixture, used in narcosis therapy was designed to be better tolerated and less

risky than the Somnifen which preceded it (Gillespie 46). New actants are mobilized and

new alliances are made, motivated by both a desire to increasingly medicalize the

profession, but also in regards to the safety of the treatments. Insulin coma therapy (ICT)

continues in this register. It would emerge as the next "advance" in the somatic

treatments that persisted until the appearances of benzodiazepines in the 1950's. Eliot

Slater, of the Maudsley Hospital in London, recalled that "sleep cures" were "the only

treatment [until ICT] we had back in the 1930s that was of any value in acute psychotic

disorders" (qtd. In Alamo, et al. 335). ICT would become ubiquitous by the 1940's.

> [ICT] involved placing psychotic patients in hypoglycemic coma through administration of dangerously large doses of insulin, which removed glucose from their bloodstreams. Shortly after receiving their doses, patients would begin to grimace and jerk, sweating profusely as they lost consciousness. …After remaining in death-like comas ranging anywhere from a few minutes to several hours, they would be lifted back to consciousness with a sugar solution. Often, psychiatrists observed that their patients' symptoms would temporarily vanish in what they deemed a "lucid period." If the treatment was successful, the lucid period would gradually increase in length until it displaced all abnormal behavior. In a typical course of insulin treatment, a patient could be expected to undergo five or six shocks, or comas, per week for several weeks or even months, until his or her psychiatrist declared him either recovered or incurable (Doroshow 214).

A decade after insulin was found to treat and control diabetes Manfred Sakel tried

giving insulin to morphine addicts in Vienna and noticed that the treatment eased

withdrawal symptoms. Later, he would try insulin in psychotics and also observed

improvement. It was not until after animal experimentation, "allegedly in his own

kitchen," that Sakel would find that the induced hypoglycemia could be reversed and that

"deeper levels of induced coma achieved." In 1933, Sakel was allowed to practice his

technique at the University Clinic in Vienna. Over four months between November of

1934 and February of 1935, Sakel would publish 13 reports claiming 88% improvement

rates in patients (Jones 147). By 1939, with private funding, Sakel would open the Sakel

Foundation, a specialized school to train physicians in the treatment (Taylor 347).

In some ways the advent of this therapy would act to bridge the gap between

Kraepelin's biomedical and Bleuler's psychological models for schizophrenia. In as

much ICT was almost exclusively administered to those with a diagnosis of

schizophrenia, the treatment can be said to work to make schizophrenia "more faithful" to

the medical model it was helping to entrench (Doroshow 226). This alliance would occur

locally in the rooms and clinics where the treatment would stabilize its network.

Doroshow argues that ICT emerged as "a technology that permitted psychiatry to be

thought of as a medical subspecialty" (228). She notices that the procedure not only acted

to reorganize psychiatry's self-perception, but the hospital itself.

> More than prior treatments like sedation or cold water packs, which could be
> given anywhere, ICT called for the creation of a special space in which it could be
> administered. The insulin unit, as it came to be known, was a room with its own
> staff, tools, and character, understood as a vital component of ICT's curative
> effects. …Specialized experience was prized and served as a basis for choosing
> the space's actors… [O]n the small, interpersonal level of the mental hospital,
> administering ICT was also a means of making psychiatry a more legitimately
> medical field. The insulin unit became an analog of spaces common to the general
> hospital: an operating room of sorts during the therapy, an intensive care unit
> during the coma itself, and an emergency room when any complications arose"
> (220).

Although nearly all of Zelda's psychiatrists and physicians would adopt the

treatment, when Zelda would actually come into contact with ICT is somewhat unclear.

However, a thorough examination of how the treatment circulated provides some clues.

In 1937, Sakel would present a paper in New York where Adolf Meyer, Zelda's

psychiatrist at Phipps Clinic at Johns Hopkins (her fourth hospital), was in attendance.

Meyer would introduce the treatment at his clinic and also recommend it to Dr. Caroll

who would treat Zelda at Highland in North Carolina, her last hospital. Zelda entered

Highland in 1936 and would remain there intermittently for the rest of her life. Here she

received both ICT as well as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). Taylor speculates that

Zelda probably underwent ICT, as well as ECT, at Sheppard Pratt in Baltimore (her sixth

and penultimate hospital) while the treatments were in experimental stages. Based on

correspondence from Zelda's last psychiatrist, Dr. Irving Pine, Cline has dated Zelda's

reception of insulin shock as early as her admittance at Prangins in 1930 (Cline 286) and

confirms that Zelda was among the experimental group at Pratt, where she would be

transferred after Prangins (Cline 350). Cline's version of events seems accurate.

Edward Shorter and David Healy note that even before the conference in 1937,

"the Swiss psychiatric scene had been heavily infiltrated by insulin therapy." ICT had

become popular "at market-oriented private nervous clinics … German patients were said

to flock to these private clinics seeking a recovery in order to avoid being sterilized under

Nazi eugenic legislation back home." Shorter and Healy specifically mention Prangins

and Forel. In addition, insulin therapy had been well established in university centers and

Prof. Henri Claude, who Zelda had seen on her first hospitalization at Malmaison, was a

practitioner (52-53). Zelda would receive the treatment intermittently until her death in

1948. In the 1950's, the procedure would disappear.

III. Sickness

By following ICT (and at the same Zelda) we arrive at a tracing of the dynamic

alliances being formed in the network of psychiatry and that Zelda's biographies only

partially reveal. Following the treatments themselves arrives at a complex assemblage of

motivations – reduced toxicity of compounds, an increasingly biomedicalized model of

disease and practice, a concern with safety and efficacy.[7] A relatively small number of

practitioners operating during the time were closely and powerfully allied. Sakel made

strong alliances with insulin and schizophrenia, alliances further extended in training

centers, which would act to materially reconfigure the profession of psychiatry and the

hospital itself. Doroshow reveals the ubiquity of the treatment stemmed from the fact that

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[7] What is interesting to note is the narrow metaphorical range that sleeping cure and coma therapy
describe. A continually ratcheted up intensity of "resting" is combined with an increasingly
technologized notion of therapy.

those participating in the "local world" where ICT was administered believed in its

efficacy because they empirically witnessed its effects. Doroshow discusses efficacy "as

an understanding of how well something works that is based not only on whether it

would work objectively in a sociocultural vacuum, but also on an understanding of the

subject in question as *embedded* within its sociocultural context" (219 italics in original).

Those who administered the therapy saw that it worked and "ICT was *experienced* as an

effective treatment for schizophrenia" (Doroshow 219 italics in original). Tracing the

emergence of ICT and its strong alliance to schizophrenia illuminates a network largely

motivated and ordered by notions of efficacy and the biomedical professionalization of

psychiatry; taking the local world of early twentieth century psychiatry into account

complicates Cline's reduction of treatments to "methods of control."

I quote Cline at length:

Zelda's medical condition plays a key role in this biography. I was fortunate in being given access to most medical records now available and was allowed to read those hitherto under seal. I also spoke twice to Zelda's last psychiatrist, [Dr. Irving Pine] who held a different view of her diagnoses from that recorded in the [Zelda] legend.

I looked at how the label schizophrenia was applied to women. Evidence suggests that Zelda's failure to conform to a traditional feminine role has, to some extent, been buried within a diagnosis of mental disorder. Zelda was a courageous woman who struggled to maintain her sanity in the face of the horrific treatments she was forced to undergo. It became obvious that she suffered as much from the treatments as from the illness itself. My particular challenge was to try to separate the illness from treatment.

Zelda's hospital label in the Thirties was schizophrenia; by the Fifties her last psychiatrist suggested (too late) that it might have been manic depression. Though the treatments for these mental diagnoses in periods separated by two decades were somewhat (though curiously, not entirely) different, that difference *had less to do with diagnoses than with methods of control considered appropriate during each era.* If letters and journals from other women patients in the Fifties/Sixties/Seventies are compared with Zelda's of the Thirties/Forties, we see that emotions engendered in all absentee mothers and artists inside closed institutions were remarkably similar. Fear, frustration, resentment and despair attached themselves to incarceration, imprisonment, enclosure (9 my italics).

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I want to draw attention to the manner in which Cline contextualizes her

discussion of Zelda, her diagnosis, and her treatments, and how it augments but differs

from the network I have briefly traced and articulated by following ICT. Cline presents

hospitalization, psychiatry and the treatments it mobilized during Zelda's life in terms of

"incarceration and control." As a reductive and somewhat totalizing context, this seems

an oversimplified rendition of hegemonic forces exerting themselves downward.

Similarly, I want to suggest that Clines' "challenge… to separate the illness from

treatment," by which I understand her to mean the causes, symptoms, and experience of

Zelda's illness on the one hand, and the effects of her treatment, as experienced and as

instrumental in progressing the course of the illness itself on the other, also perpetrates an

oversimplification. As Kleinman, Good, and Eisenberg suggest:

> Modern physicians diagnose and treat diseases (abnormalities in the structure and
> function of body organs and systems), whereas patients suffer illnesses
> (experiences of disvalued changes in states of being and in social function; the
> human experience of sickness). Illness and disease, so defined, do not stand in a
> one-to-one relation. […] Both concepts are explanatory models mirroring
> multilevel relations between separate aspects of a complex, fluid, total
> phenomenon: sickness (251, 252).

These terms, then, as Kleinman et al. claim, are perhaps better imagined as

mutually constituted in a recursive and shifting network of illness, disease, and treatment

–a confluence of diagnosis, disease, the experience of illness, and clinical practices.

Certainly, the characters of these relations change, both locally and over time, for better

or for worse; however, to say the treatments Zelda suffered had "less to do with

diagnoses than with methods of control considered appropriate during each era" offers

too overdetermined an image of psychiatry and its history, not to mention of what we can

mean by the terms social and cultural, which are also implicated. It significantly limits

how all of these registers articulate together as a historically shifting and "total phenomenon." Effectively, Cline's representations separate Zelda, her body, and her experience to one side, and her diagnosis, psychiatry and its treatments to the other. Instead of a network of relations, an assemblage populated by multiple actors with varying motivations, we receive Zelda in agonistic opposition to the social, medical, and institutional forces that she is subjected to and that acted to control her.

While this description works to weaken the association between Zelda and the fact of her madness in the imaginary, what it does not do is to give critical access to a larger network with which Zelda came perhaps tragically into contact. I would suggest, then, that what a biographic network approach allows criticism to accomplish is the mapping of a larger landscape and fuller accounting of the actors and objects that populate it, as well as their interactions, in the hopes of identifying the "tiered array of weaknesses" by which "the strength of the strong" is misunderstood. This does not mean bracketing subjective experience and pain, but it does mean setting aside a notion of forces which are found in themselves definitive, and irresistible. As Harman notes, "What is truly interesting about 'contexts' is not that they utterly define every entity to the core, but that they open a space where *certain* interactions can take place and not others." Sickness "as a complex, fluid, total phenomenon" suggests the assemblage of whole worlds.

IV: A Passage

"I must be very thin," she thought. The bedpan cut her spine, and her hands looked like bird claws. They clung to the air like claws to a perch, hooking the firmament as her right to a footrest. Her hands were long and frail and blue over the knuckles like an unfeathered bird.

Sometimes her foot hurt so terribly that she closed her eyes and floated off on the waves of the afternoon. Invariably she went to the same delirious place. There was a lake there so clear that she could not tell the bottom from the top; a

pointed island lay heavy on the waters like an abandoned thunderbolt. […] Nebulous weeds swung on the current: purple stems with fat animal leaves, long tentacular stems with no leaves at all, swishing balls of iodine and the curious chemical growths of stagnant waters. Crows cawed from one deep mist to another. The word "sick" effaced itself against the poisonous air and jittered lamely about between the tips of the island and halted on the white road that ran straight through the middle. "Sick" turned and twisted about the narrow ribbon of the highway like a roasting pig on a spit, and woke Alabama gouging at her eyeballs with the prongs of its letters.

   Sometimes she shut her eyes and her mother brought her a cool lemonade, but this happened only when she was not in pain (Fitzgerald 180).

The Thesis: Lines of Flight

In discussing the network of Zelda's novel as it appears against her biographic

material and mapping the ways in which biographic and critical networks are constituted

and ordered in relationship to one another perhaps does not register a great deal of noise

in the thesis. However, jumping off and tracing the network of ICT – through the streets

of Vienna, Sakel's kitchen, into the local worlds of hospitals, and further, following the

emergence of ICT as it was mobilized by a relatively small number of practitioners to

realign psychiatric practice more closely to biomedicine – appears tangential, disjunctive,

or diverting. In the rhizome of the biographic network which follows Zelda's novel, ICT

emerges as site of rupture, figuring as a *line of flight*, a line down which the thesis flees

when psychiatry, diagnosis, and treatment destabilize and become unpredictable actors

within the overall network.

Deleuze and Guattari write:

Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified territorialized, organized, signified, and attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another (*Thousand* 9).

As Deleuze and Guattari explain above, and Latour and Harman detail at the beginning of

this chapter, networks or assemblages are not static nor are they inherently stable; they

shift and reconfigure depending on the movements of various actors and the allegiances

made between them. Alliances dissolve and seemingly stable structures break apart,

resulting in new transformations. In as much as this thesis engages a project of mapping a

dynamic biographic network, it is similarly unstable, prone to reorganization, to sites of

rupture resulting in new lines. But, "These lines always tie back together." Deleuze and

Guattari write:

> That is why one can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in a rudimentary form of the good and bad. You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject…(9).

Cline's move to separate out Zelda's sickness, diagnosis, and regimes of treatments in many ways intends to incite a rupture in the biographic imaginary; however, exposing diagnosis and treatment as methods by which incarceration and control are achieved simply reproduces the power to be disrupted, reconstitutes Zelda as incarcerated and controlled, and reinstantiates psychiatric hegemony as ideology. Noticing and drawing ICT as a line of flight, the thesis seeks to deterritorialize psychiatry by also recognizing efficacy and a paradigmatic shift away from the administration of bodies as motivations. So then, what may seem a strange proliferation of objects and discussions in the thesis are found to be a line of flight down which it flees. While tracing the biography of ICT appears disconnected or disjointed from the map the thesis has been tracing (because it is), this line nevertheless remains part of the rhizome itself. And of course, just as the biographic rhizome being traced contains ruptures and shoots, there are many ruptures throughout the thesis, lines of flight which might have been followed.

Many have been excerpted, and do not appear here: medical metaphor (the historical continuum of rest, sleep, and comma whose increasingly acute register of "resting" as curative for nervousness); discussions of how reading criticism as a biographic network resists ideological critical projects in the context of Marxism; discussions of Zelda's visual art and her as of yet unpublished manuscript *Caesar's Things* which is housed at Princeton in manuscript and facsimile and on my computer as

a digital file; or, an interrogation of how critical reception of the novel (and her visual art) reads against a general distrust of modernist aesthetics at the time. This list is not exhaustive, but they are never the less available for tracing.

The thesis, then, approximates (or attempts to) what Deleuze and Guattari notice as "the ideal for a book," which would "lay out everything… on a single page, the same sheet: lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations" (9). This thesis performs only one possible tracing of the rhizome which moves back and forth and transversally across a "single sheet of paper," making allies and alliances with some but not others of the actors which populate it. However, engaging any of these myriad actors can effect transformations in the network, and refigure the complexity of the objects themselves in regards to the work that they do as their connections multiply or diminish. What Harman has noted of the literary work – "we cannot identify the literary work with the exact current form it happens to have" – applies to other objects as well, such as diagnosis, psychiatry, treatments, and this thesis ("Hammer" 202). A biographical network approach recognizes many biographies running against one another, unfolding simultaneously across the page, and at points tying together, breaking apart, and reconverging. The thesis unfolds, then, a rendition of a biography, a life – which is the topic of the concluding chapter.

Chapter 3: Conclusion

Biographic Life

This thesis employs a network (assemblage) approach to address the bifurcation between human and nonhuman and subject and object, binaries which are not precisely the same thing, but in as much as they are ontologically prescriptive obtain the same result. It also attempts to develop a literary critical project that considers biography in a more expansive way, suggesting that literary objects also have "life stories" which can be read against and with those of its authors. In this regard the thesis has mapped in broad strokes the appearance and travels of Zelda's novel and its various alliances with the biographies which include it and a body of criticism concerned with it. It has also mapped in a brief way relevant psychiatric treatments, the historical contexts in which they participate, and their relationship to Zelda and her novel have been considered.

Yet, as a tentative conclusion, the inquiries this thesis makes can be extended further, a space opened to deal with a larger question implicit in the bifurcation of human and nonhuman and subject and object. How do these divisions relate to a question of life itself? What can be meant by a literary work or a biography when considered in the context of a life? Or all taken together, as Deleuze asks: what is "a life"?

In his book, *The Nonhuman Environment in Normal Development and in Schizophrenia,* psychiatrist Harold F. Searles notices the anxiety that humans feel when "overcome by the unmanipulability of a mechanical device, or the seemingly impossible complexity of a home-carpentry job, or the seemingly unrecognizable chaos of figures and …regulations which flood us when we start to cope with an income-tax return" (39). This anxiety he claims is a residue from an infantile period where the child is

undifferentiated from his environment, and vice-versa. He writes:

> Not only do we have unconscious memory traces of our infantile experiences in which we are surrounded by a chaotically uncontrollable nonhuman environment that we sensed as being a part of us; in addition we presumably have unconscious memory traces of our experience with losing that nonhuman environment which had been sensed, heretofore, as a harmonious extension of our world-embracing self (39).

There is, then, "a deeply rooted anxiety of a double-sort: the anxiety of subjective oneness with a chaotic world, and the anxiety over the loss of a cherished, omnipotent world-self" (39). Searles goes on to discuss how these twin anxieties operate in both "normal development," as seen in the examples above, and in schizophrenia, as when a patient regards another person as being animal, or inanimate, or feels themselves to be this way. We always toggle, then, between these residues of being-one-with and being-separate-from – an anxiety that the inanimate can become human and that we ourselves might become inanimate. Latour has captured something of this when he asserts "the Subject/Object opposition is troublesome only if we take these two terms as distinct ontological regions, whereas it is only a matter of a slight difference between two groups." The issue of "subjectivity and objectivity" he suggests, has been "merely exaggerated, to the point of making an incontrovertible foundation out of something that should always have remained just a *convenience of organization*" (*Modes* 290-291 italics in original). When what Harman calls "the post-Kantian obsession with a single relational gap between people and objects" is reconsidered, subjectivity can be reimagined (*Quadruple* 6).

For Searles subjectivity is not given, as is implied in the opposition of human and nonhuman (as life and nonlife); rather, it results from a process of differentiating oneself as apart from the environment – a human and nonhuman collective – of which they are a

part. He conceives of subjectivity as a movement, only ever partially complete, that "recapitulates the phylogenesis of the human race… the evolutionary history of the human race" from its beginnings "in an entirely inorganic world" and proceeding through to life:

> in its broad outlines such a recapitulation does actually take place, namely, that the earliest rudiments of the human ego may experience existence as being totally inorganic, totally inanimate, including itself, followed by later phases of experiencing itself as something living but not yet human, and only later still experiencing an awareness of oneself as a living, individual human being. […] [T]he human being is engaged, throughout his lifespan, in an unceasing struggle to differentiate himself increasingly fully, not only from his human, but also from this nonhuman environment (40, 30).

What Searles has described as the infantile "world-embracing" undifferentiated state of "subjective oneness" where all subjects and objects are "a part of us," as well "a harmonious extension" of us, our "omnipotent world-self," Deleuze calls immanence. Immanence, like Searles' notion of "subjectivity" has no telos, but is always processual. "What is immanence? A life…" (Deleuze, *Immanence* 28).

> *A* life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects. This indefinite life does not itself have moments, close as they may be one to another, but only between-times, between-moments; it doesn't just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness (*Immanence* 29).

A life for Deleuze is a process, a flow, a becoming that is "merely actualized in subjects and objects," what I believe Latour articulates "as a convenience of organization." In many ways Deleuze's concept is inorganic and impersonal, analogous to the recapitulating phylogenic process that Searles describes. Nevertheless, it is vital. In a sense, it is evolutionary. Its vitality does not reside within, but entirely without, on the

outside, with the outside where it occurs.

Likewise, literary works for Deleuze approximate "experiments" in becoming that emerge with writing: "Writing is inseparable from becoming" (*Critical* 1). An assemblage attempts to articulate the perpetual emergence of this becoming and the "organization" that occurs with it. This is why Deleuze and Guattari can write:

> There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of the subjectivity (the author). Rather, an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders, so that a book has no sequel nor the world as its object nor one of several authors as its subject…one cannot write sufficiently in the name of an outside. The outside has no image, no signification, no subjectivity. The book as assemblage with the outside, against the book as image of the world (*Thousand* 23).

The collapse of the tripartite division of world, book and author is why this thesis – considering that biographical practices can attempt to approach *a life*, if even in a small and incomplete way through assemblage work – has suggested the terms articulation and emergence as enhancements to interpretation and representation, in as much as the latter terms tend to reproduce ideology in the production of a world that is divided from the content of the novel as a productive force.

> There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made. […] We will never ask what a book means…We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things does it or does not transmit intensities…Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology. There is no ideology and never has been (*Thousand* 4).

Focusing on the novel itself and on the objects – criticism, biographies, psychiatry and so on – with which it "transmits intensities," maps an assemblage, moments in a becoming. A practice of reading biographically attempts to capture in some measure the flow of *a life.*

Coda I

Writing is inseparable from becoming: in writing one becomes-woman, becomes-animal or vegetable, becomes-molecule to the point of becoming imperceptible.[…] To become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find a zone of proximity, indiscerniability, or indifferentiation where one can no longer be distinguished from *a* woman, *an* animal, or *a* molecule – neither imprecise or general, but unforeseen and nonprexistant, singularized out of a population rather than determined in a form (Deleuze *Immanence* 1).

Coda II

Yellow roses she bought with her money like Empire satin brocade, and white lilacs and pink tulips like molded confectioner's frosting, and deep-red roses like a Villon poem, black and velvety as an insect wing, cold blue hydrangeas clean as a newly calcimined wall, the crystalline drops of lily of the valley, a bowl of nasturtiums like beaten brass, anemones pieced out of wash material, and malignant parrot tulips scratching the air with their jagged barbs, and the voluptuous scrambled convolutions of Parma violets. She bought lemon-yellow carnations perfumed with the taste of hard candy, and garden roses purple as raspberry puddings, and every kind of white flower the florist knew how to grow. She gave Madame gardenias like white kid gloves and forget-me-nots from the Madeleine stalls, threatening sprays of gladioli, and the soft, even purr of black tulips. She bought flowers like salads and flowers like fruits, jonquils and narcissus, poppies and ragged robins, and flowers with the brilliant carnivorous qualities of Van Gogh. She chose from windows filled with metal balls and cactus gardens of the florists near the rue de la Paix, and from the florists uptown who sold mostly plants and purple iris, and from florists on the Left Bank whose shops were lumbered up with the wire frames of designs, and from outdoor markets where the peasants dyed their roses to a bright apricot, and stuck wires through the heads of the dyed peonies (Fitzgerald 130).

The Thesis: Conclusion

This thesis began self-consciously by considering itself as an object that has

emerged from a preexisting network of associations and activities that are not

immediately present. It ends, then, in a similar fashion by looking back at the biographic

assemblage it has attempted to trace and of which it recognizes itself a part. It has, in

broad strokes, articulated a critical literary practice conducted in an ontologically

reoriented space of collectivity that recognizes humans and nonhumans as active and

engaged participants in the production of a dynamic, constantly shifting, and expanding

biographic assemblage; this thesis, itself an assemblage and an actor in the assemblage it

traces, provides a map of that practice's unfolding. Attempting this project at all grew

from a general distrust in traditional literary criticism's default practice – interpretation –

and logic – mimetic representation – to facilitate a discussion of Zelda's novel in a

manner which would resist reproducing the overdetermined themes which continue to

stabilize her imaginary. As Mary Gordon noticed, it is difficult to read Zelda without

referring to what she symbolizes because the biographical record is so well known.

Eschewing the bifurcation of human and nonhuman allowed for the consideration

of the novel itself as an object that could be followed through the network in which it was

produced and from which it emerged into the literary field. Attending to the novel as

actor shifted critical focus away from its interior, the "text" or content, displaced

hermeneutics as a strategy, and cleared a space to consider the broader networks and

assemblages in which the novel is continually rearticulated through biographies, critical

work, new novels, and this thesis. This move also allowed for a reconsideration of

psychiatry through the lens of its treatments, ICT in particular, which resulted in a line of

flight by which diagnosis and treatment were found overdetermined in discourse, rendering Zelda and her novel as historical products representative of it effects.

Mobilizing the notion of network as an analytic tool provides a means of regarding *Save Me* apart from Zelda's own intention or the critical activities of an interpreter. In fact, it may even call traditional critique into question in as much as it interrogates the primacy of the critic in delineating the value of any work of art outside of the context of the life in which it figures as its expression, or in Deleuze's term, "an experiment." Drawing on Searles and Deleuze, I have brought forward a view of life as processual, vital, and immediate: a notion of becoming that can accommodate the conceptualization of biography that I have proposed and that recognizes writing as "an experiment" in the becoming of a life which is inseparable from it and the multiplicity of actors with and against with it occurs.

The notions of network and immanence ("a life"), then, provide heuristics and alternative avenues for criticism which might prove instructive as a "method" for dealing with other texts remaining relatively obscured at the margins of literary consciousness. Rather than provide a close reading of the novel, the thesis has juxtaposed passages of the novel which "share intensities" with the lines of the rhizome being traced: for instance, the assemblage of a world around "sick(ness)" or the many becomings – woman, vegetable, metal, molecule, imperceptible – that flowers obtain as they are "singularized out of a population rather than determined in form." The intention and presumed use of the biographic network approach the thesis has attempted to develop, much in the way of an experiment, has been to singularize Zelda and her novel out of a population of other possible lives and works, but undetermined in form.

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Vita

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