ZORA NEALE HURSTON AND ZELDA FITZGERALD: SHARED BACKGROUNDS AND WRITING TECHNIQUES

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INTRODUCTION

The personal experiences that writers bring to their work define that work as unique. It is no small wonder, then, that two or more writers who have had similar life experiences would show likenesses in their writing techniques. Such is the case with writers Zora Neale Hurston and Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald. The two writers were arguably worlds apart both individually and professionally. Still, their creative talents seem to connect on many levels. In particular, the common experiences of Zora Neale Hurston and Zelda Fitzgerald link their respective novels, Their Eyes Were Watching God and Save Me the Waltz in creative areas of characterization, theme development and writing techniques.

Both Zora Neale Hurston and Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald were turn-of-the-century southern belles whose affluent familial backgrounds dictated that the woman's proper role was to be subservient to the men in her life. Growing up and coming into their own during the period of the "roaring twenties," the two women caught the fever overtaking the American public just after the first World War. As a result, the two went against the grain of the conservative cultural mandates for women, following their creative pursuits and vying to have their voices heard among the masses of men on the literary scene.

Having written their novels during the same time period, Hurston and Fitzgerald, not surprisingly, explore similar themes in their novels, particularly those of awakening and travel. Although the two novels were written during the Great Depression, the novels are representative of the highly creative post-World War I era of the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance, spirited times embodied by Fitzgerald and Hurston, respectively. Author George Harmon Knoles characterizes the American post-war decade as a time of growth, expansion,

change, quite a contrast from the slow times brought on by the depression (126). He attributes this new development to the new state of mind which, in effect, effaced a keener, quicker and more adaptable breed than what had previously existed (40-47). Knoles suggests that Americans were in a constant state of movement, exploring the new resources made available to them. With a now stabilizing economy, Americans realized their bounty and sought to take full advantage of it.

Hurston's and Fitzgerald's literature, then, exemplifies their taking full advantage of this time of America's awakening. Emerging from this period, both women experienced their own awakening and expressed it through their writing. For both women, this "awakening" or search for identity became a major issue as expressed in each of their novels under review. Hence, both the novels have as a major topic the female search for identity. This topic is approached through the discussion of similar themes in each novel. Both Save Me the Waltz and Their Eyes Were Watching God cover, and in similar chronology, the issue of courtship and the disillusionment of romance, travel as a means of escape and the spirit of rebirth that is associated with death. Furthermore, the writing techniques and language used in exploring these themes are profoundly similar. Since Save Me the Waltz (1932) was written just five years prior to Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937), it is perhaps understandable that the two novels would cover similar topics. As the energy and fervor of the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance would carry over into the 1930s, it is also plausible that the two novels would reflect the comparable themes that embody these two periods.

The strong "mother-daughter" relationship both women experienced would become major themes developed in their novels. In Fitzgerald's Save Me the Waltz, the story begins in the home setting of heroine Alabama Beggs, the

youngest of two daughters born to Judge Anthony and Lucy Beggs. From the start, Fitzgerald describes Alabama's relationship with her mother as being very closely knit. Her mother is, by far, the more passive of Alabama's parents, perhaps intimating the female role in relationships early on. Still, despite attempts by Senator Beggs to "contain" Alabama's free spirit, it is "Mother Beggs" who, although quite subtly, supports and even encourages the carefree nature of Alabama Beggs.

Hurston emphasizes the dynamics of the maternal influence through her heroine Janie's relationship with her grandmother, the single parent credited with rearing Janie. The entire storyline, in fact, develops from values instilled in Janie by her former slave grandmother who reminds Janie how hard she has worked to ensure that her granddaughter, born into freedom, would have the advantages that she did not have.

Another similar theme explored in the two novels is that of travel. In both novels, travel is used first as an attempt to establish a new identity. Then, after the disillusionment sets in, travel is used as a means of escaping the disillusionment, as part of an awakening process in which the woman now struggles for some level of independence. Finally, the travel or journey theme engulfs the final phase of the awakening in which the heroine returns home to reconcile the realities of her life with the proverbial journey to self she has experienced. In essence, the awakening process akin to the times the authors represent is captured and duly expressed through the theme of travel.

The theme of death, too, and the renewal that comes from death is another topic the two novels share. At their conclusions, both Save Me the Waltz and Their Eyes Were Watching God explore death as a final stage of awakening for the heroines. At the end of Save Me the Waltz, Alabama returns home to witness her

father's death following a lingering illness. While Alabama seems deeply saddened at the demise of Judge Austin Beggs, she also experiences a peaceful revolution within. Alabama had struggled to establish her own identity independent of her parents and her husband. Alabama's separation from her family as she pursued a dance career had helped her reconcile her sense of self and resolve to reunite with her loved ones. Similarly, losing her father forces Alabama to realize her individuality apart from the male figure who had dominated most of her life. In essence, from her father's death, Alabama develops a new inner strength that would catapult her to a new level of maturity and independence. By the end of the novel, Alabama has risen to the role of her mother. She appears more adult-like as she can no longer rely on her father and, being newly reunited with her family, finally rises to the more mature role as both parent and wife.

Their Eyes Were Watching God, too, focuses on the heroine's sense of renewal at the death of a dominant male figure. Tea Cake, Alabama's third and last husband, becomes ill after being bitten by a rabid dog. This physical illness soon affects him mentally as he becomes angry with and suspicious of Janie, whom he blames for trying to kill him. Tea Cake lashes out at her, finally attempting to kill her. In self-defense, Janie shoots him, killing the only man with whom she felt any remote happiness. Still, Janie is suddenly overcome with peace at having put an end to the spiritual suffering she had experienced in sacrificing her own independence in union with her husband. Moreover, the sense of inner peace and happiness also results from the emotional suffering she had felt living in those final days with a man whose severe anger and mistrust came to threaten her welfare. After killing Tea Cake, in self-defense, Janie emerges renewed and independent with a new sense of pride at having freed herself from evil and long suffering.

Common themes within the two novels suggest the similar times during

which the novels were written. Coincidentally, the writing techniques of the two stories also bear likeness. Their Eyes Were Watching God was written in 1937, just five years after Save Me the Waltz in 1932. Both novels employ a similar narrative point of view in which third person seems almost fused with first person so as to offer the heroines Janie and Alabama as proverbial alter-egos of Hurston and Fitzgerald. The similarity within the narrative points of view becomes more apparent through the use of the third-person observer-participant voice. Moreover, the metaphorical use of natural imagery is consistent in both novels. Interestingly, both novels were completed in relative haste. Hurston wrote Their Eyes Were Watching God in just seven weeks while visiting Ile de la Gonave, near the harbor of Port-au-Prince in Haiti on one of her favorite anthropological excursions (Hemenway 230). Coincidentally, it took Fitzgerald only about five weeks to complete her novel, while undergoing psychiatric treatment at the Phipps Clinic at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland (Milford 216). Obviously, both women were absorbed in other ventures and the writing of these novels was done in their "spare time." Perhaps the brevity of time and the extenuating circumstances during which the women wrote these novels would explain the similar formats used and themes observed within the two novels. Such an observation would, for example, explain why the two novels seem to mirror the authors' personal lives. With relative ease, both Hurston and Fitzgerald were able to chronicle their heroines' awakening processes based on the awakening which they experienced during their own development.

In spite of the noted similarities, no formal writing has been done on the common characteristics between the two female writers and their novels. Even individually, not much was written about the two writers until long past their deaths. Perhaps this has been the case because their works had not been studied

for their literary worth until course curricula were developed specifically for the purpose of exposing women's and African American's contributions to literature. While both women produced several short stories, Hurston was, by far, the more prolific writer. Save Me the Waltz was Fitzgerald's only authentic novel, although she is credited with being husband F. Scott Fitzgerald's sole inspiration in many of his novels and short stories. Hurston, however, produced seven books, the most popular of all being Their Eyes Were Watching God.

Fitzgerald's Save Me the Waltz and Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God are, therefore, the work with which the two writers were primarily identified. These are, then, the works which shall be explored for manifestations of the authors' similar backgrounds. Several works about Zora Neale Hurston and/or her writings proved supportive of this undertaking.

Robert Hemenway's Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography provides insight into Hurston's life, particularly from her involvement in the Harlem Renaissance. Hemenway points out areas of greatest impact on Hurston's life and writing, including her family, educational and cultural backgrounds and her development as a female writer during the Harlem Renaissance. Other biographical information is provided in Lillie Pearl Howard's Zora Neale Hurston. From these texts, Howard provides insight into Hurston's biography and her development into a prolific writer, exploring themes unique to her own culture and background.

Moreover, a compilation of critical reviews and essays, titled Zora Neale Hurston: Critical Perspectives Past and Present was most insightful on Hurston's writing style. Edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and K. A. Appiah, this book is an invaluable catalog of other interpretations on, among others, Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God. In a review published in the New York Herald Tribune

Weekly Book Review, Sheila Hibben explores the writing style and themes discussed within Their Eyes Were Watching God. For Hibben, the novel comes alive with vibrant imagery and energy because of the passion with which Hurston wrote the novel. In "The Emergent Voice: The Word Within Its Texts," Karla Holloway expounds upon the narrative voice within the novel and its impact upon her reader's perception. The strong metaphorical language as depicted through the third-person narrative voice lends to the overall power of the novel. An untitled article by Lucille Tompkins focuses on the themes of the maternal influence and the disillusionment of marriage. Tompkins explores both themes as key to the story's chronicled female awakening. Cheryl Wall's essay, "Zora Neale Hurston: Changing Her Own Words" portrays Their Eyes Were Watching God as a woman's tale of her quest for fulfillment. Like Holloway's article, this article, too, focuses on the metaphorical language used to characterize one woman's coming of age. Susan Willis' article "Wandering: Hurston's Search for Self and Method" also describes victory of Their Eyes Were Watching God as a woman's triumph from cultural and sexual oppression. Here, Willis discusses the theme of the maternal influence and the use of strong metaphorical language in signifying one woman's search for self. Finally, an article by Maria Tai Wolff, titled "Listening and Living: Reading and Experience in Their Eyes Were Watching God," explores the novel as a lesson on life and becoming. Wolff suggests that it is through the lyrical, narrative voice describing a progression of episodes in the heroine's life that the reader comes to learn important lessons in life. These essays lay the foundation for citing the similarities which Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God may bear to Fitzgerald's Save Me the Waltz.

A review of other works about Zora Neale Hurston reveals that Hurston and her works have been the subject of numerous books including studies on

African American literature and language, American women writers and southern writers. Those works, which proved less beneficial to the task at hand, were at least helpful in providing a total picture of the author and her work. Hurston's life is celebrated in semi-biographical nature in Harold Bloom's introductory statement to Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker's "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston" and Ann Rayson's "Dust Tracks on a Road: Zora Neale Hurston and the Form of Black Autobiography." Mary Helen Washington offers an overview of Hurston's life and work in "Zora Neale Hurston: A Woman Half in Shadow." Elvin Holt focuses solely on Hurston's contributions as a southern writer in his article "Zora Neale Hurston." Adele Newson provides a comprehensive listing of writings by and about Zora Neale Hurston in Zora Neale Hurston: A Reference Guide.

Hurston's writing technique as well as character and theme development is discussed in several books and articles. Francoise Lionnet explores the autobiographical content of Hurston's writings in "Autoethnography: The Anarchic Style of Dust Tracks on a Road." Hurston's extensive use of folklore within her novels, based on her unique cultural influences, is discussed in Miriam Willis' "Folklore and the Creative Artist: Lydia Cabrera and Zora Neale Hurston." Similarly, Blyden Jackson explores the folklore contained in Hurston's novels in "Some Negroes in the Land of Goshen" as does June Jordan in "On Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston." James Byrd offers a similar treatment in "Zora Neale Hurston: A Novel Folklorist." Houston A. Baker, Jr., writes about her contributions in Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature, which focuses on Their Eyes Were Watching God and its discourse on one woman's triumph from the exploitations of slavery. Michael G. Cooke explores her theme of identity and coming of age in his article "Solitude: The Beginnings of Self-Realization in Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison." This review discusses the

development of the black culture from the materialism and passivism in "modern" society. Robert Stepto writes about Hurston in From Behind the Veil, which discusses her ability as a modern writer to develop her main character from the traditionally oppressed roles portrayed in earlier novels. Barbara Johnson gives insight into Hurston's use of dialect within the first-person and third-person narrative voice in "Metaphor, Metonymy, and Voice in Their Eyes." Another of Johnson's works, "Thresholds of Difference: Structures of Address in Zora Neale Hurston," discusses the themes of identity and address as they appear in Hurston's "How It Feels to Be Colored Me," "What White Publishers Won't Print" and Mules and Men. Elizabeth Meese's "Orality and Textuality in Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes" describes an African American woman's struggle against racism in Their Eyes Were Watching God. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s "The Speakerly Text" discusses the dominance of the male figure even throughout the language of Their Eyes Were Watching God. Similarly, Mary Jane Lupton's "Zora Neale Hurston and the Survival of the Female" discusses the creation of a "New Woman" capable of assuring her own survival in a male-dominated society. Moreover, Mary Helen Washington's " 'I Love the Way Janie Crawford Left Her Husbands': Zora Neale Hurston's Emergent Female Hero" discusses the female quest for power in a male-dominated society. The search for identity, as described in Their Eyes Were Watching God, is also highlighted in "The Significance of Time in Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God," by James R. Giles; Missy Dehn Kubitschek's "'Tuh de Horizon and Back': The Female Quest in Their Eyes"; Ruth T. Sheffey's A Rainbow Round Her Shoulder: The Zora Neale Hurston Symposium Papers; and "Sexual Politics and the Fiction of Zora Neale Hurston" by Barbara Smith. While these latter works feature the overall identity theme, which is the common thread throughout both novels, the examples given

differ from those explored in the books and articles used to document this thesis.

Various books and articles proved important in comparing Fitzgerald's writing techniques to that of Hurston. Nancy Milford's Zelda: A Biography was most beneficial in providing a total picture of Zelda Fitzgerald, the woman, the writer. This book describes her life, from youth to adulthood, as well as her attempts at writing. Milford champions Save Me the Waltz as Fitzgerald's single autobiographical piece, providing excerpts from the novel while describing Fitzgerald's life. In his preface to The Collected Writings of Zelda Fitzgerald, Matthew Bruccoli offers insight into Fitzgerald's idiosyncratic writing style. He, too, suggests that Save Me the Waltz is uniquely autobiographical in its content and that the novel, therefore, can provide insight into Fitzgerald's eccentric life. Other biographical support of Fitzgerald is provided in Koula Hartnett's Zelda Fitzgerald and the Failure of the American Dream for Women. In this book, Hartnett characterizes the search for independence as the dream which most American women seek but somehow fail to achieve due to the constraints placed on them by a male-dominated society. According to Hartnett, Fitzgerald spent her entire life seeking fulfillment in marriage but becoming disillusioned at losing her sense of self in the process. Moreover, Laurie Di Mauro offers a biographical synopsis on Fitzgerald in the Dictionary of Literary Biography entry, titled "Zelda Fitzgerald". She notes that Fitzgerald began writing early in her marriage to Scott and that, due to her eventual mental collapse, she was unable to achieve a greater level of success as a writer.

Other articles within the DLB essay also proved helpful for their discourses on Save Me the Waltz. An excerpt of Henry Dan Piper's Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait offers insight into Save Me the Waltz as an autobiographical novel. Piper explores the novel's treatment of a woman's search for freedom.

Similarly, W. R. Anderson's "Rivalry and Partnership: The Short Fiction of Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald" describes Fitzgerald's writing her novel as a way of seeking self-definition and spiritual independence. According to Anderson, Fitzgerald started writing because she felt unfulfilled in her marriage to Scott. Furthermore, Linda Wagner's " 'Save Me the Waltz': An Assessment in Craft" discusses the language and structure of the novel as it chronicles one woman's search for identity. Wagner draws distinct parallels between Fitzgerald's life and that of her heroine, Alabama, in terms of both struggles for identity and independence.

Robert Edward Seaman's dissertation "Mother and the Father: Mother Right and the Maternal in Zelda Fitzgerald's 'Save Me the Waltz,'" was a final source of information in exploring themes within Save Me the Waltz. In this, his dissertation, Seaman explores the dominance of the male language within the novel. He cites male dominance, paternal and spousal, as forces which compete with Alabama's quest for identity. Seaman suggests that Alabama's identity is defined, and therefore stifled, by the constructs of a male-dominated society.

Although there has not been as much criticism on Fitzgerald's works as there has been on Hurston's, there are relevant articles and essays critiquing the life and writing style of Zelda Fitzgerald. These various reviews, of biographical and/or literary content, are of interest, but of little use to the present subject matter. Sara Mayfield's Exiles from Paradise: Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald; James R. Mellow's Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald and the Foreword to Bits of Paradise: 21 Uncollected Stories by F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald by the Fitzgerald's only daughter, Scottie Fitzgerald Smith provide biographical information on both Fitzgeralds, Scott and Zelda. On a smaller scale, Harry T. Moore discusses Zelda's life relative to her novel in the Preface to Save Me the Waltz. Another of her biographers, Matthew Bruccoli, includes a bibliography

titled "Zelda Fitzgerald's Publications." Moreover, William T. Going compares Fitzgerald's life and works to fellow author, Sara Haardt Mencken in "Two Alabama Writers: Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald and Sara Haardt Mencken."

Fitzgerald's writing techniques, including characterization and theme development, are explored in various articles and essays as well. Sarah Beebe Fryer compares the central characters from Save Me the Waltz as well as Scott Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night in "Nicole and Warren Diver and Alabama Beggs Knight: Women on the Threshold of Freedom." Furthermore, Fitzgerald's poetic writing style and character development are discussed in Victoria Sullivan's "An American Dream Destroyed: Zelda Fitzgerald." Sullivan presents the central theme of identity within the novel, although using different examples from those supporting the topic at hand, in articles by Meredith Cary and Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin. Cary examines the concept of the novel as a woman's search for identity, order and social acceptance in "Save Me the Waltz as a Novel." In "Art as Woman's Response and Search: Zelda Fitzgerald's Save Me the Waltz," Tavernier-Courbin reveals Fitzgerald's artistry in the way she catalogs the heroine's response to otherwise oppressive conditions by striking out in search of her own identity. Finally, Douglas Marshall Cooper's dissertation "Form and Function: The Writing Style of Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald" discusses the search for identity in Save Me the Waltz from an historical perspective, following American women's struggle for independence at the turn of the century.

Although there has been significant individual exposition on the search for identity as a central theme for each novel, no prior work has focused on the two women writers together. This thesis, "Zora Neale Hurston and Zelda Fitzgerald: Shared Backgrounds and Writing Techniques," unearths new ideas that compare the ways in which the authors' similar backgrounds are manifested in their novels,

Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God and Fitzgerald's Save Me the Waltz.

ZORA AND ZELDA: WOMAN TO WOMAN

One cannot help being intrigued by the personal congruences between the Zora Neale Hurston (henceforth referred to simply as Zora) and Zelda Fitzgerald, (henceforth simply called Zelda). The resemblance in their biographical sketches is uncanny. Both Zelda and Zora are essentially southern writers. Their backgrounds, to a large extent, also formed the framework of their novels. Both novels reflect much of what is learned from studying the personal lives of each writer. An examination of the similarities in their personal lives forms the foundation of the similarities drawn from their novels. Growing up in the south played a major role in both writers' lives. Steeped in southern tradition and laden with cultural mores, the social climate of the south had significant impact on Zelda and Zora as they matured.

Zora was a native of Eatonville, Florida, a small, rural town in central Florida. The values cultivated in Zora during her childhood experiences in Eatonville laid the groundwork for the prolific writer she would become. In fact, Zora's biographer, Robert Hemenway, asserts that "the sources of the Hurston self-confidence were her home town, her family, and the self-sufficiency demanded of her after she left home for the world" (11). He offers the following description of Zora's hometown:

> . . . . Incorporated since 1886, Eatonville was, in Zora Hurston's words, "a pure Negro Town,". . . . As a result she had been more or less isolated as a child in totally black surroundings, and the town became, as the black poet June Jordan has put it, "a supportive, nourishing environment," where people represented 'their own particular selves in a Family and Community setting . . . . '(12).

The support and nourishment Zora received as a child in her closely knit community perhaps fueled the fearlessness and boldness with which she faced the adult world. Moreover, the communal spirit seemed an integral part of her hometown. This nurturing environment provided the framework of Zora's formative and creative years. The camaraderie and sharing of similar experiences in the small town of Eatonville formed a support nest for Zora. The kinship notwithstanding, these same shared experiences painted a reality which Zora would later express in her writings. Hemenway said that Eatonville "was a rich repository of the oral traditions preserved through slavery into the twentieth century. . . " (11-12). This description of Eatonville provides insight into Zora's focus on the closely knit black communities and the importance of familial roles in Their Eyes Were Watching God (hereafter known simply as Their Eyes).

Zelda's homelife and family structure, too, had profound impact on her development. Zelda was born and spent her childhood years in Montgomery, Alabama. The youngest of five children, Zelda was perhaps influenced the most by the experiences she gained in her youth. Similar in many ways to Zora's native Eatonville, Montgomery must also have been a nurturing environment for Zelda. In fact, Zelda was quoted in Nancy Milford's Zelda: A Biography as saying, "When I was a little girl, I had great confidence in myself, even to the extent of walking by myself against life as it was then. I did not have a single feeling of inferiority, shyness, or doubt, and no moral principles" (8). Zelda characterizes the supportive homelife in Save Me The Waltz (hereafter known simply as The Waltz), just as Zora does in Their Eyes.

The strong and dominant paternal influence was a pervasive part of both women's protective and familiar home environments. Further, both writers were born to fathers of considerable affluence and influence in the small communities in

which they lived. Pressures would abound from being reared by such dominant and demanding fathers.

Zelda was certainly no stranger to such pressure. Early in Zelda's biography, Milford describes "the grave A.D. [Anthony Dickinson Sayre]", as having "an air of sober dignity that set him apart from other young men" (6). Zelda remained under the strong, somber watch of her father through most of her youth. In fact, the drive and determination that Zelda consistently demonstrated are probably a result of her father's influence. Milford tells us "[A.D.] worked relentlessly and well, becoming in his thirties a member of the Alabama House of Representatives; after four years he was elected to the state Senate, governing it as president during his final year in office. By 1897 he was elected judge of the city court in Montgomery" (7). Rising to these heights, Judge Sayre would wield his strong influence both in the community and at home. As his position would undoubtedly dictate, the Judge perhaps had to take care to uphold certain traditions and portray certain images for his public. For Zelda, the Judge's status probably meant his often stifling of her carefree spirit, which, for southern women, was to be controlled at all costs.

Even in Zelda's adult years, physicians with whom she would visit to undergo therapy would marvel at the heavy, though arguably indirect, influence Zelda's father had over her. Dr. Oscar Forel, one of Zelda's physicians at the Phipps Clinic in Baltimore, Maryland, received a letter from one of Zelda's family members, describing Zelda's father as "a solitary man in the most thoroughgoing sense; he was silent, not at all sociable and possessed no sympathy toward youth . . . . he did not show affection and his restraint eventually projected an oppressive aura over the entire family" (Milford 162). Zelda's reflection of her father cast him as a "man without fear, intellectual, silent, serious" (174). She described her father

as a man of "great integrity," saying "I had an enormous respect for my father and some mistrust'" (174). This mistrust Zelda felt toward her father was probably due to his stern demeanor and the cold, distant nature she undoubtedly would see in him as he was likely her primary disciplinarian. This image, coupled with the judge's status within the community, would earn him the respect that Zelda felt toward him.

Zora came from a similar background with a father whose prominence in the community carried over into the home. Moreover, Zora's mother, Lucy, died when Zora was still very young. Lucy Hurston, like Zelda, felt more akin to the maternal influence in her life. In her biography, author Robert Hemenway notes, "Her belligerence . . . kept her constantly at odds with her father . . . . he frequently complained to her mother that Zora was going to be hanged before she got grown, that her mother 'was going to suck sorrow for not beating [Zora's] temper out of [her] before it was too late'" (Hemenway 14). Her father had been Mayor of Eatonville for three terms and, as a minister, he served as moderator for the South Florida Baptist Association (14). His role as both politician and minister would reinforce his persuasion toward the status quo, particularly regarding women's roles in the community. Hemenway notes, "John Hurston was one of the strongest men in the village, two hundred pounds of hard muscle, known for his bravery, leadership and powerful poetical preaching" (Hemenway 14). Perhaps Zora's belligerence, too, was a direct message of frustration with and rebellion against her father's many attempts to suffocate her desire to grow beyond the traditional roles for women during that time. The dominant father figure had, for both Zora and Zelda, profound influence on the aggressive behavior the two women seemed to exude.

By nature perhaps, and because of the strong dictates of Zelda's father,

Judge Anthony Sayre, and Zora's father, Mayor (and Minister) John Hurston, the two young women were inclined toward a closer relationship with their more passive mothers. However passive, both Zelda's mother, Minnie Sayre, and Zora's mother, Lucy Hurston, displayed genteel qualities that had quite an impact on their daughters. In Zelda's biography, Nancy Milford also reflects that "Minnie was known for her gaiety and vivacious charm" (6). Such a description would contribute to the personal effervescence Zelda gained from her mother.

In the previously referenced letter from one of Zelda's family members to Dr. Forel, Zelda's physician at the Phipps Clinic, we learn, "[t]he only person [Zelda] had ever been attached to was her mother, toward whom she was extraordinarily loving" (Milford 162). Noting that Zelda had indeed been spoiled by her mother, such a description would, therefore, explain why Zelda's relationship with her mother was so much stronger than that with her father. It would also explain Zelda's long yearning, at her mother's support and encouragement, to "spread her wings" as a caged bird finally given its freedom. On another occasion in which Dr. Forel asked Zelda to describe her parents, Zelda "remembered her mother as being extremely indulgent of others' faults, an artistic woman who wrote, played the piano and sang . . . " (174). This kindly recollection was, no doubt, a sign of the times for most women. Moreover, Minnie Sayre's artistic ability as a writer and musician of sorts obviously had the most influence over Zelda. Milford notes, in Zelda, "Minnie was the artistic member of her family and her poems and short sketches were frequently published in local Kentucky newspapers. She was an ardent reader of fiction and poetry . . . . But her dreams centered upon the stage" (4). Again, the direct influence Minnie Sayre had in Zelda's life is acknowledged. Zelda's eventual rebellion against the traditional roles her father sought to enforce and her later development into an author in her own

about her lay in the fact that she was able to overcome the small-town traditions that would otherwise have smothered her creative spirit. In so doing, Zora set herself apart from her peers. In her biography, Robert Hemenway notes, "the reader is reminded of a class differential: her townspeople did not become famous, while Zora Hurston did" (281). The paternal drive and the maternal compassion that were instilled in Zora laid the foundation for her upward mobility. Hemenway describes Zora as being "different from her Eatonville friends. She always had some 'inside urge to go places' . . . . She was compelled by unknown forces to walk out to the horizon and see what the end of the world was like" (281). Those "unknown forces" that undergirded Zora's success were the heavy influences of a strong willed father and an otherwise supportive mother who encouraged Zora to pursue her dreams.

It was, too, the interesting combinations of her paternal and maternal influences that created the dominant yet docile woman we come to know. Hemenway reflects that Zora was "flamboyant yet vulnerable, self-centered yet kind . . . Her personality could seem a series of opposites, and her friends were often incapable of reconciling the polarities of her personal style. Aware of this, she came to delight in the chaos she sometimes left behind" (5). The chaos was most likely the result of the excitement that Zora would, no doubt, create through her effervescent charm that would always ignite the crowd. In her biography, Zora is described as being

> . . . a complex woman with a high tolerance for contradiction. She could occasionally manipulate people to aid her career, and she was a natural actress who could play many roles. Physically, she was a high-energy person, capable of intense work for long stretches of time, possessed of a personal effervescence that frequently

overwhelmed. She had an instinct for publicity . . . . (5)

The "instinct for publicity" which Zora exhibited was perhaps demonstrated in the way she was able to champion her own cause. Her effervescent style drew attention from the masses and stimulated their interest in her persona.

Embodying her mother's compassion and her father's strength, Zora used her homelife experiences to propel her to even greater heights. Perhaps it was because of the experiences she had as a child that she allowed her strong, forthright personality to dominate. According to Hemenway, Zora displayed "little empathy for [personal] suffering . . . . She [did] not admit that oppression [affected] her; and she [avoided] describing it. She [was] very much aware of her private career" (Hemenway 278). She had to be aware of her private career; for African American women's careers during those times were virtually unheard of and, therefore, had to be developed at a more gradual pace than their male counterparts or white contemporaries. Still, Zora had the special gift of persistence and charm that won her many supporters. Friend and fellow author Langston Hughes reflected that he "too, remembered her success in getting things from white people, 'some of whom simply paid her just to sit around and represent the Negro race for them. She did it in such a racy fashion' " (Huggins 131). The racy fashion in which Zora "entertained" undoubtedly stemmed from the excitement she felt not only from the mere accomplishment of the very act of entertaining, but also from her ability to astound those groups who may otherwise have discounted her skill. When speaking before the white populace, Zora used her intriguing aura coupled with her "minority status" to capture attention, as if performing on stage. Hughes continued, "To many of her white friends, no doubt, she was a perfect darkie, in the nice meaning they give the term - that is a naive, childlike, sweet humumorous and highly colored Negro" (Huggins 131). By

appearing this way to white people, Zora not only captured their attention, but held it long enough to inspire them and inform them of her experiences in predominantly African American Eatonville, concepts certainly new to them.

Zora's captivating style became her trademark. Author Robert Hemenway reflects, "...the artistic, dramatic, eccentric Zora Neale Hurston, a master of figurative language, [charmed] with transparently posed humility" (276). A further testimony of her personal style, Zora engenders her mother's meek spirit and her father's strength of character in a blend of humble yet dramatic eccentricity. Hemenway also found that Zora was "a brilliant raconteur, a delightful if sometimes eccentric companion," saying that "she fit in well with the Roaring Twenties - both black and white divisions. Her presence was legendary" (60). Borrowing from her rich, although often complicated, homelife, Zora turned the difficulties into a springboard for her success. Hemenway summarizes, "The sources of the Hurston self-confidence were her hometown, her family and the self-sufficiency demanded of her after she left home for the world" (11). Against the contradictions of her meek but supportive mother and her rigid but courageous father, Zora engendered the combination of opposing maternal and paternal influences. In effect, she was able to achieve her own level of success.

Zelda's personality, too, mirrored the complex background which fueled her success. Like Zora, Zelda's personality reflected the strength she gained from her father and the compassion and creativity she gained from her mother. These qualities were exhibited early in her childhood and continued into her adulthood. In the biography by Milford, Zelda described herself as a child who was "independent, courageous, without thought for anyone else," but also as "dreamy, a sensualist, who was bright and loved sports, especially imaginative, active competitive games" (8). The independent, competitive and indulgent qualities

were likely traits of paternal influence. The passion and imagination that imbued her image were perhaps qualities influenced by her creative, supportive mother. From her strong family base, Zelda seemingly emerged independent, strong-willed and even self-centered enough to advance her own cause. Of her youth, Zelda reflected "'When I was a little girl I had great confidence in myself against life as it was then. I did not have a single feeling of inferiority, or shyness or doubt, and no moral principles'" (8). Encouraged by her mother and disciplined by her father, Zelda demonstrated the will to go against the grain in pursuit of her dreams.

Even as she matured, Zelda's underlying influences marked her unique personality and garnered attention from the crowd. Edouard Jozan, one of the Fitzgeralds' aviator friends, recalled that Zelda was "'a creature who overflowed with activity, radiant with desire to take from life every chance her charm, youth and intelligence provided so abundantly'" (Milford 109). She demonstrated a propensity to "seize the moment" and to squeeze from life all of the excitement she possibly could. Another family friend, Ernest Hemingway's wife Hadley, described Zelda as a charming, lovely creature who lived on what Ernest called the "'festival conception of life'" (115). This conception of life celebrates life and, in the process, self. Like Zora, it seems, Zelda's charm and charisma won her the center of attention whenever she stepped out on the scene.

Zelda also possessed an energetic persona with a zeal for life. By the age of twenty-one, Zelda had formulated a philosophy of life which dictated "'you created yourself as a product and you showed yourself with all the flair of a good advertising campaign'" (92). Her intent was to "experiment and be gay" and to avoid at all costs her vision of the legion of unhappy women (92). Having witnessed her mother's apparent martyrdom and resignation to domesticity, Zelda set out to show her talents and use them to take her anywhere in life. Zelda

developed her talents, even at the expense of competing with her husband, author F. Scott Fitzgerald. This exuberant spirit underscores Zelda's passion to go beyond the norm in achieving her success.

The drive and zeal are what set both Zelda and Zora apart from other more passive women of their time. Perhaps Zelda was actually defending her perceived need to break the proverbial mold for traditional women's roles. Likewise, she could have been, in some way, speaking out in defiance against the oppression she had witnessed her mother suffer at the hands of her father as Zelda, too, had done. Her yearning, even into adulthood, was to break free of the chains of oppression that kept women bound into certain roles that she saw limit their progress. No matter the motive, Zelda used her personal experiences that most inclined her to transform and transport her philosophy on life. These shared experiences and doctrines are what catapulted both Zelda and Zora alike into heresy among other women of their time. That they flaunted their unorthodox life theories made them both anomalies.

These very eccentricities would even have far-reaching impact on their personal relationships as well. For Zelda, it was this very determination to be different that also struck a chord of controversy for her. Author Koula Hartnett analyzes how Zelda's background would spring forth such a desire. In Zelda Fitzgerald and the Failure of the American Dream for Women, Hartnett notes that "Zelda was going against the grain, as a Southern Belle turned career woman. It was contrary to her early orientation, which had been designed to create her into a 'decoration' to delight and adorn her husband" (168). Hartnett refers to critic Howard Chesler's observation that Zelda, like other creative women of her time, was driven to "madness" by the "unfeminine" drive to succeed as an artist in a male-oriented society" (168). While Chesler's connection between Zelda's

eventual depression and her mental illness may have been an overstatement, the drive she exhibited was a further testimony to the familial spark that, through its complexities, became the undercurrent of her success. Regardless of Chesler's accuracy, "a Southern, Belle [like Zelda] who dared to denounce her femininity by assuming male attributes in the quest for a career, was considered odd" (177). However unusual, Zelda, like Zora, seemed to become the self-made character of will and determination as a result of striking out against the feminine oppression she witnessed early in her personal life.

So it was that Zelda stood out because of her zest for life and her deep-seated desire to follow her passions, no matter the obstacles along the way. This notion was further emphasized by those who knew Zelda best. Sara and Gerald Murphy, close friends of the Fitzgeralds, attested to Zelda's unique personality. They reflected that Zelda "had her own personal style; it was her individuality, her flair. She might dress like a flapper when it was appropriate to do so, but always with a difference"; they continued, "her taste was never what one would speak of as a' la mode - it was better, it was her own" (Milford 107). Such was the way Zelda constantly impressed people. Such was the way she lived her life. Moreover, this was the common description of Zelda from those on whom she left her mark. Matthew Bruccoli, who for many years has studied Zelda Fitzgerald and her work, offers a similar portrait. In his introduction to The Collected Writings of Zelda Fitzgerald, Bruccoli says that Zelda "possessed a characteristic wit, the ability to make surprising connections between ideas and idiosyncratic style" (Bruccoli xi). This insightfulness was distinctive both in Zelda's personal life and in her writing style. This idiosyncratic style was her secret delight because it helped her achieved the level of "difference," of "uniqueness" that she sought throughout her life.

This need to be different would manifest itself in different ways within Zelda's life. In breaking the chains of oppression that traditional women's roles levied, Zelda set out to prove, perhaps to her strict father and supportive yet suppressed mother, that women could claim the same feats as men had for so long. Mrs. Xandra Kalman, a friend of Zelda's in St. Paul, described Zelda as being "very athletic and always [wanting] to be out doing something" (Milford 92). She continued, "Zelda was a good golfer, or at any rate, far better than Scott. She was not at all interested in going out with the girls, . . . certainly she enjoyed being different and was definitely not our idea of a Southern Belle--there just wasn't a bit of clinging vine about her" (93). Defying what may generally have been expected for women, Zelda garnered attention by displaying the typically male athleticism. Moreover, the implied needy or otherwise dependent "clinging vine" metaphor was one which Zelda consciously negated.

Zora's personal life was scarcely different from Zelda's. Zora, too, used her complex background of opposing parental forces to develop her unique perspectives on life. Alain Locke, Zora's teacher at Howard University in Washington, D.C. referenced the "unusual burst of creative expression" that "differed significantly from what had come before" because, as he observed, Zora's was "a new aesthetic and a new philosophy of life" (Hemenway 39). Just as it had for Zelda this "new aesthetic" and fresh approach to life earned Zora a tremendous amount of attention, and some controversy, too, for daring to go beyond the norm for women of their time.

When Zora moved to New York in her adult years, it was her matchless energy and flair that made her an integral part of the literary and social awakening known as the Harlem Renaissance. This period was marked by vigorous artistic and intellectual activity for African Americans. Having already demonstrated

her writing abilities during her college years, she applied the nurturing and fortitude which she had received at home to advance her cause. She, therefore, became one of the few women to demonstrate her abilities as a writer during this time. By many accounts, in fact, Zora was considered "The Woman" of the Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes, Zora's friend and fellow author from the Harlem Renaissance, noted that Zora "was certainly the most amusing of all the Harlem Renaissance artists" (36). Like Zelda, Zora celebrated life and, in so doing, celebrated self. Holding minority status as a writer of both the African American and female persuasions would certainly merit her a great deal of attention. At virtually every juncture, Zora turned this attention she received into an opportunity to deliver a most enlightening and entertaining performance.

Zelda's and Zora's outwardly strong and dominant personalities made them constantly stand out among the masses, even making each one somewhat of an anomaly. The uniqueness for which each woman strove had far-reaching impact in their public lives as well as in their private lives. The traditionally male characteristics that both Zelda and Zora developed became sources of tension in their intimate relationships. Perhaps that explains why Zelda and Zora were, in many respects, victims of failed marriages.

This premise is particularly true for Zora. Having three lovers of note during her life, Zora married and divorced two of them, both times after only a few months of marriage (Hemenway 5). Her first marriage to the young medical school student Herbert Sheen was prophetically short-lived. In her autobiographical novel Dust Tracks on a Road, Zora said that Sheen was the only person since her mother's death who "'felt really close and warm to [her]'" (93). The sentiment expressed here, namely that Zora married for companionship rather than for love, speaks to young women's upbringing and conditioning during Zora's

and Zelda's time. Moreover, by saying that Sheen felt really warm and close to her further legitimizes Hurston's inclination to look at men as comforter or provider since she compared the way she felt with him to the way she felt with her mother. Such was the premise for the "dream" that the likes of Zora and Zelda constantly sought.

Zora's contentment with Sheen, however, would soon be shaken as she admitted to the doubts she had early in their relationship (Hemenway 93). She reported being "assailed by doubts from the first and wondered who had cancelled the well advertised tour of the moon" (94). In essence, Zora felt unfulfilled in her marriage to Sheen. Zora's inability to be both writer and wife was detrimental to her marriage. Perhaps she begrudged the feeling that being one meant being in competition with the other. Hemenway describes Zora's relationship with Sheen:

> Sheen had discovered that his bride resented interruptions in her work and had no intention of following her husband in his occupation . . . . By 1928, her relations with Sheen had been broken off and there was only intermittent, perfunctory communication before the divorce on July 7, 1931. (94)

Here, Zora's intention to be different, as well as her determination to defy the traditional female spousal dictates by having her own career, somehow strained her marriage. Still, this pressure did not bother Zora at all. In fact, she remarked to Langston Hughes during her marriage to Sheen that "Herbert holds me back" and that the demands of her career doomed the marriage to an early, amicable divorce (94). Still, unmoved by this misfortune and by the negative perception it undoubtedly cast on her female image of needing a man for support, Zora pressed onward in her quest for a career.

Having been dissatisfied with the security and fulfillment that marriage had

promised, Zora had no intention of conforming and thereby compromising her values for the sake of tradition. In Dust Tracks on a Road, she explained her views on the staid sexual traditions, reflecting that "her first marriage had been unsuccessful because of her desire for a career" (308). A second relationship also proved unsuccessful because of the top priority Zora placed on her writing. Hemenway describes this relationship:

> [Zora's] affair of the thirties that inspired Their Eyes Were Watching God became so intense because her lover was one of the few intellectual equals she had ever found; yet that relationship failed because she was unwilling to marry, assume a subordinate role and give up her work. (308)

Her desire for a mate, an equal, would nonetheless compete with her greater desire to prove her autonomy. Furthermore, we learn that Zora was more apt to follow the road leading to her own sovereignty rather than that toward a union. In fact, we find that Zora's predilection towards her own independence "had led her to rail in public against [what she called] the natural apathy of women, whether Negro or white, who vote as their husbands do . . . . " (308). Zora was intent on claiming and maintaining her independence. She seemingly did not mind sacrificing what would have been the security that marriage promised young women for the controversy that the quest for a career also proposed for young women (314). Hemenway continues, "Zora Hurston went through two marriages and a number of love affairs without finding a man secure enough to grant her both his love and her career" (314). Her quest would, then, pose a threat to the security of the men in her life. Still unmoved by her failed attempts at marriage, Zora's desire for a career seemed fueled by the calamities that befell her relationships.

Zora's second marriage also attested to her disinterest in assuming the

subordinate role of a wife. Given a second chance at the sacred union of marriage, Zora opted for the career goal first. In her biography, Hemenway submits that Zora, like the heroine Janie Crawford in Their Eyes Were Watching God, had married a man several years her junior. He notes that "on June 27, 1939, in Fernandina, Florida, [Zora] had stood before a county judge to be united with Albert Price III. Price was twenty-three and Zora was at least thirty-eight" (238). We are told that the two had met in Jacksonville where he was a WPA playground worker. Unfortunately, though, Zora and Albert would not enjoy their union as had Janie and her twelve years younger spouse Tea Cake who, because of his youth, bears some similarities to Price. Hemenway supports that "[Zora] filed for divorce in February, 1940, claiming bitterly that Price drank, refused to work, was often abusive and refused to maintain a home;" and, as a result, "the marriage was over after less than a year . . . " (274). There is no wonder, then, at the strain their marriage suffered. Zora, unlike her mother and other women of her time, preferred to define herself through her contributions to her work rather than through her contributions to a marriage or family union.

Zelda's life was no less different. For Zelda, although there were many suitors who fell prey to her escapades, Scott was the only one whom she married. Due in large part to her strong will and drive to do rather than simply to be, their marriage, by many accounts, was far from successful. Friends closest to the Fitzgeralds' could see that Zelda's wont for going against the grain would cause problems in her marriage to Scott. One of Scott's former Princeton classmates, Alexander McKaig, who became a close friend of the Fitzgeralds during their first year of marriage, described Zelda in his diary as being a "temperamental, small town Southern Belle" (Milford 67). Noting that Zelda "[chewed] gum" and "[showed her] knees," McKaig concluded that he did not expect their marriage to

succeed because of these seemingly "unladylike" characteristics (67). McKaig, like others of Scott's and Zelda's friends, found Zelda's eccentricities a possible threat to their marriage down the line.

But it was definitely not the lack of will on Zelda's part to fit the traditional spousal role for women. She wanted to be married; and she tried, accordingly, to fit the image of a married woman. What she did not want, however, was to change who she was in order to be the wife Scott expected her to be. Koula Hartnett writes that Zelda was, in fact, very "eager to please her husband" (56). This desire alone, however, proved to be insufficient. According to Hartnett "[Zelda] felt that [Scott's] wishes had to be respected. Already, she had been demoted to the back seat in their relationship" (56). Surely Zelda resented this perceived competition in her marriage. She probably acquiesced and acted accordingly, deeming it only appropriate for her role as wife. Hartnett states that Zelda realized that "it was his arena they were now in, and he was clearly in control . . . . She was convinced that it was the feminine thing to do: to let one's husband take command made a woman appear coy and demure - the way Southern Belles were conditioned to be in order to be more appealing" (56). Zelda , in her characteristic fashion, rose to the occasion, playing the part of the coy, demure wife; but it was arguably for the wrong reasons (56). Rather than letting her husband take command for the sake of their marriage and the traditional roles, Zelda maintained the facade of the damsel, so that she would gain more attention (62). The act backfired, however. Hartnett reflects, "Gradually, the role reversal - the shift from Zelda's dominance before their marriage to Scott's afterwards - began to erode Zelda's self-esteem. Never again would Zelda feel so genuinely self-confident as she had before Scott married her . . . " (62). She had been used to being her own person, doing what she wanted and how she wanted it. The

glamor of marriage had not, she thought, warranted having to compromise very much. She especially had not thought she would lose what had been most important to her. That was being the center of attention. Hartnett writes, "Like most wives, Zelda had to learn the lesson that, while a wife is married to her husband, usually her husband is married to his work" (63). This being the case, Zelda perhaps feared losing her "center stage" status, especially with her husband who had once showered her with attention (63). Sure, she knew that Scott was most devoted to his career as a writer, but she had problems with the extent to which it seemed to her that his writing preempted the attention she was accustomed to receiving at home (63).

The frustration of competing with and for Scott's attention spelled trouble early in their marriage. Zelda and Scott had married on April 3, 1920, after an almost two-year courtship in which he actively pursued her interests (Milford 62). Milford notes, "If the origin of such an unhappy marriage can be dated, it would be in early 1926. For it was then that Scott worriedly told the wife of a friend of theirs that Zelda complained of his inability to satisfy her" (153). Whether Zelda was implying a sexual dissatisfaction or her unhappiness at having to compete with Scott's writing, Zelda eventually became dissatisfied with their union (153). She had entered into the marriage expecting one thing but found something totally different (153). Based on her family background, her desire for marriage had probably been for the security of being with someone who would forever worship her as he had during the courtship. While some critics have portrayed Zelda as being greedy and mundane, Hartnett defends that Zelda was not being "materialistic per se" (Hartnett 28); rather, as perhaps one of the earliest of Southern Belles, "she had been socialized to aspire to a life of prosperity made possible for a young lady by marrying a high-salaried husband" (28). Furthermore,

Hartnett notes that such a way of thinking was akin to the principles instilled in Zelda in her upbringing. She argues that "even Minnie Sayre (Zelda's mother) stressed the importance of this achievement, which precluded the development of a girl's talents or of the furthering of her education" (28). So it was, then, that Zelda happened upon her role as wife of author F. Scott Fitzgerald. This role she assumed was based more on keeping up with tradition than acting out of desire.

Unfortunately for Zelda, the subservient woman's role was expected by the men and even anticipated among the other women during her time. Such was the tradition and the established norm for the turn-of-the-century Southern Belle. This was a dismal fate for Zelda because, as Hartnett contends, Zelda was "most vulnerable because society condoned - even encouraged - her non-productive pattern of life" (59). Zelda's role, now deemed unproductive, meant her simply accepting a lifestyle which was in stark contrast with the energetic and independent lifestyle she had sought. Zelda, however, would end her search and allow herself to be relegated to a secondary rank in her marriage. Hartnett maintains that this ancillary position for Zelda was simply status quo since Zelda had been "socialized to believe that merely existing as a 'decoration' for her husband was sufficient for a woman. She was taught that the purpose of a Southern Belle was to attain the American Dream for women and that she had done - practically overnight" (59). In achieving this American Dream for women, Zelda seems to have done herself the greater disservice by compromising the value of her independence, which had been so much of a driving force in her life.

Zelda came to accept her role in marriage as dictated by society. She did not seem happy, though, because she began to lose her true identity, those qualities which had set her apart from other girls most of her life. Milford reflects, "It was unfortunate that [Zelda] thought of herself as having been 'ordered...to be worn' by

Scott. She would accept being his creation, his fictional girl; she would match his ideal to the letter if she could" (Milford 42). But could she, without even greater sacrifice and compromise of her independence? Given her strong will, she perhaps forced herself into this particular mode while continuing to struggle with her own identity. Milford observes that Zelda's character after marrying Scott "was becoming entangled in the cross currents of a complex of opposing roles, making an effort to be both daring and loving, to not give a damn and to care deeply, to be proud of Scott's drawing on her for his fiction while representing it" (76). Being pulled on by this series of opposing forces is perhaps what caused Zelda the most difficulty as a married woman. It was because of these opposing forces that Zelda began to mask herself in first one then the other role in order to achieve some semblance of success.

Whether or not the success was achieved is still debatable. The fact, however, that Zelda assumed a certain role rather than becoming a certain type of person perhaps intimated a certain failure of becoming for her. Zelda explained her frustration in keeping up such a charade by saying "it is very difficult to be two simple people at once, one who wants to have a law to itself and the other who wants to keep all the nice old things and be loved and safe and protected" (21). This feat was not only difficult. Indeed, it called upon contradicting definitions of herself. In order to maintain some sort of balance in her life, she had to fulfill the needs of two opposing personalities emerging in one body (21). Hartnett notes, "while she wanted to be an independent woman, Zelda also realized that she had a need for the emotional security of a relationship similar to the close knit family structure in which she was raised, where a man ruled and the others felt secure . . ." (20). Caught within this dichotomy of circumstances, Zelda seems to have resigned herself to make the best of both worlds in which she lived (21). Adapting

to married life proved discomforting for Zelda in her adult years. Hartnett even suggests that throughout Zelda's life, she was "plagued by the conflict caused by these two diametrically opposed needs. She fluctuated between her docile Southern Belle personality and her Flapper free-spirit nature" (20). This was particularly the case in her marriage to Scott. She had been conditioned most of her life to find security in marriage from the dominating male. Being conditioned this way, however, did not equate with the daring, free-spirit personality she had cultivated.

Scott even observed the difficulty emerging in his marriage to Zelda. However, it was unfortunate that he had not heeded the warning signs in enough time to address the problems early on. Milford supports, "[F. Scott] had not paid attention to the pre-marital letters in which Zelda had announced that she would not be one of those housewives who slaved away on housework. She refused to submit herself to boring and demeaning household chores" (72). Scott was familiar with Zelda's family and the "matronly type" her mother, Minnie Sayre, had been. Scott, therefore, did not understand Zelda's unhappiness in assuming a similar role in her married life. However, if Scott had also paid attention to the way in which the supportive Minnie Sayre had helped to develop Zelda's free-spirit nature, he might have been better prepared for the backlash he witnessed from Zelda in their marriage.

It was, alas, this very same backlash and inability to cope with the opposing forces at work within Zelda's personality that caused terminal trouble in her marriage to Scott. Zelda had difficulty in finding a balance between her own personal desire for independence and the often compromising dictates of marriage (261). These stresses she experienced perhaps contributed greatly to Zelda's emotional and mental collapse that later tore at the fiber of her marriage to Scott

(261). One of Zelda's physicians, Dr. Thomas Rennie, even diagnosed Zelda's mental and emotional distress in terms of her marriage to Scott. According to Milford, Rennie saw their marital problems in three parts.

> The first was the struggle between them as creative artists, each jealous of the other. The second was the conflict caused within Zelda by trying to have a career as a writer while at the same time fulfilling the obligations of her home and marriage. The third was the sexual relation to each other. What Rennie had noticed was the growing discrepancy between the Fitzgeralds' ideas of the roles of husband and wife and the part they were individually prepared [or able] to play. (Milford 261)

So the problems that developed in Scott and Zelda's marriage seemed very closely connected to Zelda's unconventional disposition toward her role as wife. The fact that the problems these two experienced became obvious even to outside parties attests to the magnitude of the difficulty (261). Scott's reference to his being the "weaker" partner in the marriage and, as a result, feeling that Zelda began to view him as the "woman" of the relationship reflected society's commonly held views of the time of the woman as the weaker sex and his sense that in his marriage to Zelda the traditional roles had been reversed. Zelda's personality seemed a continued exhibition of such strong and dominant qualities, which were typically ascribed to men. According to those sources who knew or studied her most, such a demonstration would inevitably cause problems in her quest for identity (261).

The struggle for independence was apparent, therefore, for both Zelda and Zora. Both women were challenged to fit a certain naive, subservient image as a wife that opposed virtually everything they worked to achieve in their independence. It is debatable which is the actual cause vs. effect between these

two opposing forces. Did their unhappiness in "measuring up" as wives cause them to strive even harder for independence? Or, did their constant striving for independence result in their unhappiness in trying to "measure up" as wives? Either way, this competitive edge inherent in both women kept them striving to prove themselves in their seemingly male-dominated societies. To this end, the two women sought other avenues for self-expression.

Zora's chosen outlet was in anthropology (Hemenway 21). Her particular interest in folklore was perhaps undergirded by her hometown experience in rural Eatonville and her eventual study of the subject when she went to New York and attended Barnard College. Hemenway maintains, "The Barnard experience was critical to Hurston's development, for she came to New York in 1925 as a writer and left Barnard two years later as a serious social scientist, the result of her study of anthropology under Franz Boas" (Hemenway 21). Zora's anthropological studies proved critical to her development for obvious reasons. First, the study of anthropology for Zora perhaps helped to give her a greater appreciation for her hometown and the environment that spawned her early development (21). Second, her studies in folklore were pivotal to her fictional writing, especially since most of her stories were about people in the South (22). Third, having this extra-curricular interest undoubtedly kept Zora immersed in something positive rather than leaving her to ponder her unsuccessful relationships and other of her life's hardships.

Similarly, Zelda showed interests in areas outside of her marriage and her writing. Still devoted to the arts, Zelda's external interests lay in dancing and painting (Milford 136). Early on, Zelda yearned to dance, but it was not until her adult years that she devoted so much of her time to becoming a professional dancer (135). Dancing could have been, for Zelda, a means of escape from her

unhappy marriage. Or dancing could also have been her way of competing with her husband, Scott, to prove that she was capable of achieving a level of success independent from him.

The same rationale could be used to explain why Zelda pursued painting with such vehemence. Painting is another outlet Zelda explored during her adult years (135). Critics of Zelda's artwork note the disproportionate lines and shadows apparent in her paintings as a reflection of both her fervor and the anxiety out of which she painted (281). When Malcolm Cowley, a friend of the Fitzgeralds, came to visit them, he too noticed such disproportion in Zelda's paintings. In fact, Milford notes his description of Zelda's paintings as "flawed, exactly as her writing had been by the lack of proportion and craftmanship" (Milford 281). Ironically, the flaws in Zelda's paintings had begun to reflect the imperfections that were increasingly obvious in her physical appearance. The uneven lines in her paintings now matched the uneven lines in her face and skin. Moreover, Cowley noted that, bearing resemblance to her paintings, "[Zelda's] mouth, with deep lines above it, fell into unhappy shapes" and that her skin in the lamplight looked brown and weatherbeaten" (281). Zelda's paintings and her physical characteristics had, alas, become mirror images of each other. Moreover, both images reflected the inner turmoil which Zelda was experiencing.

Zelda's failure to achieve success in either outlet as a dancer or painter would lead to lasting pain and disappointment. The physical strains and mental anguish Zelda suffered in submerging herself as a painter and a dancer began to wear her down. Finally, after her mental illness set in, Zelda realized that "dancing was . . . permanently out of the question, for she was no longer in top physical condition and she realized the limitations of both her age and her ability" (193). Likewise, Zelda realized her limitations as a painter. Her physical strain had

impacted her creative abilities and, as a result, "she felt her talents as a painter were second-rate and besides her poor eyesight made painting difficult and tiring" (193). Being physically and mentally drained was quite a blow to Zelda's self-esteem and psychological soundness. Although she felt a sense of failure at not having achieved the success she had worked so hard to garner for herself, these same external interests were the sustaining forces to which Zelda would cling, especially during the unhappy years of her marriage to Scott.

Both Zelda and Zora appeared consumed with their own quests for self-expression, particularly among their male-dominated cultures. Likewise, their similar searches for identity would lead to their eventual demise. The pressures had mounted in their striving for a separate identity during a time that women were identified by association with their husbands or other dominant male family figures. Despite - and because of - their strong will and extracurricular interests and activities, mental and eventual physical collapses overcame them, leaving them helpless to the end.

From what is known of Zora's final days of life, she lived her last days in total contrast to the way many had come to know her (Hemenway 321). Deeply wounded by the lack of support she received from the false accusations against her character in an alleged sodomy case, Zora's emotions alternated between outrage and despair (319). As a result, she wrote to another fellow Harlem Renaissance writer, Carl Van Vechten, "I care nothing for anything any more . . . My race has seen fit to destroy me without reason." She continued "all that I have believed in has failed me. I have resolved to die" (Howard 144).

In a deep sense of depression and plagued with thoughts of suicide, Zora's physical health suffered as well. No longer having a regard for her personal well-being, Zora gained a tremendous amount of weight and later endured a battle with

high blood pressure that eventually led to the stroke she suffered in 1959 (347). According to Hemenway, the stroke left her "weak and without the ability to concentrate" (347). Finally, Zora would succumb to the hardship that now wrought her life. No longer able to cope on her own, Zora moved into the Saint Lucie County Welfare Home in October 1959 and died of hypertensive heart disease a few months later on January 28, 1960, her final book (its title and subject unknown) yet incomplete (347). Reflecting on Zora's life, Hemenway notes, "Hurston had a full life that did not end all that differently from the way it was lived - with courage, and strength and a compulsion for rejecting the commonplace and the everyday" (323). Finally, at Zora's funeral, the minister said, "They said she couldn't become a writer recognized by the world. But she did" (348). In the final analysis, Zora's life ended on a much quieter note than she had lived it; however, she had finally been able to overcome the odds against her, which she had sought to do for most of her life.

Zelda, in quite similar fashion to Zora, succumbed to the pressures of battling the odds stacked against her. Zelda's frenzied life with Scott undoubtedly competed with internal tensions between her striving for independence and assuming a subordinate role in marriage. According to Milford, these stressors drove Zelda from mere unhappiness to sheer helplessness, eventually contributing to her depression, followed by a nervous breakdown and the onset of schizophrenia (Milford 161). The collapse Zelda experienced was marked by depression, paranoia, exhaustion and thoughts that were once intensely religious then drastically suicidal (158). Relegated to a life of virtual poverty after Scott's death in 1940, Zelda died in a fire that broke out while she was living in Highland Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina (382-3). Like Zora, Zelda never completed her final book, Caesar's Things, which she had begun writing while in Highland

Hospital (354).

The moving biographies of both Zelda and Zora bear amazing similarities. The often staid mores of their southern roots inspired them both to challenge the traditionally passive female roles. Both women were equally influenced by the creative energy of their mothers as well as the strength of their powerful fathers. As a result, Zora and Zelda tended to cling to their mothers for nurturing and support as they attempted to shun the conservative dictates of their fathers. Their intense struggle for independence often conflicted with the otherwise confirming role of the wife, which was a large part of both their identities. Along their respective journeys, however, Zora and Zelda channeled their energies into creating novels chronicling female search for identity.

THE MATERNAL INFLUENCE EXPLORED

From what we have learned of Zora's and Zelda's biographies, their mothers were very influential in their development. The support these women received from their mothers helped to fuel their desires to follow their dreams, despite the often opposing male forces dominating their lives. Similarly, their novels portray a strong mother-daughter bond in effect early in the lives of their heroines. A close survey of these dynamics demonstrates the magnitude to which the maternal influence dominates the heroine's awakening experience as cataloged in the two novels.

As early as chapter one, both novels intimate the close bond between the heroine and the maternal figure. In fact, the maternal influence seems to dominate that of the paternal. This tendency is particularly vivid in the ways in which the mother figures in both novels are the bastion of support for the heroines. Within the first two pages of Save Me The Waltz, it is clear that Alabama, the heroine of the novel (along with her two sisters), looks primarily to her mother to meet her needs. Zelda writes, "If [the Beggs' children] cried for something, it was supplied by Millie (their mother) within her powers" (Fitzgerald 9). Here, Millie is ascribed "powers" over her children, as if in solitary control over them. This depiction is reinforced through the image of Millie as the primary supplier of the children's needs. The idea of Millie Beggs being in control is an intriguing concept given the restraints placed upon her as wife of the domineering Judge Beggs. This image gains even more credence in the fact that Millie is portrayed as the children's caregiver "if they cried for something," thus emphasizing their state of vulnerability at the hands of their primary caregiver. Within this same paragraph, Millie is portrayed as a strong fortress, as she was somehow the children's protection from

the perils, real or imagined, which lay in their midst. For instance, the novel foretells how "Millie, perforce and unreluctantly, took her children out of bed at three o'clock in the morning and shook their rattles and quietly sang to them to keep the origins of the Napoleonic Code from being howled out of her husband's head" (10). The fact that Millie is described as acting "perforce and unreluctantly" demonstrates her natural tendency toward caring for the children, particularly given the notion that the judge is up, studying the law at three o'clock in the morning. While the judge's primary concern is obviously his career, Millie's primary concern is apparently her children. The foundation is established early in the novel that the children are more Millie's responsibility than the judge's. Portraying Millie as the primary care-giver to her children justifies the idea that Alabama's development into adulthood stemmed more from the influence of her mother than from that of her father.

Continued descriptions of the Beggs family evidence Millie Beggs' supremacy in her children's lives over that of the judge. Zelda writes, "Austin loved Millie's children with that detached tenderness and introspection peculiar to important men when confronting some relic of their youth . . . " (10). Even here, Zelda uses words to describe the separateness between the heroine, Alabama, and her father. In so doing, Zelda implies the closeness between the Beggs' children and their mother, especially as a result of the seemingly distant father figure. That Zelda chooses the expression "Austin loved Millie's children..." demonstrates her intent in revealing the dominant maternal impact on the children's lives over that of the paternal. Moreover, Zelda refers to the "detached tenderness" with which Judge Austin Beggs loved his children. This description, too, validates why the Beggs children feel closer to their mother, as their father remained aloof in his affection and emotional support for them. Zelda's use of the word introspection as

ascribed to the father figure also intimates more of a selfish quality to almighty Judge Beggs whose "inward gaze" signifies his tendency to internalize his feeling for his children rather than verbalize them. The judge's hesitancy to outwardly demonstrate his feelings for his children may, in fact, have been because of the lesser influence which he realizes he has in the lives of his children as compared to Mrs. Millie Beggs, particularly since it was Millie's "job" to be the children's emotional support. Perhaps the perceived distance from which he loved his children was due to the proverbial "long arm of the law" with which he seemed to rule the Beggs family. This concept becomes even more apparent with Zelda's description of Judge Beggs as "important," thereby insinuating that it was the judge's sense of importance which seemingly put him on a pedestal and intrinsically distanced him from even his family almost automatically.

Yet another passage shows Millie Beggs' prominence in her children's lives over the judge. Zelda describes Millie, probably speaking to the judge in defense of their children, saying, "If my children are bad," she answered her friend, "I have never seen it" (10). This passage stands out for many reasons. First, the fact that Millie refers to Alabama and her two older sisters as her children, when seemingly addressing the judge signifies her sense of proprietorship, if you will, over that of the judge in the girls' lives. Instead of saying "our" children when referencing the girls to the judge, Millie calls them hers, as if they belong to her alone and not to the judge. Perhaps Zelda chooses to ascribe that particular language to Millie Beggs because of her natural tendency toward the female or mother-daughter bond. This idea notwithstanding, Millie perhaps realizes that "her girls," as they are called, are genuinely closer to her than to their father because of his limited dealings with his daughters. Since Alabama and her sisters see the judge primarily as the breadwinner and disciplinarian and their mother as the comforting stabilizer

in their lives, they are automatically drawn closer to Millie for their emotional support and as the one parent who encourages them in most of their endeavors. Millie knows this; hence the reference to her children rather than "our" children. Secondly, Zelda writes, in the aforementioned quote, that such was how Millie "answered her friend," Judge Beggs. The reference to Judge Beggs as "Millie's friend" creates some distance in their relationship. This passage almost immediately reduces Judge Beggs' status in his daughters' lives by portraying him on a more casual rather than intimate basis, as Millie's friend, rather than as the girls' father too. Finally, Millie's acknowledgement that she has never seen her children behaving badly suggests that she may somehow turn the proverbial blind eye to their wrongdoings. Given the nature of the judge's relationship with Alabama and her sisters, Millie is more apt to overlook any misbehavior in order to protect her daughters from the judge's harsh disciplinary tactics. In so doing, Millie creates another level of closeness between her and her daughters, which the judge could not seem to penetrate.

Such was what Zelda herself had experienced as a child. Her relationship with her father was strained because he served primarily in Zelda's life as the disciplinarian. As a result, Zelda often clung to the protective bough of her mother. Young Zelda, like Alabama, perhaps only saw her father, Judge Sayre, as "the judge" and the final authority in her upbringing. This perception, real or imagined, drew Zelda closer to her always comforting mother. These are the same dynamics portrayed within the first chapter of The Waltz.

Zora exposes the dominant maternal influence within her fiction in ways very similar to Zelda's. Zora's father had sent her away to school when he remarried after her mother's death (Hemenway 17). This most personal experience of Zora's is manifested within Their Eyes Were Watching God through her heroine

Janie's closeness to her grandmother instead of her father. On a very personal level, Zora perhaps chooses to develop Janie's relationship with her grandmother instead of her actual mother because the grandmother figure clearly acts as Janie's surrogate mother in the obvious absence of her father figure.

After the tone is set for the story in the first chapter for the young heroine's chronicled awakening process, the second chapter expresses Janie's wont for a father figure and, as a result, the close bond between Janie and her maternal influence. Sitting comfortably on her back porch talking with her friend Phoebe, Janie reflects on her life's journey and the path she has taken into her womanhood. She recounts "Ah ain't never seen mah papa. And Ah didn't know 'im if Ah did. Mah mama neither. She was gone from round dere long before Ah wuz big enough tuh know. Mah grandma raised me" (Hurston 8). Early on, as in The Waltz, the strong maternal bond is clearly defined. The close bond between Janie and her grandmother was inevitable. For "Grandma" was not only Janie's sole maternal influence; indeed, her grandmother was her sole parental influence, encompassing the roles of both mother and father alike. Speaking in the dialect unique to Zora's and hence Janie's south Florida roots, Janie vehemently declares "Mah grandma raised me," thereby unequivocably defining the close relationship between the two. Moreover, the word raised ascribes a certain power or control which Nanny, Janie's grandmother, has over her. Likewise, Zora's use of the word raised also implies Janie's complete dependence on her grandmother, as with a seedling raised by its owner into a fully developed plant, yet ever-dependent for its on-going care.

Janie's fondness for and the support she received from her grandmother were likened to those which Alabama received from Mrs. Beggs in many ways. Like Mrs. Beggs in Alabama's life, Nanny, Janie's grandmother is her guardian to

whom all her care is entrusted. A little further into Chapter Two, Janie attests, "Nanny didn't love tuh see me wid mah head hung down, so she figured it would be better if us had uh house. She got the land and everything . . . " (10). In the manner of form following function, Janie fondly refers to her grandmother as "Nanny," as do Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, the white family for whom her grandmother worked as a slave. The term "Nanny" is a commonly used nickname for a grandmother or, in the case of the Roberts', a caregiver. The concept of Nanny, then, as Janie's ultimate care-giver, is further emphasized as Janie points out that her dear Nanny got the land so that the two of them could have their own home and Janie, therefore, would be better taken care of as all of her needs would be met.

So the emotional support Zelda and Zora received from their mothers outweighed the financial support provided by their fathers. Furthermore, the emotional support provided by their mothers justified the women growing closer to their mothers than to their fathers. This premise would also explain why their writings reflect the strength of the mother-daughter relationship over that with their fathers. In fact, the maternal lineage and close bond play a major role in the heroine's early search for identity.

Zelda writes that Alabama asked her mother, "Tell me about myself when I was little...She presses against her mother in an effort to realize some proper relationship" (Fitzgerald 11). The beginning of this dialog marks the beginning of Alabama's awakening and discovery of self. In this sentence, she demonstrates her interest in learning about herself as a child so she could understand more about the person she is becoming. Zelda's description of Alabama pressing against her mother is also significant because it alludes, again, to the closeness shared between Alabama and her mother. The image of Alabama pressing against her mother

intimates not only the sense of refuge she seeks in her mother; on a deeper level, the image is created of the two almost as equals, at least in Alabama's mind. Alabama perhaps sees her mother as an extension of herself, the woman she will become. Furthermore, Alabama may also think of herself as an extension of her mother, representing the young girl she used to be. Perhaps that's why Zelda describes Alabama pressing into her mother, thereby subtly creating an image of interdependency on both their parts. Alabama's pressing against her mother portrays both the sense of support Alabama seeks in her mother as well as that same sense of refuge that Millie perhaps sees in her beloved Alabama. Alabama becomes the metaphorical refuge undoubtedly because of the strained relationship with Judge Beggs, who, by virtue of his status in the community, perhaps treats Millie, too, as his subordinate. Thus losing their defined mother-daughter roles in this instance, Alabama's act of pressing against her mother is done "in an effort to realize some proper relationship," thereby attempting to reconcile that while the two are extremely close, the maternal influence is most important to Alabama and her development.

As their discussion continues, Zelda delves into what is perhaps the crux of her treatment of the identity theme as it is explored in the novel. She writes of Alabama's early development,

> The girl had been filled with no interpretation of herself, having been born so late in the life of her parents that humanity had already disassociated itself from their intimate consciousness and childhood become more of a concept than the child. She wants to be told what she is like, being too young to know that she is like nothing at all and will fill out her skeleton with what she gives off, as a general might reconstruct a battle following the advances and recessions of

> his forces with bright-colored pins. She does not know that what effort she makes will become herself. It was much later that the child, Alabama, came to realize that the bones of her father could indicate only her limitations. (11)

This entire section establishes the novel as the story of one woman's search for identity. In fact, this section alerts the reader that Alabama's sense of identity and her process of becoming will be one of the major issues explored within the story.

Based on this passage alone, the reader learns that the beginning of Alabama's search for identity lies with her mother, for it is Millie Beggs to whom Alabama turns with questions regarding her heritage. The reader also learns from this paragraph that, in spite of her deep-seated desire to learn about who she really is, the reality is that Alabama is in the process of becoming an adult. What Zelda is suggesting here is that one's identity is not something which can be put into words in a solitary definition. Rather, one's identity is a continual process of becoming. That is why Zelda likens Alabama's identity and development to a general reconstructing a battle while following the "advances and recessions of his forces." Moreover, Zelda asserts that Alabama's identity is to be a gradual process, inevitably defined by the choices she makes in her life given the circumstances before her. Once Alabama learns this, she also realizes that the efforts and choices she makes in life will define her far more than anything her father or mother could ever tell her about who she is.

The connection is drawn between the female identity and the mother-daughter relationship in Zora's Their Eyes as well. As Janie sits, talking about her childhood background with her friend Phoebe, she describes the white family who employed her grandmother and became a surrogate family of sorts for her and her grandmother. She tells Phoebe about the first time she learned she was black

unlike the white Washburn children with whom she lived and played. The realization came at the hands of Ms. Nellie Washburn, the mother of the children with whom young Janie lived and played. Janie describes the awakening she experienced:

> "Ah wuz wid dem white chillun so much till Ah didn't know Ah wuzn't white till Ah was round six years old . . . a man come long takin' pictures and without askin' anybody, Shelby, dat was de oldest boy, he told him to take us . . . .
>
> "So when we looked at de picture and everybody got pointed out there wasn't nobody left except a real dark little girl with long hair standing by Eleanor [the young Washburn girl]. Dat's where Ah wuz s'posed to be, but Ah couldn't recognize dat dark chile as me. So Ah ast, 'where is me? Ah don't see me.' . . . [Miss Nellie] pointed to de dark one and said, 'Dat's you, Alphabet, don't you know yo' ownself?'
>
> ". . . Ah looked at de picture a long time and seen it was mah dress and mah hair so Ah said:
>
> " 'Aw, aw! Ah'm colored!' " (Hurston 8)

This passage can be compared to the previous one from The Waltz because of the role of the mother figure in helping the heroine to learn about her identity. In the first place, the mother figures are responsible for the young heroines' gaining insight into their identities in both novels. Just as Alabama seeks insight into her identity from her mother, Janie learns about her true identity as a so-called "colored girl" from Miss Nellie, the mother of the children with whom Janie was reared. The Washburn children are, in fact, portrayed as being the closest semblance of siblings to young Janie since these are the only children with whom

she was reared. Zora emphasizes the tremendous impact of the maternal influence on the heroine by having Nellie Washburn reveal such an important part of Janie's identity to her rather than having Janie learn this through the Washburn children. Although Miss Washburn is not Janie's mother, she is mother to the Washburn children with whom Janie identifies and, therefore, a legitimate mother-figure in Janie's life. This move, on Zora's part, still ascribes an obvious power to the maternal influence that, in this instance, is still Janie's caregiver, a foster mother of sorts.

In the second place, and in a fashion similar to the previously explored passage in The Waltz, Ms. Nellie's reference to young Janie as "Alphabet" shows that she, too, has no clearly established identity. That is why, as Janie explains, so many people call her by different names. As it is true for young Alabama, Janie's identity, too, would become more clearly defined by her continual interaction with people whom she met. This passage, too, marks the beginning of Janie's awakening process at the hands of a strong maternal influence.

A final similarity in the way in which the novels explore the strong mother-daughter bond is evidenced in the emphasis placed on courtship. In fact, in both novels, the emphasis on the strength of the mother-daughter bond in the heroines' early development is further accentuated as their move into adulthood is signaled by the break in the mother-daughter bond and their migration into married life. This premise is first confirmed in The Waltz as Alabama leaves home to marry U.S. Army lieutenant David Knight. She leaves a note to her mother proclaiming "I have not been as you would have wanted me but I love you with all my heart and I will think of you every day. I hate leaving you alone with all of your children gone. Don't forget me" (42). This letter symbolizes the beginning of Alabama's adult life. She is expressing how very much she loves her mother and will miss the

bond they shared throughout her youth. In the latter part of the letter, she even appears to express some hesitancy at leaving the familiarity and comfort of her mother's watch and venturing into the unknown world of marriage and adulthood.

Similarly, in Their Eyes Janie expresses to Phoebe how her life had changed after she was thrust into adulthood when her grandmother arranged for her to be married. She says that her "conscious life had commenced at Nanny's gate" (Hurston 10) when she kissed Johnny Taylor. Witnessing this act, Janie's grandmother decided that it was time for Janie to be married. Janie reminisces of that moment that it "was the end of her childhood" (12). The feelings associated with the kiss she shared with Johnny Taylor had opened Janie's eyes to a new world for which she felt ill prepared. Her discussion with her Nanny had made some of this clear:

> "Janie, youse uh 'oman, now, so ----"
>
> "Naw, Nanny, naw ah ain't no real 'oman yet."
>
> The thought was too new and heavy for Janie. She fought it away. . . .
>
> "Yeah, Janie, youse got yo' womanhood on yuh. So Ah mout ez well tell yuh Ah been savin' up for uh spell. Ah wants to see you married right away." (12)

With that, Nanny had arranged for Janie's marriage, not to Johnny Taylor but to Logan Killicks, a man Nanny deemed "decent" enough to make a good mate for her granddaughter. From this conversation, it seems that Janie, like Alabama, fears the new world to which her feelings and adult actions are leading. Janie, too, would rather stay nestled under the protective watch of her grandmother. Still, Nanny, like Millie Beggs, welcomes this new stage of development for her daughter as evidenced in the way in which she gladly releases her daughter into the

throes of marriage and adulthood.

The dominance of the maternal influence has many implications. The strong mother-daughter influence exhibited in the novels seems autobiographical in that both Zora and Zelda shared a remarkably close relationship with their mothers. In this respect, the theme of the close mother-daughter bond was something undoubtedly close in their hearts. The concept of both novels being developed as "identity novels," and their primary focus on the maternal influence in the early process of the heroines' awakening is, therefore, no accident. Rather, it is only natural for the authors to stress the importance of the mother figure in the heroines' development because it was so for themselves. It was, too, only natural for the authors to look to the relationship between the heroine and her mother (or, in Zora/Janie's case, the grandmother) because of the obviously shared gender. Consequently, as the young heroines grow closer to their mothers, they adopt certain qualities and values which their mothers had espoused.

The dynamics of these strong relationships were another implication and/or result of the dominant maternal influence. Just as Zelda and Zora received so much insight from their mothers, so do the heroines in their novels. Furthermore, the closer the young women grew to their mothers, the more they were trained to behave in certain ways deemed acceptable for women. This doctrine, too, was expressed in their novels, particularly through the heroines' relationships with their mother figures. As part of the awakening process expressed in both novels, it is clear that the heroines were taught what literary critic Linda Wagner calls "the proper female role: good girls don't cry, tease, whine" (74). In such a description, Wagner is perhaps alluding to the manner in which Alabama learns from her mother what is "acceptable" behavior for women. They are strong in their pursuits and supportive in their relationships. Similarly, Zora's Janie learns from her

grandmother what is acceptable behavior for young women. That is why Janie's grandmother sees fit to arrange a marriage for her granddaughter, associating Janie's kiss with her entrance into young adulthood and wanting the best her granddaughter. What seems best for Janie, according to her Nanny, is a husband who spelled security for her granddaughter.

Yet another implication of the dominant maternal influence is the level of dependency the heroines seem to exhibit on their mothers. Perhaps this is why the young girls seem to grapple so much with the notion of their mother figures encouraging them into marriage. Indeed, for the young women, such a venture means their leaving the protective clutches of the maternal watch for worlds yet unknown and therefore uncomfortable to them. Still, it is at their mothers' teachings and even urging that the young women enter into marriage, still seeking a continuum of the protection which they had found with their mother figures. In fact, Alabama's love for her mother, according to Robert Edward Seaman in his dissertation, has been transferred to a father-figure, in the form of David Knight, her husband. Seaman asserts that since Alabama's love for her mother can seemingly no longer be fulfilled, she seeks it in other forms, "characterized, in the first quarter of the novel by David Knight," Alabama's husband (Seaman 61). Although marriage is an entirely new world for Alabama, she perhaps accepts it as a natural occurrence since she has grown up witnessing her mother's dependency on her father, Judge Beggs. This transition, then, is an intrinsic part of her adult development and her realization of herself as an adult. As far as Alabama (and Zelda, for that matter) had learned from her mother, a young woman was supposed to marry for protection.

And apparently marriage is crucial to the heroines' identity. As for their identity, their youthful struggle to learn of themselves from their mothers' points

of view now changes. For as young married women, their quest for identity is now experienced in light of the new paternal stronghold in their lives, namely their husbands. While marriage assuredly marks the young heroines' entrance into adulthood, the concept of the woman's ever-present need for protection into adulthood is but a sign of the times for the young women. Perhaps that is why the young girls, albeit with some hesitation, relent to the maternal influence which urges their journey into married life. Alabama had witnessed her own mother to whom she had grown so close define herself as an adult within the constructs of their male-dominated home.

In that respect, Koula Hartnett notes that Zelda and her alter ego heroine, Alabama, represent the time in which they lived. They both engendered the model of the ideal Southern Belle who, rather than using her own talents to achieve high standards, had to have a dashing man in the picture (Hartnett 39). Zora and her heroine, Janie, embodied these same ideals. That is why Janie's grandmother insists she be married when she sees her granddaughter kissing a young man over the gatepost. But Nanny would not let Janie marry just anyone. In a 1937 New York Times Book Review, Lucille Thompkins says that because Nanny wanted the best for Janie, she "married her off straightway to a widower who spelled security" (Tompkins 18). Security was most important in Zora's and Zelda's development, as characterized in the lives of their heroines.

THE JOURNEY

The coming of age experience that is expressed in Their Eyes and in The Waltz is also depicted through the theme of travel. Marriage does not signal the end of the awakening process that the young women experience. Indeed, marriage for Alabama and Janie is merely another dimension of their awakening process. After Alabama and Janie enter into adulthood and are married off by their mother-figures, they travel extensively with their husbands still in search of happiness and, in effect, in search of who they are becoming as adults. In fact, both novels describe four journeys which the heroines undertake, particularly as a means of escaping their current conditions. In each episode, the heroines seem to be in search of a better life than the ones they choose to leave behind.

Janie's travels are described in four moves, each marking a different phase of her personal development. After Janie marries Logan Killicks, the widower whom Nanny arranged for Janie to marry, she soon becomes disenchanted with this relationship and she sets her sights on uniting with Jodie (Joe) Starks, her new love interest. At her sudden decision to flee her unhappy situation, Zora describes how a "feeling of sudden newness and change came over" Janie (Hurston 31). She continues in her description

> Janie hurried out of the front gate and turned south. Even if Joe was not there waiting for her, the change was bound to do her good. The morning road air was like a new dress. That made her feel the apron tied around her waist. She untied it and flung it on a low bush beside the road and walked on, picking flowers and making a bouquet. (31)

The previous passage provides a vivid description of Janie's need to escape her

current situation in search of a better life. She has become disenchanted with her marriage to Logan Killicks, and she wants out of this relationship. Again, her sense of becoming is described as Hurston portrays the sudden newness and change which comes over Janie when she decides to leave this, her first husband. The description of her hurrying out of the front gate and heading southward expresses Janie's sudden urgent need to escape her unhappy relationship with Logan. This sense of unhappiness is perhaps a most significant blow for Janie since she does not find a sense of a security with her husband, as her grandmother had foretold she would. Furthermore, the fact that Janie looks forward to this escape, whether or not Joe Starks is there waiting for her, demonstrates the fervor of her desire to leave Logan, even if it means she will not have the potential male figure in her life to provide the security she obviously seeks. Still, as a symbol of her developing inner strength, Janie sees her escape from her present situation as a quest toward her own security and independence. That is why it does not matter to her whether or not Joe is waiting for her.

Zora's comparison of the morning road air to a new dress also hints at the positive effects of Janie's act of fleeing her current situation. Janie's travels along the morning road are, in this case, as welcome a treat as a beautiful new dress. Moreover, the newness she now feels further emphasizes her discontent with her current state of being. That explains why she quickly unties the apron and flings it along the roadway, leaving it in the distance as she keeps moving forward, in search of her new life with Joe Starks. Finally, Janie finds Joe Starks waiting for her, and they head to Green Cove Springs where they marry before traveling further to their final destination in Eatonville, Florida.

Life in Eatonville also proves somehow lackluster to Janie. Instead of finding happiness there, she suffers loss after loss with her new husband, Jody

Starks. She loses her independence to this man, her mate, who vehemently proclaims "somebody got to think for women and chillun and chickens and cows" (67). Once the townspeople elect Joe mayor of Eatonville, Janie also loses her identity and is reduced to being known simply as "Mrs. Mayor Starks" (50). The final loss in this phase of Janie's life is at Joe's death due to sudden illness. Again searching for some sense of wholeness, Janie seeks to put this part of her life behind her. She flees, again, to a new life with her now third husband Vergible "Tea Cake" Woods.

The day that Janie leaves to wed Tea Cake, she describes this experience, too, as one of newness and excitement. Zora notes how "the train beat on itself and danced on the shiny rails mile after mile. Every now and then, the engineer would play on his whistle for the people in the towns he passed by. And the train shuffled into Jacksonville and to a whole lot of things she wanted to see and to know" (111). Here, Janie seems full of anticipation and happiness as she awaits the beginning of her new life with Tea Cake. The first part of this account alone invokes a sense of fanciful elation by characterizing the movements of the train as dancing and ascribing a shiny new quality to the train rails. Furthermore, Zora's mention of the "mile after mile" of distance ahead of her symbolizes the distance between her past life in Eatonville and what lies ahead for her in Jacksonville. Even Zora's depiction of the train engineer playing his whistle rather than blowing it summons a sense of enjoyment, and even anticipation, as one feels when listening to music being played. Hurston's description of the train shuffling into Jacksonville, where Janie eventually marries and lives with Tea Cake, is akin to dancing, which also exudes a feeling of extreme delight and amusement. Finally, notes Janie, waiting for her in Jacksonville are "a whole lot of things she wanted to see and to know," thus indicating her delight and anticipation. Once the train

arrives in Jacksonville, Janie sees Tea Cake and notes the new blue suit he is wearing in honor of this new chapter of her life upon which she has so eagerly embarked.

Janie's third journey with her new husband, Tea Cake, even demonstrates the sense of awe with which she views this new phase of her life. When Janie travels with Tea Cake down to the Florida Everglades (known by them as "de muck"), she describes everything she sees there as being big and new. She speaks of "Big Lake Okechobee, big beans, big cane, big weeds, big everything" (123). Her perception, in this case, signifies her sense of wonder at all that lies ahead for her. The large descriptions, here, spark a sense of foreboding as "de muck" would form the background of where Janie and Tea Cake would experience a substantial awakening of their own.

Life in the Everglades proves just as rewarding for the couple as Tea Cake has promised Janie it would be. Yet, again, they are forced into another escape pattern that moves them back to the life they left so far behind them. This time, not by choice, Janie and Tea Cake are running together to escape the damaging hurricane that tears through their home in the Everglades. In trying to outrun the storm, Janie and Tea Cake find themselves back in Palm Beach. Janie witnesses that although one day has passed since they were caught in the storm, she feels that it "was years later by their bodies. Winters and winters of hardship and suffering. The wheel kept turning round and round. Hope, hopelessness and despair. But the storm blew itself out as they approached the city of refuge" (158). This passage provides both a sense of transition and foreboding in the storyline. The years that Janie felt in her body symbolize the growth and maturity Janie has experienced in her physical as well as spiritual journey toward adulthood. Indeed, the years that her body now feels, in comparison to the way she felt while living in

Palm Beach, signify that she has reached adulthood in many respects. Then, too, the winters of hardship and suffering represent the trials and pitfalls she has encountered along her journey and through her travels. Zora's description of the wheel turning round and round signifies Janie's life cycle and demonstrates that, in her cycle, she is back almost to where she started in her life with Tea Cake while still relatively new in her search for identity. This premise is evidenced by her acknowledgement of the hope, hopelessness and despair which she has experienced. Janie longs to escape the hopelessness and despair she feels along the way, constantly in search of hope for happiness and fulfillment in her life. Janie's reference to Palm Beach as the city of refuge symbolizes that this is to be her/their final stop along the journey and their refuge from the storm, the hopelessness and despair they had encountered along their life travels together.

In The Waltz, Alabama and David Knight experience quite similar transitions in their lives together. Zelda, like Zora, explores the themes of travel and escape in Alabama's coming of age. When Alabama marries David, he whisks her away from her home in Alabama and she reflects on how the train they rode together "pulled Alabama out of the shadow-drenched land of her youth" (Fitzgerald 43). By design, Fitzgerald creates the darker image of Alabama's home-town by referring to it as the "shadow-drenched land of her youth" (43). They quickly journey to New York where, as Alabama surmises, the skyline "twinkled like a golden canopy behind a throne" (47). Alabama describes the gold canopy that she sees along the city skyline and quips that the city resembled a "gold-crowned conference" (47). For Alabama, New York's golden display represents her unlimited golden opportunities for new experiences in this grand city. From this depiction, Alabama has left her unenlightened youth to grow and experience the limitless possibilities awaiting her in her life's journey, beginning in

New York City.

Alabama and her husband David Knight never stay in one place very long. Like Janie, Alabama comes into her adulthood through four instances of travel and shedding one experience to try out another. Alabama and David leave New York in search, again, of some grand lifestyle, some promise of a life she did not know but had only heard of in her youth.

On their boat ride from New York into Europe, Alabama's first observation is that the air on the ship is "sticky and stuffy" (60), thus signaling her initial apprehension either to following David on this journey into the unknown or to journeying this far away from the life to which she was just growing accustomed in New York. Once they arrive in Europe, Alabama automatically perceives the air as being "very un-American" (67). She notes that the sky is "less energetic" than what she had known in America and that "the luxuriance of Europe had blown up with the storm" (67). The storm she references is the tidal wave they encounter on their journey in the boat. Perhaps a little jaded from this frightening experience on the ship, Alabama's perception is clouded by the less-than-smooth voyage into Europe. Her description of the air and sky as decidedly un-American and less energetic demonstrates her initial apprehension about leaving the comforts of her native country to be welcomed into Europe by such disorderliness. Having grown weary from her trip in the storm-tossed ship, Alabama's own lack of energy is characterized in her impression of the European sky. Moreover, this first impression has marred her view of Europe, which is why she feels that the beauty and luxuriance of the country she had so anticipated has been blown away in the storm.

It is interesting to note that, while on the ship, Alabama, David and their young daughter, Bonnie, experience a situation similar to what Janie and Tea Cake

experience when they are tossed about in a hurricane while swimming toward their home in the Florida Everglades. Perhaps the significance of the hurricane in Their Eyes and the tidal wave in The Waltz is simply the element of survival. These were sudden natural disasters for which there is no adequate preparation other than to simply learn to survive. Both women are, then, growing stronger and learning to survive life's hardships.

In Alabama's customary style of rising to the occasion, she again welcomes whatever her new life would bring in Europe. Rather than continue to view the new place with disdain, she warms to the new scenery, observing how "the coast of Europe defied the Atlantic expanse. Here, she begins to get a full unblemished view of the world that lies ahead of her, seemingly even beyond the scope of what she had imagined. She views with wonder and excitement how the ship "slid into the friendliness of Cherbourg amidst the green and faraway bells" (70). Alabama, from this passage, seems to have softened to welcome the new occasion of her journey into Europe. Her notion of entering what she terms the "friendliness of Cherbourg" marks her openness to her new life ahead. The characterization of the green and faraway bells is likened to the newness and unbridled treasure she hopes to find as she opens this new chapter of her life in search of her true identity.

Alabama's third journey is when she travels to Naples, Italy, for a spot in a ballet production there. This journey is significant for Alabama because it marks the first time she has traveled alone. This feat in itself is an accomplishment because all of her prior escapades have taken place with her husband by her side. In the passage about to be explored, Alabama's first "solo" journey, in effect, symbolizes her launching out on her own, and perhaps her first true demonstration of independence. While she thought she found security in marrying David Knight, this solo venture signifies her growth and maturity beyond the point of "needing"

someone else to provide her security.

As Alabama boards the train to leave Paris for Naples, she notes with wonder, how "the glow from the electric signs [blare] over Paris in the distance like the glare of a pottery kiln" (154). This unmistakable sound that she describes hearing symbolizes the indelible impression that Paris has left on her and that she will somehow carry with her the experience she has had while there. Fitzgerald also characterizes Alabama, during this part of her travel, as being quite nervous about her new embarkation in her description of how Alabama's hands "sweated under the coarse red blanket" (154). While understandably nervous about the experiences awaiting her in Naples, her fears are perhaps heightened all the more because this is her first time traveling away from David since they married. Moreover, this solo journey of Alabama's represents her sense of escaping her real life in search of her dream of becoming a dancer. Saddled with these new fears, her burdens are transferred to the red blanket she carries with her on the train. Signaling her discomfort and making Alabama feel ill-at-ease, the blanket she carries, too, feels hard and course rather than warm and comfortable.

Finally arriving in Italy, her eeriness of anticipation subsides as she begins to notice "the open friendliness of the Italian air" (155). According to Fitzgerald, this is the moment when Alabama's spirits begin to rise. Taking in her new environment, Alabama begins to view with welcomed anticipation what this new experience could mean to her. Again, her mind focuses on the opportunity her life had afforded her by channeling her courage to Naples. Zelda writes, ". . . though Alabama could not find a trace of it in her room, she [feels] somehow as if the ceilings [are] encrusted with gold leaf" (157). Here as well, Fitzgerald's description of the gold appropriately symbolizes the golden opportunity which she hopes lies ahead for Alabama in Italy.

Like Janie, too, the personal and spiritual journey which Alabama had experienced throughout the novel culminates with her return to her family home. At news of her father's impending death, Alabama, David and Bonnie travel back to the states to be close to the judge and his family. Upon their return, the southern town appears "soundless" to this jet-setting couple who have lived in so many larger cities that, to them, have seemed so busy, quite the opposite of what they now witness upon their return to Alabama's home. Fitzgerald depicts Alabama's hearing as being "muffled by the intense stillness as if she had entered a vacuum" (181). The power of this description lies in the fact that, by comparison, Alabama's first impression upon entering (or leaving) all of the other cities she has visited is the loudness, the brightness, the "busy-ness" that seem to overwhelm her. That she is now stricken by the "intense stillness" of home shows that Alabama has come full-circle and has become quite worldly now in her journey. She has matured to the point that this environment, once all she knew, now seems completely new to her. Zelda notes how Alabama's being with her sister after so many years makes her feel like a child again. Once more, Zelda expresses Alabama's maturity and her finally having come of age with her own child and acting in the maternal role that had been her mother's place when last she was at home. She notes that once you began to "weave your horizons into some kind of shelter, it was good to know that hands you loved had helped in their spinning" (182). Alabama has, from all accounts, realized herself as adult for she has acknowledged that through all of her journeys, she has come home to reconcile that her family and all of her experiences have played equal roles in making her the adult she has become.

Author Sally Peltier Harvey submits that Alabama's desire to get out and explore is done not out of selfishness but out of a sense of self-fulfillment and

survival. She emphasizes critic Warren Susman's assertion that the desire to travel is simply a mode of "'adjustment and adaptation'" which, he continued, "'are keys to such survival'" (Harvey 70). Janie's and Alabama's wont to travel is a natural pattern of their development. To them, their wanderings are completely necessary as they seek their own identities.

Alabama's travels are particularly a sign of the times. She and David move together in search of happiness and success, and in an attempt toward self-definition. In a 1978 review of Zelda's life and works, editor Laurie Di Mauro suggests that the Knights, like other Americans during their time, "thought that happiness was just around the corner" (Di Mauro 51). So they journey from Alabama's southland to the Riviera and beyond in search if fulfillment (Fitzgerald 182). Interestingly, it is not the individual trips but the sum of all her escapades that create a sense of satisfaction for Alabama. She marvels at how her returning home has made her realize the total contributory effect of her journeys on the woman she has become (182).

Janie comes into her own in much the same way. In her case, as with Alabama's, the resources to travel are actually made available to her spouse(s). This, too, was characteristic of these times when women were still considered inferior to men. Janie, like Alabama, is simply able to take advantage of the situations presented to her by her husband. In a 1993 review, critic Lucille Tompkins discusses the element of escape as a focal point in Their Eyes. Tompkins points out that Janie goes off with Jody Sparks in search of her own fulfillment once her marriage to Logan Killicks proves to her that marriage does not end what Hurston termed "the cosmic loneliness of the unmated" (Tompkins 19). Marriage for Janie, then, is the ultimate escape. Each time she becomes disenchanted with her marriage, she leaves town to wed another, in perpetual

search of happiness. Tompkins, too, supports this premise as she alludes to Janie's expression of discontentment with Jody when she tells him "'all dis bowin' down, all dis obedience under yo voice - dat ain't whut ah rushed off down de road to find out about you'" (19). Indeed, she had rushed off down the road in search of happiness with Jody. Instead, she finds more unhappiness and soon leaves in search of happiness with her third husband, Tea Cake.

A final similarity within the context of the heroines' travel is that their journeys climax with their experiencing death of a dominant male figure in their lives. Losing the powerful male force in their lives proves to be a bitter-sweet experience for both Alabama and Janie as they also gain a stronger sense of their own independence. For Alabama and Janie, then, the element of death is a final device toward self-discovery characterized in the novels. Moreover, the losses the heroines experience are pivotal in their own development. It is through the loss which each character experiences that she also finds her ultimate satisfaction in learning her own inner strength.

Janie's loss comes at Tea Cake's death at her very hands. After being bitten on the face by a wild dog during the hurricane, Tea Cake contracts rabies and suffers sudden fits and attacks that make him paranoid and delusional. By way of self-defense, Janie shoots Tea Cake who, in his paranoia, accuses her of cheating on him and threatens to shoot and kill her. This experience places Janie in a most precarious position. In one fatal gun shot, Janie proves her strength as she stands to defend herself from her husband, this sudden stranger now attacking her. In her analysis of Hurston's treatment of this topic in Their Eyes, critic Cheryl Wall maintains that Janie's act is an heroic act of self-reclamation (92). Wall asserts that in this one act Janie has defined herself as a strong, independent woman, thereby marking a dramatic break from her past (93).

On the other hand, this one fatal act at Janie's hands also leaves her alone, without the man to whom she had looked for security and completion. This action alone makes Janie a different woman from this point on. Wall contends that from now until the ensuing end of the novel, Janie is "independent for the first time in her life" (92). It is from this initial tremendous setback that Janie makes her greatest leap toward adulthood. She faces her greatest challenge of surviving without the man who had spelled security for her.

Janie's survival, in essence, creates a sense of triumph and glory at the end of the story (Hibben 22). Janie has finally found her ultimate happiness in her realization that she can survive without the false guise of Tea Cake as her consummate protector. In her analysis of Hurston's approach to the theme of the search for identity, critic Susan Willis concurs. She offers that it is during Tea Cake's dying moments that Janie realizes that "women cannot hope to have themselves fully realized in their husbands" (Willis 126-27). This premise is true; for it seems through all of her journeys with her three different husbands in search of happiness, Janie falls short of finding fulfillment, her ultimate goal. Only at the end of the novel when Janie stops to reflect on her life does she realize that she has become a complete woman (Hemenway 240). She has borrowed from all of her experiences the positive energy that can come from peril. In the final paragraph of the novel Janie realizes she is finally at peace because she has "pulled in her horizon like a great fishnet....around the waist of the world and draped it over her shoulder" (Hurston 184). Her horizon, the sum all of her experiences, shall be the only real security she will need because these experiences have made Janie the strong independent woman we witness at the end of the story.

Alabama experiences a very similar transition in The Waltz. The death of Alabama's father, Judge Beggs, is quite a shock for Alabama. Having realized in

her marriage to David Knight that marriage is no guarantee of a woman's ultimate satisfaction, Alabama perhaps had always felt she would have her father there as her eternal protector. The judge's death, then, drives home the harsh reality that Alabama's ultimate security rests in her own independence. This premise is evidenced in the novel, as Nancy Milford points out, when Alabama reflects, "without her father the world would be without its last resource" (245), then, suddenly she recounts "it will be me who is the last resource when my father is dead" (246). With this startling realization, Alabama is at once on the brink of her independence. For in this very moment, she begins to see that she is her own ultimate protective resource.

Just as Janie realizes she must look to her personal horizon for security in her adult life, Alabama has the same shocking realization. Zelda, too, focuses on the horizon as the totality of Alabama's experiences that have brought her to this moment of self-realization. Zelda describes that, even with the sadness in the eminent death of Judge Beggs, Alabama (and David) would be forced to "accept the tightening up of the world - to begin someplace to draw in [her] horizons" (Fitzgerald 190). After having traveled far and wide in search of her own fulfillment, Alabama comes home to realize it is truly the sum of all of her experiences, both good and bad, from which she gains her ultimate sense of security in her identity. Just as Zora describes Janie's protective horizon as the sum of her life's experiences, so, here, does Zelda with the sum of Alabama's experiences.

The loss of Alabama's father becomes, therefore, a revelation of her own independence. The "end" which she is experiencing at her father's death will catapult her into adulthood. Realizing this, Alabama comments to her husband "we will have to begin all over again...with new expectations to be paid from the

sum of our experience..."(191). This revelation for Alabama signifies the new start she is willing to make. The new expectations she feels they must have will come from having to rely on themselves for fulfillment of their dreams rather than on others as they had done for most of their lives.

From this point forward, Alabama seems more introverted in her thoughts and plans. In his portrait of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry Dan Piper digresses to comment on Zelda's heroine Alabama that "after [her father's funeral] Alabama withdraws more and more into her own secret world" (Piper 54). Thus retreating more to herself, Alabama is able to reconcile the meaning of these experiences, especially the loss of her father, on her life. Realizing the depletion of what had been her human resources, Alabama appears very accepting of the fact that she is her own most valuable resource. With an air of resignation, she comments that "by the time a person has achieved years adequate for choosing a direction, the die is cast and the moment has long since passed which determined the future" (Fitzgerald 195). The insight in this comment from Alabama lies in the idea that her words so adequately describe what she has just experienced. Now, as an adult, Alabama realizes she must make her own choices for the direction her life should take. Moreover, she realizes that her life ahead has already been shaped by all of her experiences and the choices she has made up to this very moment.

So it is, then, that both Zora and Zelda realize the valuable sense of independence that often comes at the death of a loved one. The similarities in both of novels' chronicles of a woman's search for independence culminate in the personal loss she experiences and the inner strength she gains because of it. Both heroines, Janie and Alabama, realize they must look to the horizons they have created to chart their own courses toward ultimate fulfillment. In so doing, both Janie and Alabama emerge from the insecure young women introduced into the

novels to strong independently thinking women by the end of the novels.

LOOKING WITHIN

The many similarities demonstrated between Zora's Their Eyes and Zelda's The Waltz are not limited to the themes explored within them. The writing styles and ways in which these themes are expressed are also remarkably similar. Pervasive throughout both novels is the use of the participant third person narrative voice and the strongly metaphorical natural imagery. That these common traits are present in both novels gives credence to the early premise that the authors' similar personal influences affect their writing styles. While the common themes may be deemed as purely coincidental, the similar ways in which these themes are expressed in the novels provide an even closer link to the origin of these authors' creativity.

Both novels are written entirely in the third person narrative voice. This style is characterized by the narrator's telling of the story as if observing the characters throughout the story. In essence, when reading the novels, it is clear that the narrator is telling the story from the heroine's point of view. The description of the heroines' experiences throughout the story, however, are portrayed as if the narrator is actually in the scene observing the actions of all involved. Because of the distinct parallels between the authors' lives and these, their novels, it seems as if they themselves are the narrators creating this free indirect discourse. Assuming this to be the case, the authors have created a triple fusion of voices between them, the narrator and the heroine.

The third person observer-participant writing style is particularly obvious during Alabama's conversations in The Waltz as early as during her youth when she is inquiring about herself as a child. In this scene where Alabama searches for answers about her youth, Zelda describes how young Alabama "presses against her

mother in an effort to realize some proper relationship" (11). This description is offered as if Zelda is somehow sitting in a corner of the room and listening to the dynamics at work between Alabama and her mother. Zelda continues in her narrative commentary, offering "[Alabama] does not know that what efforts she makes will become herself" (11). Here, again, the narrator tells the story of the young heroine in search of her identity as if actively with the heroine at all times. This particular passage, however, has the double effect not only of describing Alabama as a youth, but also of foreboding what the heroine will discover about herself at the end of the novel. The telling of the story from the narrator's point of view first shows Alabama's lack of awareness as a child that her own efforts will create her true identity. Then, by the end of the story, the same ageless narrator witnesses Alabama as an adult and asserts, on Alabama's behalf, "we will have to seek some perspective on ourselves . . . " (196). The narrator's sharing of these, Alabama's innermost thoughts, symbolizes that the narrator has, in fact, witnessed the heroine's entire journey in search of self, from child to adult.

Critic W. R. Anderson, in his 1978 essay on Zelda's development as a writer, alludes to the observer-participant style of writing she employs in The Waltz, noting that in so doing, she is able to "create both a sense of involved immediacy with her characters and a level of detached judgment" (61). This style helps the reader come to know the narrator as an active part of the story, learning about life and growing with Alabama rather than simply retelling it after the fact. Anderson observes that Zelda's voice represents a "fusion between narrator and protagonist as though the narrative identity were a self-questioning element of the protagonist's psyche" (61). Perhaps that is why Alabama's assertion at the end of the story that " 'we' will have to seek some perspective on ourselves" is so powerful. Through the third-person narrative voice, it is as if "we" does actually

symbolize the heroine and the author/narrator.

This third-person narrator, then, is given a dual tone, as if the story is being told in unison from two women's accounts, one sitting by and watching the action, while the other is at the receiving end of the action. Anderson notes that in The Waltz, the narrator "is simultaneously permitted access to events, judgmental detachments and . . . a sense of involvement in [their] struggles" (61). Anderson's observations legitimize the premise that Alabama's story mirrors that of Zelda's background. The author's voice blends with that of the narrator and, because of the obvious parallels between the storyline and the author/narrator's biography, both become active participants in the story. In effect, Zelda's alter ego, Alabama, echoes bits of Zelda's own personal experiences.

Even in Their Eyes, Zora's autobiographical tone fuses with the omniscient voice of the narrator to create both a solitary and pluralistic effect. In her essay critiquing the language of the novel, Maria Tai Wolf cites the overall effect of the third-person participant voice in the novel. She expounds that from the beginning of the story, the reader is made aware that it is essentially a woman's story. She continues, "This is the narration of life as lived by a woman, the creation of a dream as truth" (Tai Wolf 218). Tai Wolf's exposition sets the scene for the participatory role that the narrator assumes by virtue of the congruences between the lives of the story's heroine and author. Furthermore, this pronouncement begs the question of which woman is actually referenced here. Is it Zora, the woman narrating the story, or is it the other woman, Janie, the heroine of the novel? The ambiguity in this comment, then, prepares the reader for the seemingly unified voices of both the narrator and the heroine.

Critic Karla Holloway maintains a similar stance. In her essay entitled "The Emergent Voice: The Word Within Its Texts," Holloway explores the singular

emergent voice that arises from Zora's writing from the third-person participant point of view in the novel. Holloway focuses on the converging of two voices within the story, that of the narrator and that of the heroine. Holloway notes that Janie "gains her voice from the available voice of the text and subsequently learns to share it with the narrator" (Holloway 71). The voice of the text from which Holloway says Janie gains her voice is, in fact, the voice of the narrator. Holloway's assertion that the voices are shared attests to the power of the third-person observer-participant voice by which the reader is drawn into this woman's story, be it Zora as the autobiographical narrator or Janie, the heroine who comes to life at the very hands of the narrator.

The fact that both novelists employ use of the third-person participant voice in writing their stories is mostly coincidental. The tenet that the author is, in fact, the narrator of the story emphasizes both writers' need for self-revelation through their writings. This finding is certainly not surprising given the similar times during which Zora and Zelda did their writing. Both Zelda and Zora are reflecting their own coming of age, during times when women were otherwise considered the silent voice. How appropriate, then, for both women writers to engage the third-person participant voice in their writing. In so doing, they are able to tell their own story through the experiences of the fictitious heroines they created.

Another similarity between Zora's and Zelda's writings is the use of natural and floral imagery throughout the novels. Descriptions of Janie's and Alabama's experiences often employ vivid floral imagery in describing the developmental processes of the heroines. Interestingly enough, each novel contains approximately eight instances detailing descriptive floral imagery. In each description, the floral imagery symbolizes the delicacy of womanhood both Janie

and Alabama are experiencing within the novels.

The effect of natural imagery as used to describe the scenery is obvious in various scenes within both novels. Such depictions create an atmosphere of natural beauty and delicacy. These women writers, however, put these images to work creating other impressions central to the development of the story. Coincidentally, Zora and Zelda apply the use of natural imagery in similar ways within their respective novels. For in both Their Eyes and The Waltz, distinct natural images cultivate sub-thematic ideas including eroticism, maturity and symbolism.

Early in The Waltz, the reader becomes aware of Alabama as a young woman on the brink of adulthood. Part of the awakening process for Alabama is her becoming aware of her own sensuality, her inner being. Zelda delicately and quite vividly explores this subject matter in the following scene:

> From the orchard across the way the smell of ripe pears floats over the child's bed . . . . The moon on the windowpanes careens to the garden and ripples the succulent exhalations of the earth like a silver paddle . . . . There is a brightness and bloom over things; she inspects life proudly, as if she walked in a garden forced by herself to grow in the least hospitable of soils. She is already contemptuous of ordered planting, believing in the possibility of a wizard cultivator to bring forth sweet-smelling blossoms from the hardest of rocks, and night-blooming vines from barren wastes, to plant the breath of twilight and to shop with marigolds. (Fitzgerald 13)

The natural and floral imagery in the preceding passage catalogs Alabama's early awakening as she enters adulthood. The ripe pears referenced in the opening

sentence signify Alabama's early development. The smell of the ripe pears represents Alabama's "ripeness" as a woman. On a deeper level, perhaps, the ripened fruit is to Alabama as the smell of the fruit is to the physiological changes which women experience as they enter adolescence, the period commonly known as puberty or "pre-adulthood." As the fruit becomes ripe, it gives off a distinct smell. Likewise, as women mature from childhood into adulthood, their hormonal changes within their bodies produce certain smells that were non-existent during childhood. The fact that this smell in the story is characterized as floating "over the child's bed" represents the concept that, for Alabama, her sense of womanhood is close upon her as the child who seemingly is in great anticipation of it all.

The descriptions that follow also chronicle the young woman's early development. Alabama observes the succulent exhalation of the moon, thus ascribing sensual, even sexual, qualities to the earth. Even here, the earth, for its natural vastness, could represent Alabama, a vast and complex character herself. The "brightness and bloom over things" which Alabama witnesses represent her own coming of age. Such is why she is described as being so proud. The feeling of self-force through a garden of "least hospitable soils" signifies the pressure that Alabama puts on herself throughout her life, as chronicled in the novel, to weather the storms which her less-than-simple life would yield her. In this sense, this passage gains a strong sense of foreboding. Alabama's life was, after all, anything but simple as she met with many challenges along the way.

Finally, the ordered planting of which Alabama is so contemptuous represents the mundane order from which Alabama struggles to break away. Likewise, the sweet-smelling blossoms bursting forth from the hardest of rocks and the night-blooming vines from barren wastes are the metaphor for Alabama's development into childhood amidst the pain and difficulty which lay in her midst.

Similarly, Janie's first chronicled sensual awakening is expressed in vivid natural images. In Their Eyes, Zora writes

> [Janie] was stretched on her back beneath the pear tree soaking in the alto chant of the visiting bees, the fold of the sun and the panting breath of the breeze when the inaudible voice of it all came to her. She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight. (Hurston 10)

An obvious similarity here is that Zora, like Zelda, chooses to use the pears as the primary focal point for the young heroine. Concurrently, both Janie and Alabama lie beneath the pears affected to the very core of their beings by their observations. For Alabama, it is the smell of the ripe pears that lingers in the air, over her bed where she lies. For Janie, the pear tree itself seems to provide some form of shield as Janie lies on her back underneath it. Perhaps the two authors chose to place this emphasis on pears for the metaphorical comparison of the young women to these ripe fruit. Pears reach their full ripeness in the early autumn. Similarly, these women are experiencing their autumn season. Autumn is generally described as a very colorful period and one of great change, just between the drastic heat of the summer and the extreme cold brought on in the winter. Likewise, these women of such colorful character are experiencing their own time of change, being no longer children yet not quite grown-up.

Zora effectively invokes nature and rich floral imagery in describing what, as far as the reader can tell, is the beginning of Janie's awakening on a very sensual level. The pollination process which takes place between the bees and the blooms in the pear tree is quite stimulating. Janie's senses are heightened as she lies on her

back under the big, strong pear tree, observing with great passion as the dust bearing bee sinks "into the sanctum of a bloom." In what seems a most erotic experience for Janie, she, like the blooms, lies at the receiving end of this action. This experience leaves Janie spellbound. She is caught up in the so-called "love embrace" between the thousand sister-calyxes and the bees as she watches the entire tree shiver from top to bottom in the sheer ecstasy from the entire experience.

Through such descriptive, metaphorical language, Zora has essentially divulged to the reader that Janie is at the very brink of her womanhood. Like Zelda, Zora's use of the natural imagery is essential for its metaphorical value to the story. In the preceding passages from both stories, the language powerfully yet subtly transforms the heroine into the object of her observation, and vice versa. In effect, one delicate being defines the other in terms of constantly changing and becoming, terms which are the primary themes of both novels.

As the stories continue, the authors introduce other instances of the natural and floral imagery in describing the heroines' development and maturity. The following passage tells of the inner struggle Alabama experiences as a young, single woman at the threshold of adulthood:

> She had a strong sense of her own insignificance; of her life's slipping by while June bugs covered the moist fruit in the fig trees with the motionless activity of clustering flies upon an open sore. The bareness of the dry Bermuda grass about the pecan trees crawled imperceptibly with tawny caterpillars. The matlike vines dried in the autumn heat and hung like empty locust shells from the burned thickets about the pillars of the house. The sun sagged yellow over the grass plots and bruised itself on the clotted cotton

effectively weaves images of nature in describing the heroine's development. By the end of the story when an older and more mature Alabama returns home to be with her dying father, similar tranquil images of nature describe her mental state. Zelda portrays how "The sweet smell of sleeping gardens lay in the air. A breeze from the gulf tolled the pecan trees mournfully back and forth....Thirty years he had lived in his house, and watched the scattered jonquils bloom and seen the morning glories wrinkle in the morning sun and snipped the blight from his roses and admired Miss Millie's ferns" (183). The sweet smell of sleeping gardens conveys a sense of peace and innocence as Alabama returns to the place where she spent her childhood. The sleeping gardens reflect a sense of beginning as a garden of infinite potential will spring forth full of life. This image, too, conveys a tragic sense of the inevitable end of life which Alabama has come home to spend with her ailing father. The sweet smell, then, appeals to the innocent childhood on which Alabama is now reflecting. Perhaps Alabama views the breeze as being so mournful because she feels it will usher in the impending death of her father. The vivid floral and natural images, here, encompass the past thirty years of Alabama's life quite effectively. Just like the scattered jonquils, the morning glories and the roses in her mother's garden, Alabama, too, has bloomed and become a woman.

Zora, too, portrays her heroine's adult development in terms of her natural environment. Early in her marriage to Logan Killicks, as Janie began to verbalize her lack of fulfillment from the union, Zora expresses Janie's feelings in terms of colorful floral images. She tells of how Janie "waited a bloom time, a green time, and an orange time" in search of satisfaction within her marriage to Logan (Hurston 23). The bloom time, the green time and the orange time are, respectively, the springtime when flowers are blooming, the summer time when nature's plants reflect a vibrant green hue and the autumn as vegetation adopts an

earthly orange hue. In essence, nearly a year has passed in Janie's marriage to Logan, and she has yet to find the fullness that she thought her grandmother said she would find. Furthermore, Janie notes that "when the pollen again gilded the sun and sifted down on the world she began to stand around the gate and expect things " (23). Again, Zora engages the pollen icon, referencing not only a cyclical year of marriage for Janie and Logan but also signifying springtime and new life. For Janie, it was time for a change, a new life.

Zora continues her implosion of natural imagery meshing the young heroine with her natural surroundings. Janie professes to know things that no one had told her, such as the words of the trees and wind (23-4). In fact, Janie is described as having spoken to the falling seeds, telling them," 'Ah hope you fall on soft ground,' because she had heard the seeds saying that to each other as they passed" (24). Such a portrayal of Janie creates an image of her being uniquely and completely one with nature. She, like the seasons, is constantly changing and growing, hoping to find that soft, fertile ground that will nourish her spirit.

This natural imagery continues as Janie summons the strength to leave her first husband, Logan Killicks. Janie has apparently reached a level of maturity that has encouraged her to break the ties of unfulfillment in search of satisfaction. She decides that "from now on until death, she was going to have flower dust and springtime sprinkled over everything. A bee for her bloom" (31). The flower dust and springtime that Janie desires represent the new life she is seeking for herself. Here, again, the flower dust and bee for her bloom are images that are synonymous with springtime and new life bursting forth. Such is what Janie seeks. So, with this thought in mind, Janie heads off again in search of happiness with Joe Starks.

Marriage had, then, played a large role in the heroines' development within both novels. Apart from it, the two women in the novels appear somehow

incomplete. While the natural and floral descriptions have created the portrait of the women's search for fulfillment, they are equally effective in exposing the feelings of the women even in their happy unions.

For Alabama, the somber autumn ends and she feels her own springtime when she falls in love with and later marries David Knight. Zelda expounds

> Spring came and shattered its opalescent orioles in wreaths of daffodils. Kiss-me-at-the-gate clung to its angular branches and the old yards were covered with a child's version of flowers: snowdrops and *Primula veris,* pussywillow and calendula. David and Alabama kicked over the oak leaves from the stumpy roots in the woods and picked white violets. (Fitzgerald 41)

The brilliant orioles and beautiful flowers are the beauty that Alabama witnesses as she looks through the eyes of a woman who has awakened to find love with David Knight. The various types of wild flowers she describes reflect the new life, the infinite options and the wild passion she feels with David. Finally, the image of the two of them kicking over the oak leaves and picking white violets symbolizes their working together, in effect, to turn over new leaves and unearth the pure beauty of their relationship together.

Similarly, when Janie finally finds true happiness in young Vergible "Tea Cake" Woods, her life, too, is showered with renewed joy. The joy she feels lingers, even beyond Tea Cake's untimely death, for he has been the one who has helped her find her ultimate happiness and satisfaction. For that reason, after Tea Cake's death, "she [has] given away every everything in their little house except a package of garden seed that Tea Cake had brought to plant . . . . The seeds reminded of Janie of Tea Cake more than anything else because he was always planting things" (182). For Janie, the garden seed symbolizes Tea Cake for all the

potential he had and the beauty that he brought to her life, just like a garden.

The use of devices such as natural imagery and the third-person narrative voice contribute significantly to the development of the heroines' characters in both novels. Like so many women writers, Zora and Zelda pour much of their personal lives into the development of the main characters in the novels. Because of this, the narrative voice in both novels gains a pluralistic tone, as if the narrator is an actual participant or silent witness within the story. In effect, the reader becomes familiar with the heroines of the stories while also gaining more insight into the authors' backgrounds. It is for this reason, alone, that these similar writing techniques proved so effective.

The use of the natural imagery also proves effective in both novels. Whether through vivid floral descriptions or other colorful natural images, Zelda and Zora chronicle the development of Alabama and Janie, respectively, through lively metaphor. In each case, the delicacy of nature represents the awakening process that both Alabama and Janie experience. As in nature, both heroines are constantly growing and changing along their journey into womanhood. The fact that both writers employ these similar techniques speaks to their pre-disposition to such devices. These common traits were found because of the similar backgrounds shared by both writers.

CONCLUSION

From what has been exposed of the Zora Neale Hurston's and Zelda Fitzgerald's lives, their similar personal experiences somehow linked their spirits. Such is why the similar themes of the maternal influence, travel and the inner strength resulting from the loss of a loved one are noted. Both Zelda and Zora had close ties to their mothers, both women traveled extensively along their journeys into self-discovery, and both women grew even stronger when faced with adversity. It would stand to reason, then, that these experiences would permeate their writings. Moreover, both Zora and Zelda were writing during the Great Depression, but their works reflect the creative spirit of the post World War II era, a time of awakening when people were given to self-expression in many different forms. Zelda, a product of the Jazz Age, expressed herself through her art work, dance and writing. Zora was a dominant female voice of the Harlem Renaissance, an out-growth of the Jazz Age. She, too, turned to writing as a vital form of self-expression.

Drawing from these common traits, the similarities in their writing styles would manifest as well. Whether engaging the third-person narrative voice or the graphic natural portraits, the ideals of self-discovery and self-expression remained paramount. To this end, both writers have essentially and quite effectively created what, for them, their heroines and undoubtedly their female readers, are two canonical coming-of-age novels for women.

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