

Outline

- I. *Babylon Revisited* and *A Rose for Emily* portray love differently.
 - A. *Babylon Revisited* portrays a reformed man in a quest to reunite with her daughter and give her paternal love.
 - B. *A Rose for Emily* narrates a story of a lady who kills the man she loves so she can hold him by her side forever.
- II. Consequences of Love
 - A. In *A Rose for Emily*, the protagonist murdered her fiancé out of her love for him.
 - B. In *Babylon Revisited*, the main character reforms both morally and financially and goes back to Paris to reunite with his daughter.
- III. Contradicting Determinations to get Love
 - A. The longing and pursuit for love in *A Rose for Emily* strongly contradicts with the actions of the characters and is therefore unfruitful.
 - B. The quest for love in *Babylon Revisited* is in line with the efforts of the main character, Charlie, and there is hope that it will materialize.
- IV. The Endings
 - A. As *A Rose for Emily* comes to an end, no love is found; Emily murders Homer and gets back to her state of isolation and solitude.
 - B. In *Babylon Revisited*, Charlie is hopeful that he would reunite with his daughter and give her paternal love in the near future.
- V. It is evident that *A Rose for Emily* and *Babylonian Revisited* portrayed Love differently.

Love in *A Rose For Emily* and *Babylonian Revisited*

Thesis: *A Rose for Emily* and *Babylonian Revisited*, both written after the Great Depression in America, approach love relationships differently; the main character of the former murdered her fiancé in the name of love while the protagonist of the latter, innocent and reformed, seeks to reconcile with his family and give paternal love to his daughter.

Introduction

The *Babylon Revisited*, a short story authored by F. Scott Fitzgerald, was first published in 1931. The narrative is about Charlie Wales, the main character, who initially led a bad life in the 1920's, lost all that he treasured with the Great Depression, but came back to Paris as a reformed man with a strong desire to recover the guardianship of his daughter, Honoria from his sister-in-law. *A Rose for Emily*, on the other hand, is similarly a short story, authored by William Faulkner in 1930 and set in an imaginary county, Yoknapatawpha in Mississippi. The tale is about Emily, who lives with a very loving and protective father; he does not find any of the suitors that turn up to woo her daughter fit for her. Eventually, Emily's father dies and she gets into a relationship with a man of a lower social status, Homer Barron. The love affair is full of mystery, ending with the death of both partners.

Both stories were written after the crash of the stock market in America in 1929, which was followed by the Great Depression period. The two texts portray love differently; *Babylon Revisited* portrays a reformed man in a quest to reunite with her daughter and give her paternal love. *A Rose for Emily*, on the other hand, narrates a story of a lady who kills the man she loves so she can hold him by her side forever. She ends up living a miserable life of loneliness with no true love. This paper will compare the different ways the two literary texts deal with the topic of love.

Consequences of Love

In *A Rose for Emily*, the protagonist murdered her fiancé out of her love for him (Sullivan 160). Homer, Emily's love, leaves her after he completes his construction works. As such, Emily is left heartbroken as Homer was her only hope in life. She is very hopeful that she would eventually get married; "she purchases a man's toilet set in silver, with the letters H.B" which stands for Homer Baron (Faulkner 77). She also buys "a complete outfit of men's clothing, including a nightshirt" (Faulkner 77). After Homer's departure from Emily's life without a word, he reappears after a couple of weeks. Emily is however fearful that Homer would leave her again. She therefore expresses her love and desire to stay with him forever by killing him and locking his body in a room in her house.

In *Babylon Revisited*, on the other hand, Charlie reforms both morally and financially and goes back to Paris to reunite with his daughter. He faces a lot of opposition from Marion, her sister-in-law but never gives up in his quest for familial love. Marion believes that he was the cause of the death of his wife. She once angrily tells Charlie, "How much you were responsible for Helen's death, I don't know...square with your own conscience" (Fitzgerald 222). However, a close analysis on the circumstances under which Helen died confirms that Charlie was innocent. He was involved in an argument with his wife during a dinner after which he left her behind, went home and locked the door. Helen escaped pneumonia narrowly after she walked home drunk and in slippers in a snow-stormy night. Marion having witnessed her sister being attended to by physicians in the hospital "imagined it to be one of many scenes from her sister's martyrdom" and she "never forgot" (Fitzgerald 223). As such, her bitterness was as a result of lack of forgiveness and did not imply that Charlie indeed played a role in the death of his wife. As a matter of fact, when Charlie said that "Helen died of heart trouble" (Fitzgerald 222), Marion

knew that it was the truth and did not insist on her allegations further. She instead shouted, “Do what you want!” (Fitzgerald 223). Despite the opposition, Charlie is hopeful and determined to reunite with his daughter Honoria.

Contradicting Determinations to get Love

The longing and pursuit for love in *A Rose for Emily* strongly contradicts with the actions of the characters and is therefore unfruitful. For instance, Emily lives a life of solitude with her domineering father only in their house. He rejects the many suitors that come in a bid to woo his daughter. Emily’s father feels that none of them is worth her hand in marriage. Ironically, she gets into a love affair with Homer, a construction worker, who is far below the status Emily’s family perceived to be in. Also, her decision to kill Homer in a bid to force him to love her and live with her forever ends the affair instead (Dilworth 251). Her actions distance her from affection because Homer’s death gets him into a “long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love” (Faulkner 78).

On the contrary, the quest for love in *Babylon Revisited* is in line with the efforts of the main character, Charlie, and there is hope that it will materialize. Charlie is so regretful about his past during which his wife died; he was an alcoholic and extravagant. He desires to reunite and regain his daughter, Honoria, from the guardianship of her aunt, Marion. As such, he is determined to convince the Lincolns that he has reformed and is fit to take care of Honoria. He is financially successful despite the stock market fluctuations, which depicts him as an industrious businessman. His commitment to both business and love are seen when he thought that “the present was the thing- work to do and someone to love (Fitzgerald 224).” Consequently, he looks stable to be able to take care of his daughter. As such, he wins the trust of Lincoln, Marion’s husband, who sees her wife’s opposition to Charlie as irrational in comparison to his drinking

responsibility (Tachibana 45). The title of the short story, *Babylon Revisited*, implies that Charlie is coming back to Paris, a place where he initially led a wasteful life; it is a symbol of reconstruction.

The Endings

As *A Rose for Emily* comes to an end, no love is found. Emily murders Homer and gets back to her state of isolation and solitude (Dilworth 251). When she dies, no one realizes until her body has decomposed in the house. All of the very significant characters of *A Rose for Emily*; Emily's father, Homer and herself, end up dying and true love is never realized. The neighbors are astonished by the sight in Emily's bedroom. The room looks lovely, "decked and furnished as for a bridal" (Faulkner 78). On the contrast, Homer's skeleton lies on the bed. The revelations that she had lived with a corpse in her house for over forty years exposes her not as a lovable person but as a murderer and obnoxious.

In *Babylon Revisited*, Charlie is hopeful that he would reunite with his daughter and give her paternal love in the near future. His desire to live with her and love her is seen in the morning he was to go and pick her. Charlie had been allowed by Lincoln to go and stay with Honoria in Prague; Lincoln thought that "there was no need for delay" (Fitzgerald 224). Charlie and Lincoln took lunch together that day and he tried his best not to show his excitement. He meditated how relieving it was to think about the Sundays he would spend with Honoria, "saying good morning to her, and of knowing she was there in his house at night, drawing her breath in the darkness." It was unfortunate that Charlie's alcoholic friends came looking for him and the Lincolns changed their mind about letting him take care of his daughter. However, Lincoln gives him a hope that they would reconsider their decision in six months time.

Conclusion

It is evident that *A Rose for Emily* and *Babylonian Revisited* portrayed Love differently. In the former, the protagonist murdered the man she loved. As such, Emily's pursuit for true love strongly contradicts with her actions and she ends up living a miserable life of solitude. Her efforts are therefore unsuccessful. In the latter, Charlie is a reformed man who seeks to reconcile with his family and give paternal love to his daughter. His quest for love agrees with his determination and there is hope that he would regain the guardianship of her daughter.