

Roselily and a rose for emily



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

It is often difficult for a woman to cope with the desire for love and support and for developing stable family identity. Although modern feminists are convinced that females are capable of living independent and self-sufficient lives, certain conditions might drive her to seek male authority and support. Two short stories, “ A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner and “ Roselily” by Alice Walker, although written in different styles with almost a 100-year interval, convey the same message about the necessity of filling a woman’s solitude with a confident and determined husband.

In fact, in spite of the contrasting imageries, both short stories finally reveal disappearance, uncertainty and insecurity, whereas the protagonists’ original intention is obtaining emotional fulfillment and the sense of home.

Comparing the settings, it is important to note that the events of both short stories take place in a small town, as Walker mentions “ country black folks” (Walker), while Faulkner directly refers to the main character’s environment as “ town” (Faulkner, I): “ Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town” (Faulkner I).

On the other hand, the material dimension depicted in the latter short story determines hopelessness, pessimism and despair and set the Gothic tone at the very beginning: “ They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow” (Faulkner, I). The old mansion with heavy doors and thick curtains becomes both prison and sepulcher for Emily and Barron, and the spirit of decomposition and degeneration definitely points to the presence of a sinister mystery, revealed as the presence of Barron’s mortal remains in Emily’s bed.

Walker, in turn, creates ceremonial atmosphere of a matrimony whose major participant is the main character. Furthermore, given that “Roselily” is organized as a flow of consciousness, the protagonist imagines and recollects a number of places like Chicago, cities of New England and Mississippi positioned as either prospective or past milestones of her life.

Importantly, the story ends with the couple’s departure from Roselily’s hometown which probably means the absolute abandonment of the past lifestyle, culture, habits and even social characteristics of a single woman of non-white background, as the light colors of the wedding ceremony seem to have “whitened” her own social position given her quitting of the hard “blue-collar” work: “Not to have to go to a job. Not to work in a sewing plant. Not to worry about learning to sew straight seams in workingmen’s overalls, jeans and dress pants” (Walker).

The two plots are similar in terms of the inclusion of Emily and Roselily’s longing for humanity and emotional comfort that imply love and respect normally developing in cross-gender romances. As both authors narrate, the protagonists endure physical and nervous break-downs, whereas Emily suffers primarily because of her defenselessness and “otherness” that become apparent after her father’s death, whereas Roselily has simply undermined her health and thus needs to eliminate this fatigue.

For this purpose, both females decide to create families, yet Emily marries her dead victim: “The man himself lay in the bed” (Faulkner, V). However, Faulkner’s writing also addresses the mental illness that has been maturing in Emily following her father’s death, whereas Walker’s Roselily

demonstrates perfect sanity and self-consolation skills, when her panic attacks are about to begin under the effect of the minister's speech.

Finally, both literary works in certain sense depict abandonment, including the social death of Roselily as an independent, yet socially unstable single mother, the expiration of Emily's reason as spiritual death, followed by her physical departure from this world. Moreover, both characters seem prone to insecurity and uncertainty that can be viewed as a logical continuation of the stories .

Emily, who loses her common sense under the psychological effect of emotional deprivation, secures herself by killing her boyfriend and putting his corpse into her bed, similarly to children who sleep with teddy bears as remedies against solitude and nightmares; therefore, passing away can be equated to quitting supportive and defensive environment. Roselily, in turn, questions her future security in the final episode, when she notices her spouse does not look back and thus will probably intend to de-value her as a mature and experienced personality.

Although the general setting of both short stories is countryside, Faulkner tends to compress the atmosphere with the dark mystery by darkening imagery, while Walker adds more light colors to the physical environment and suggests a socioeconomic improvement in the protagonist's new life, yet the emotional aspect of her union with the Muslim man refers rather to uncertainty, which actually is a common theme in both stories along with insecurity.

As the analysis shows, Emily and Roselily are entering the shadowed dimension and leaving their relatively secure homes and respond to the perceived danger with leaning on the defining person or experience of their lives.