

**A Comparative Study of “Babylon Revisited” by F. Scott Fitzgerald & “Violet flower” by Ansam Almaarof:
Attachment Theory Applications**
دراسة مقارنة لتطبيقات نظرية التعلق على قصة " اعادة زيارة بابل "
لفرانسيس سكوت فيتزجيرالد القصيرة وقصة "زهرة البنفسج"
القصيرة لانسام المعروف



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Abstract

The greatest creator of illusions is attachment; only the unattached can reach reality. The present study focuses on feelings and how they affect people's psychological growth. By shedding light on how untreated attachment difficulties influence characters' challenges with intimacy and atonement, the research contributes to a better understanding of the psychological aspects of narratives. This research compares and contrasts "Babylon Revisited" by F. Scott Fitzgerald with "Violet Flower" by Ansam Almaarroof using attachment theory as a framework. The study examines how the main characters in both works deal with themes of loss, regret, and psychological recovery while emphasizing how early attachment experiences shaped their actions and relationships with others. This research illustrates how both writers depict the emotional complexity of their characters by employing fundamental ideas from attachment theory, such as secure and insecure attachment patterns. By employing an interdisciplinary approach, the research enriches literary analyses of these works and enriches the wider conversation on attachment and interpersonal relationships in literature.

**Keywords: Attachment , Loss & Regret , Emotional attachment
F. Scott. Fitzgerald , Ansam R. Almaarroof.**

إن أعظم خالق للأوهام هو التعلق؛ ولا يمكن إلا لمن لا يرتبط بالتعلق أن يصل إلى الواقع. تركز الدراسة الحالية على المشاعر وكيف تؤثر على النمو النفسي للناس. من خلال تسليط الضوء على كيفية تأثير صعوبات التعلق غير المعالجة على تحديات الشخصيات فيما يتعلق بالألفة والفاء، يساهم البحث في فهم أفضل للجوانب النفسية للسرد. يقارن هذا البحث بين "إعادة زيارة بابل" لف. سكوت فيتزجيرالد و"زهرة البنفسج" لأنسام المعروف باستخدام نظرية التعلق كإطار. تدرس الدراسة كيف تتعامل الشخصيات الرئيسية في كلا العملين مع موضوعات الخسارة والندم والتعافي النفسي مع التأكيد على كيف شكلت تجارب التعلق المبكرة أفعالهم وعلاقاتهم مع الآخرين. يوضح هذا البحث كيف يصور كلا الكاتبين التعقيد العاطفي لشخصياتهما من خلال استخدام أفكار أساسية من نظرية التعلق، مثل أنماط التعلق الآمنة وغير الآمنة. من خلال استخدام نهج متعدد التخصصات، يثري البحث التحليلات الأدبية لهذه الأعمال ويثري المحادثة الأوسع حول التعلق والعلاقات الشخصية في الأدب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلق، الخسارة والندم، التعلق العاطفي، ف. سكوت فيتزجيرالد، أنسام ر. المعروف.



Introduction

All human is by nature a social being who seeks to establish social relationships with others. This is a necessity that preserves his being and helps in developing his personality and skills. However, sometimes social relationships become a cause of psychological disorders or symptoms. One of these disturbed social relationships is excessive attachment to someone. Attachment refers to feelings of closeness and affection towards another person, whether a parent, sibling, friend or partner. It is generally a secure attachment that helps maintain relationships, but it may sometimes take a different direction when it becomes “unhealthy attachment” or “excessive attachment.” By applying John Bowlby's theory of attachment theory, this study will go deeply inside human nature to discover the reason behind this attachment & to which extent it could lead people .

Theoretical Framework

Attachment theory, according to John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, is a psychological model that describes the dynamics of long-term emotional attachments between individuals. The theory was originally developed by British psychologist John Bowlby in the 1950s, and has since been expanded by many researchers. The theory delves into the deepest emotions within individuals, exploring their past to account for their current behaviors. According to this theory, past events in a person's life and their relationships with others shape their personality. John Bowlby developed the attachment theory, and later Mary Ainsworth expanded it. In this case, memory, imagination, and individuals have a very strong influence on attachment patterns and behaviors (Bowlby,1982). This theory has had a significant impact on our understanding of child development, mental health, and relationship dynamics across the lifespan. The purpose of this paper is to explore the origins, components, and implications of the major attachment theory and its reflection on literary characters. Bowlby states that

"Attachment behavior is conceived as a class of social behavior of an importance equivalent to that of mating behavior and parental behavior. Although they are especially conspicuous during childhood, attachment behaviors continue to play an important role in human



experience throughout life. Moreover, it is believed that the propensity to make strong emotional bonds to particular individuals is a basic component of human nature, already present in germinal form in the neonate and continuing throughout life" (Bowlby, 1982, p. 226).

This quote reflects Bowlby's view that attachment is not only a fundamental component of early development, but also a fundamental behavior rooted in evolution that shapes human social interactions. John Bowlby's view of attachment as an evolutionarily rooted behavior highlights that attachment is not only essential to early childhood development but is a fundamental biologically driven mechanism that shapes human social interactions throughout life. Bowlby's theory integrates insights from ethology, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis to argue that attachment behaviors evolved to ensure survival by keeping infants close to caregivers who can protect and nurture them. This survival-driven aspect of attachment is the foundation of Bowlby's work and remains influential in psychology. Bowlby hypothesized that infant attachment behaviors—such as crying, clinging, and proximity seeking—are biologically programmed responses that increase the odds of survival by maintaining proximity to a caregiver. Drawing on the work of ethologists such as Konrad Lorenz, who observed imprinting behaviors in animals, Bowlby argued that humans have similar, inherent biological behaviors designed to secure attachment to primary caregivers. In his seminal work, Bowlby noted:

“The propensity to make strong emotional bonds to particular individuals [is] a basic component of human nature, already present in germinal form in the neonate and continuing throughout life” (Bowlby, 1982, p. 226).

This statement confirms Bowlby's belief that attachment is not only essential for infants, but remains a fundamental component of human behavior throughout the lifespan. By demonstrating that attachment behaviors are inherent, Bowlby is consistent with the evolutionary perspective, suggesting that these behaviors are adaptive mechanisms aimed at ensuring the infant's survival. This theory provides a framework for understanding actions and reactions in intimate relationships, friendships, professional encounters, and even self-



perception by focusing on the development and maintenance of emotional attachment. Researchers examining the effects of attachment styles on everything from sexual intimacy to workplace dynamics as part of the burgeoning field of adult attachment research. In this research projects scope lies the exploration of attachment theory, beyond its childhood roots to delve into how it applies to adulthood on a scale. Among adult attachment aspects scrutinized extensively stands relationships as elucidated by Hazan and Shaver in 1987. Attachment theory offers insights into management in relationships as well as the dynamics of intimacy and conflict, in romantic settings. Attachment takes place when individuals are heavily connected emotionally to a place, an object, or a person. Whilst reaching out for the symptoms and the signs that displays attaching to something is troublesome, these reasons led to the flourish of Attachment as a theory (Sincero, as cited in Rostam & Al Maroof, 2024, P. 2066) Different adult attachment styles are typically grouped into three categories; anxious and avoidant. These styles significantly influence how individuals perceive intimacy, trust and reliance, in their relationships. Individuals with a secure attachment style tend to report high levels of comfort with intimacy and are more likely than others to achieve a balance between intimacy and autonomy.

Many types of researches show that people with a more secure attachment style deal with conflict more effectively and react more positively to stress, resulting in overall happier couples (Collins & Reed, 1990). However, individuals with an anxious attachment style may express more need for intimacy and reassurance, which can result in ruminating about the relationship status and increased emotional reactions to partner conflict (Mikulincer & Shafir, 2007). Citing a study conducted by Simpson and Rowles (2017), people with an avoidant attachment style may be more independent and experience intimacy as uncomfortable, therefore keeping their emotional distance in their relationships to keep their independence. These types of attachment not only affect emotional closeness, but also through actions that promote bonding, and blocks to intimacy.

Broadly speaking, attachment theory has sociocultural ramifications, providing understanding of how attachment types differ according to



social norms and cultural circumstances. In societies that value knit relationships and strong community bonds, like collectivist cultures tend to have individuals with an slightly apprehensive attachment style as the norms prioritize interdependence and social harmony (Kagitciibasi 2005). In societies where self reliance and independence are cherished qualities avoding attachment may be common as it aligns with the cultural emphasis on self sufficiency and autonomy. Investigating the differences in styles, across cultures sheds light on how cultural values shape peoples thoughts and actions. Theorys versatility, across cultural contexts highlights its utility in understanding both individual and group behaviors by shedding light on the complex interplay between societal norms and personal attachment styles. It continues to serve as a framework, for studying how people interact with each other and grow personally. Attachment theory presents a comprehensive idea of how deeply ingrained emotional patterns affected several types of interpersonal interactions, from its use in romantic and professional relationships to its function in self-perception and cultural psychology. This theory clarifies how the attachment patterns may gives a chance for meaningful connections in a different spheres of life and focus on the significance of resilience, self-awareness, , and empathy in creating wholesome, fulfilling relationships.

Applications of attachment theory can extend deeply into several aspects of adult life, reflecting the way individuals are related to each others in their personal and professional lives that reflects deeply held attachment patterns. Examining these patterns can be particularly useful for understanding the way that individuals cope with stress, deep navigate emotional regulation, and respond to interpersonal conflict. This extension of attachment theory into adult contexts has become a very important and essential study for psychologists and researchers seeking to understand human resilience and interpersonal adaptability. One area in which attachment theory has been particularly influential is in understanding how adults cope with stress and regulate their emotions. Mikulincer and Shafir (2007) state that attachment theory “provides a framework for understanding how people cope with stress and regulate their emotions, particularly in the context of close relationships and support-seeking behaviors” (p. 22). The authors states



that securely attached individuals generally presents greater emotional resilience because they often have an intrinsic and great confidence in their ability to cope with different challenges and a willingness to seek support from all others when needed. This combination of self-reliance and openness to external support allows securely attached individuals to manage stress effectively, promoting mental and emotional stability.

Conversely, individuals with anxious attachment may experience and try emotional responses to stress, often feeling overwhelmed or preoccupied with the possibility of many negative outcomes. This pattern can lead to a tendency to “catastrophize” stressful situations, and emotional exhaustion and difficulty solving such problems effectively (Fraley et al., 2011). Individuals with avoidant attachment, on the other hand, may tend to downplay their stressors and refrain from seeking support, as they prioritize independence. However, this approach can lead to chronic stress, as suppressing emotions and avoiding support networks can lead to an accumulation of unprocessed stress. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) summarize this trend, stating, “Individuals with avoidant attachment orientations often attempt to deal with stress through emotional suppression, distancing themselves from their own emotions, which can inadvertently increase internalized stress and reduce psychological well-being” (p. 47). The implications of attachment theory for adult relationships are particularly clear when considering the role of attachment in conflict resolution. Collins and Reid (1990) found that attachment styles significantly influence how individuals communicate and resolve conflicts, particularly in intimate relationships. Securely attached individuals typically approach conflicts with a willingness to engage in constructive dialogue, and view disagreements as opportunities for growth and mutual understanding. This approach fosters a sense of security and trust within the relationship, as both partners are able to express themselves without fear of retaliation or abandonment. In contrast, anxiously attached individuals may approach conflicts with heightened sensitivity and may interpret disagreements as signs of instability in the relationship, leading to escalation of conflict. Collins and Reid note that “anxious individuals often seek excessive reassurance and closeness during conflicts, which can place undue pressure on their partners and



inadvertently intensify relational tension” (p. 645). Similarly, individuals with avoidant attachment tendencies may cope with conflict by attempting to disengage, often withdrawing emotionally to avoid perceived vulnerability. This tendency can lead to unresolved issues, as avoidant individuals may avoid direct confrontation and view emotional closeness during conflict as a threat to their autonomy (Simpson & Rolls, 2017). Over time, this pattern can erode trust in relationships, as partners may view avoidance as indifference or detachment. Mikulincer and Shafir (2007) note, “Avoidant individuals often distance themselves from relational conflicts, sometimes refusing to engage in any form of emotional discourse, which, while protecting their sense of autonomy, undermines intimacy and long-term relational stability” (p. 58).

Attachment theory also provides insight into self-identity and personal growth, particularly in relation to self-compassion, self-esteem, and emotional resilience. Shafir and Mikulincer (2002) argue that attachment styles profoundly influence self-perception, stating that “secure attachment fosters a balanced, resilient self-concept, enabling individuals to approach challenges with both confidence and humility” (p. 137). This balanced self-concept contributes to positive self-esteem and encourages individuals to take healthy risks, as they are less afraid of failure or rejection in general. In contrast, individuals who are anxious may experience fluctuations in self-esteem, which can lead to emotional instability. They may rely heavily on external validation, seeking affirmation from others as a means of boosting their self-esteem. Shaver and Mikulincer (2002) add, “The anxious person’s self-concept is often fragile, dependent on external feedback, and vulnerable to criticism, which can make them more susceptible to anxiety and insecurity” (p. 139).

In more individualistic cultures, which prioritize self-reliance, attachment styles may shift toward avoidance, as cultural expectations encourage independence and self-sufficiency. Avoidantly attached individuals may find their attachment style to be well-aligned with these norms, whereas anxiously attached individuals may experience feelings of incompatibility, as they seek validation in cultures that emphasize independence. “individualistic cultures tend to reward self-reliance, creating an environment where avoidant attachment styles are



more culturally acceptable, whereas anxiously attached individuals may struggle to find validation in such environments” (Little et al., 2011, p. 470). Individuals with avoidant attachment often prioritize self-sufficiency, sometimes to the point of avoiding external support even when it is helpful. While this self-reliant orientation can create a sense of independence, it can also contribute to isolation, as avoidant individuals may resist forming close bonds that could challenge their autonomy (Fraley et al., 2011). This avoidance of emotional vulnerability can lead to a form of self-protection that hinders emotional growth and self-awareness over time. Fraley et al. (2011) observe that “the avoidant individual’s emphasis on self-sufficiency often results in a limited capacity for self-reflection, as they may avoid acknowledging vulnerabilities that could compromise their sense of independence” (p. 619). Finally, attachment theory has broader social implications, providing a framework for understanding how societal norms and cultural values influence attachment behaviors. In collectivist cultures, where mutual interdependence is valued, securely attached individuals may find greater alignment with cultural norms that emphasize family and community ties (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Collective norms often encourage close relationships and support networks, which can foster secure or even anxious attachment behaviors. Kagitcibasi (2005) explains, “In collectivist contexts, individuals are encouraged to develop strong interpersonal bonds, creating a cultural environment that reinforces interdependence and support-seeking behavior” (p. 411).

In short, attachment theory continues to expand beyond its initial scope, offering valuable insights into adult relationships, workplace dynamics, self-identity, and cultural psychology. Whether promoting personal resilience, enhancing relational satisfaction, or guiding professional interactions, attachment theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of human connection and individual growth. By recognizing and reflecting on attachment patterns, individuals can foster greater self-awareness, cultivate healthier relationships, and contribute to more supportive and compassionate social environments.



Discussion

Babylon Revisited” by F. Scott Fitzgerald and “Violet flower” by Ansam Almaarouf: Attachment Theory Applications

Analyzing F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Babylon Revisited* through the lens of attachment theory provides a rich understanding of the protagonist, Charlie Wells, and his struggle for redemption amidst profound personal loss and guilt. In this short story, Charlie's complex attachment dynamics are revealed in his relationships, his self-perception, and his search for stability in a world that constantly reminds him of his past mistakes. Charlie's character displays an avoidant attachment mode in his early years, marked by his excessive drinking, financial recklessness, and detachment from meaningful relationships. His past behavior reflects Fitzgerald's own portrayal of the Lost Generation in Paris—a generation of Americans in Europe, disillusioned and indulgent. During this period, Charlie's avoidant tendencies manifest in his reluctance to face the consequences of his actions or connect meaningfully with others. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) describe that “avoidant individuals often suppress emotional needs and prioritize independence to prevent the vulnerability of attachment” (p. 47). This detachment leads to the ultimate disintegration of his marriage and, tragically, contributes to his wife Helen's death.

Applying attachment theory to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Babylon Revisited* sheds light on the psychological complexities of Charlie Wells' relationships, particularly with his estranged daughter, Honoria, and the memory of his deceased wife, Helen. In this story, Charlie's struggle to rebuild his life and reconnect with Honoria is hampered by his attachment patterns, which reveal an avoidant and anxious attachment dynamic, leading to significant psychological and relational consequences. By examining Charlie's behavior through attachment theory, readers can understand the emotional distance he maintains with his daughter and the residual pain of his marriage, both of which underscore his fragile sense of security and self-worth.

In *Babylon Revisited*, Charlie's past life echoes Fitzgerald's description. “He was never the same since he lost everything in the accident; he never knew what he wanted to do with himself, and so he spent a great deal of money on entertaining himself.” (Fitzgerald,



1960, p.48) Here, he writes Charlie's previous life is described as one of avoidance and independence. This passage shows Charlie's vulnerability and inability to form close relationships, as he "never knew what he wanted," (p.48) a line that reveals the existential dimensions that often accompany an avoidant attachment style . In the present, Charlie's attachment style shifts toward anxious attachment, a type of anxiety reflected in his interactions with his daughter Honoria and his in-laws, Marion and Lincoln Peters. His visit to regain custody of Honoria is his psychological need to reconstruct family bonds and his quest to atone for his past mistakes. However, his sense of self is fragile and he relies heavily on external validation from Marion and Lincoln, as he tries to prove that he has reformed himself and is a good man . Schaefer explains: And Micolenser (2002) that "individuals with anxious attachment often seek reassurance from others, especially in contexts where self-esteem is under scrutiny" (p. 139). This tendency His attachment and desperate need for reassurance is evident when Charlie says, "I want her back. I want to undo everything that happened," (p. 52) which demonstrates his overwhelming desire to put his life right and reclaim his identity as a father. He also explains , Fitzgerald explores Charlie's anxious attachment style through Marion's criticisms, which Charlie absorbs with sensitivity and depth, highlighting his own instability and insecurity . Marion recalls his past irresponsibility with bitter clarity: "I don't know how I can forgive you, Charlie. It's true you paid for it—but I can't forget."(p. 58) Here, Marion's reminder of his past and past mistakes serves as a powerful catalyst for Charlie's anxious need to prove himself. His attempts to control his emotions and reactions, despite their hostility, indicate his desperation for her approval —a key feature of anxious attachment. When Charlie responds internally by saying, "I know how you feel about me,"(p. 65) this reveals his fragility and vulnerability and his belief that his worth depends on Marion's approval, consistent with anxious attachment's tendency to rely on the validation of others for the purpose of security . Charlie's anxious attachment is also manifested in his obsession with controlling his environment, in the hope of securing the relationship he craves. Frehley and Shaffer (1997) suggest that anxious attachment often leads to an obsessive need for reassurance,



with individuals seeking control to avoid the pain of perceived rejection. This aspect of Charlie's personality is evident in his attempts to impose order on his life, as evidenced by his abstinence from alcohol and his careful management of his finances. Charlie sees these behaviors as evidence that he has reformed himself and as a prerequisite for restoring his family, but they also reveal an underlying fear of slipping into chaos and losing Honoria . Fitzgerald illustrates this when Charlie tells Marion, "I can take care of her. I have five thousand dollars a year now" (Fitzgerald , 1931/1996, p. 623). His insistence on displaying control reflects an anxious need to prove his worth as a father, illustrating how attachment-related insecurity drives him to seek external validation.

In addition, Charlie's great attachment to the memory of his deceased wife is evident . Helen has disorganized attachment traits, which often stem from trauma or unexpected loss , Mikulincer notes. and Shaffer (2007). Disorganized attachment is characterized by conflicting feelings about closeness and an inability to fully process grief or trauma. Charlie's many memories of Helen are fraught with pain and ambivalence, as he blames himself for her death and struggles to reconcile his grief with his present life without her . His disorganized attachment style is evident in his fragmented memories of Helen and his simultaneous longing and resentment for the past they shared during their marriage . In a moment of reflection, Charlie reflects, "She was all he had in the world, and he had spent everything in the world to keep her safe" (Fitzgerald , 1931/1996, p. 618). This passage captures his deep, unresolved feelings of guilt and regret, and shows how his inability to process Overcoming the shock of Helen's death leads him to develop an unstable attachment style that affects his other relationships

Charlie's past actions and psychological implications demonstrate avoidant attachment, particularly in his struggle to fully open up to others and achieve true intimacy. According to Mikulincer, Shafir (2007) said that avoidant attachment is characterized by a fear of vulnerability. and brokenness and preference for emotional self-reliance. Fitzgerald emphasizes Charlie's aversion to vulnerability when he describes his return to Paris, a city haunted by memories of his past sins and mistakes. Charlie now seeks to portray himself as reformed



and in control , suppressing the deep pain of his mistakes in order to project stability. This reflects the avoidant attachment tendency toward emotional repression, as Charlie deliberately keeps certain parts of his past under control. Fitzgerald writes , "I had spoiled this city for myself. I did not realize it, but days passed one after another, then two years passed, and it was all gone" (Fitzgerald , 1931/1996, p. 617). His difficult position in dealing with past regrets, as well as his inability to fully confront his mistakes, reflects the avoidant attachment drive to repress and fight Negative feelings instead of overcoming or processing them, a pattern that complicates his relationship with his daughter and hinders his psychological healing.

This anxious dynamic is also evident in Charlie's self-reflection, as he repeatedly questions whether he deserves a second chance with his daughter. Honoria . He feels a strong and urgent need to prove to himself and others that he has changed, yet his self-concept remains fragile and vulnerable , haunted by memories of his past life. At one poignant moment, he reflects, "I was quite sure Helen would not have wanted him to be so alone."(p.56) This idea captures Charlie 's changing perspective on attachment; his regret and need for family underscore his awareness of lost opportunities for meaningful connection, a painful realization that fuels his anxious quest for reconciliation. The conflict with Marion exemplifies Charlie's dual struggle with attachment and redemption. Collins and Reid (1990) note that securely attached individuals engage in "constructive conflict-resolving communication," yet Charlie finds himself unable to deal constructively with Marion's hostility, a failure that is rooted in both his attachment history and his residual guilt (p. 644). As the tension mounts, several of Charlie's anxious and avoidant traits come to the fore—he desperately tries to defend his current sobriety while internally struggling with the shame of his past actions. His anxious attachment is evident in his plea to Marion, "Can't you see that I'm responsible now?"(p.62) as he seeks her recognition, hoping to confirm his changed personality. His apparent attachment style thus complicates his ability to rebuild family bonds after their loss , as he remains emotionally dependent on Marion's judgment, reflecting an anxious need for acceptance



Moreover, Charlie's interactions with Honoria reveal traits of avoidant and anxious attachment, as he oscillates between trying to control the relationship and the fear of losing her forever like he lost her mother. Hazan explains Shaffer (1987) suggests that anxious attachment often leads to emotional dependence and an intense fear of abandonment. Charlie's deep sense of guilt and his great desperation to regain custody of Honoria demonstrate this anxiety. He views his relationship with her as a means of redeeming himself and obtaining a secure base after his chaotic past. As a part of himself and his dead wife. For example, he expresses a strong desire to "go back and take Honoria to live with him" (Fitzgerald, 1931/1996, p. 622), and sees this encounter as a means of finally achieving emotional stability. However, Charlie's anxiety emerges when his attempts are thwarted by his sister-in-law, Marion, who remains skeptical of his intentions and sobriety. Her resistance serves to amplify his fear of losing Honoria, making him obsessed with the idea that his chance for happiness and redemption may be slipping away, thus confirming the anxiety inherent in his attachment to her.

Ultimately, *Babylon Revisited* depicts Charlie's journey as one marked by the wounds of attachment that shape his identity and relationships. His separation and attachment have left him. The avoidant in his youth was isolated from the world and unable to maintain meaningful connections, while his current anxious attachment reflects his longing to restore those connections, especially with his daughter, Honoria. Fitzgerald illustrates the painful impact of unresolved attachment issues, revealing how these attachments leave Charlie trapped between his desire for redemption and constant self-doubt. And in his longing for his past and his wife. Through attachment theory, we can see Charlie's journey as a profound human psychological struggle for connection, highlighting how attachment patterns shape not only relational outcomes but also the essence of an individual's quest for healing and personal acceptance. And get a safe life. Mikulincer's research supports Shaffer (2007) further this idea, arguing that insecure attachment impedes individuals' ability to form healthy relationships and process emotional distress. Charlie's attachment behaviors in *Babylon Revisited* emphasize his ongoing struggle with guilt and insecurity, illustrating how attachment theory can provide a framework



for understanding the deeper psychological layers of his personality. Through this lens, Fitzgerald's work depicts a man haunted by past attachments and desperate for security, offering a profound exploration of the lasting impact of attachment on one's life and mental health .

The short story of "Violet Flower" is about a patient suffering from Alzheimer's disease who only remembers the name of her ex-lover "Ahmed". The old painting containing the violet flower growing in the middle of the snow is used as a symbol of the previous relationship between the patient and Ahmed, whose feelings towards him have not changed despite a long period of separation and parting. This can be linked to the psychological theory of attachment, which indicates that previous relationships can affect the subsequent behavior and thinking of individuals. Attachment theory is a psychological theory that studies human relationships and their impact on the psychological and social development of individuals. This theory is based on the idea that human relationships and social communication can affect the development of an individual's personality, behavior, and future relationships. John Bowlby says Attachment is an integrated behavioral system that satisfies an individual's need for protection, care, and security. It leads to the establishment of social relationships with others and contributes to the development of an individual's personality and psychological growth. In many cases, the woman would wander through her old memories and remember a person named "Ahmed" and talk about him without remembering anything else. Old memories and old people are used as a way to improve her psychological state and move forward in life. Like all individuals who are attached to someone they consider safe and reliable, losing this person can have negative psychological effects and may lead to psychological disorders such as depression. The sick woman constantly talks about "Ahmed" who was an important person in her life, and this seems to help her overcome her current psychological state and move forward in life. As for the violet flower painting, it grows in the snow as a symbol of hope and life that continues to grow and develop despite the difficulties and challenges that individuals may face in life. Thus, it can be said that the story carries a positive message about willpower and holding on to positive



memories and people who mean a lot to individuals in their lives. (Al Maarooof, n.p.)

This narrative intricately reflects attachment theory and its influence on romantic relationships, specifically how unresolved attachments affect psychological well-being over time. Through the lens of attachment theory, we can analyze the protagonist's life-long emotional attachment to "Ahmed" and her inability to let go, even after he left her. As her doctor says: "Her memory was limited to his name only. Ahmed." (Al Maarooof, 2023, n.p.) Her attachment style seems to lean toward an anxious attachment, which is marked by an intense need for emotional closeness and a deep fear of abandonment. Her experience aligns with insights by Hazan and Shaver (1987), who explain that people with anxious attachment often struggle to move past relationships, even when these relationships are painful or unreciprocated. Here, this attachment has permeated the character's life and persists even through her Alzheimer's, where her only remaining memory is of Ahmed, the one who left her.

The empty, yellow room itself serves as a metaphor for her mind—neglected, as she said "The room was covered in yellow, which at first glance suggested the time that had passed without any restoration or renovation." (Al Maarooof, 2023, n.p.) marked by the passage of time, and filled only with traces of her past love, which is embodied in the clock that has stopped, and the solitary painting of a violet flower struggling to bloom in the snow. This room, much like her mind, remains trapped in a specific moment, unable to move forward. The color yellow, often associated with fading or aging, suggests her psychological state, embodying a life marked by a lost love that left her in stasis. Her attachment to Ahmed consumes her even in her old age, and her inability to forget him despite her memory loss suggests the enduring, sometimes obsessive nature of anxious attachments, which Fraley and Shaver (1997) identify as creating psychological distress due to unresolved emotional needs. Furthermore, her Alzheimer's is a compelling factor in the story, reflecting how attachment can manifest and persist even when cognitive functions decline. Her repeated calls for Ahmed illustrate the anxious attachment style's preoccupation with a lost bond. "Despite the fact that people frequently recall their past emotions (such as how they reacted or response to a specific incident)



quite accurately, researches also demonstrate on that regular memory biases that depend on peoples personality traits do exist. For example, exaggerating the intensity of past unpleasant events has been associated to greater ratings of nervousness and anxiety (Gentzler and Kerns 20 as cited in Rostam & Al Maroof, 2024,p. 2067). Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) note that attachment experiences, particularly anxious ones, deeply embed themselves in the psyche, which can cause individuals to fixate on unresolved relational trauma. Despite losing other memories, she clings to Ahmed's name as though it were the last thread of her identity, a clear indication of the powerful hold attachments can maintain over one's psychological state. Her continued utterance of Ahmed's name is a poignant representation of her longing and the way unhealed attachments can resurface, especially during periods of vulnerability. The caregiver's observations underscore the pain of unresolved attachment from an external perspective. The caregiver, whose efforts to converse or distract her prove ineffective, embodies the struggle to provide comfort in the face of deep-seated emotional wounds. He witnesses her pain, and although he tries to connect with her, she continually reverts to her past, revealing how attachment influences behavior and outlook, even in the face of caregiving. This dynamic resonates with Mikulincer and Shaver's (2007) analysis, which highlights how attachment figures provide emotional security that is difficult to replace or substitute, leading those with unresolved attachments to frequently relive their emotional pain.

The patient's occasional moments of peace—particularly when she smiles and speaks of the joy Ahmed brought her—suggest brief flashes of reconciliation. Despite her suffering, these moments show that the positive aspects of attachment can also bring comfort and a sense of meaning, even if her attachment to Ahmed also causes her pain. Her statement, "I am happy that I met you, Ahmed," conveys acceptance and an almost forgiving attitude. Here , the woman imagine that Ahmed is sitting beside her and talking with her. Rostam and Al Maroof writes in their study that:

“Imagination has a powerful bond to attachment theory; individuals tend to imagine past events as a coping mechanism. People with



insecure attachment rely on imagination in order to cope. The impact of this imagination is either negative or positive on the reality” (p. 2067).

Insecure feeling of attachment makes individuals use imagination to overcome their unbearable realities. For instance, if someone used to live in a specific places and has a specific memories in their childhood then they forced to leave it for many years, imagining these places is going to be just like a consolation for them. In this situation, imagination worked as a coping mechanism” (Vygotsky, 2004, as cited in Rostam & Al Maarroof, 2024, p. 2067)

Everything that comes from the imagination is always derived from actual events or from the experiences of the individual. In attachment terms, this moment hints at a transition from an anxious attachment toward a more secure acceptance of her experiences, where she can acknowledge her love without fixating solely on the loss. According to Mikulincer and Shaver (2007), achieving security in attachment, even retrospectively, can promote a sense of resilience and peace. Finally, her relationship with her caregiver reflects an unconscious attempt to fulfill her need for connection. She begins to project her attachment onto him, calling him "Ahmed" as if he were a stand-in for the lost relationship. This behavior aligns with attachment theory's concept of "transference," where individuals project past relationships onto new ones, often unconsciously seeking to fulfill unmet needs. Her caregiver's quiet acceptance of this role_his patience and eventual willingness to respond as "Ahmed" suggests that he intuitively understands her need for attachment. This interaction mirrors Hazan and Shaver's (1987) finding that attachments in adulthood often seek the comfort of familiar relational patterns, as she redirects her attachment needs toward someone present who can provide, even temporarily, the psychological comfort of a familiar name.

From Past to Present: Attachment Theory in “Babylon Revisited” and “Violet Flower” A comparative Reading

It's worth noting that Bowlby's Attachment theory is part of a broader debate in the field of psychological studies, and his ideas have been built upon and critiqued by many other scholars. In the following I have chosen two literary texts written in different languages and cultures that can be analyzed comparatively according to the principles of Attachment theory, the first story is Baylon Revisited by F . Scott



Fitzgerald (English story) and the second story is Violet flower by Ansam Almaarof (Arabic story). According to Bowlby, the concept of "attachment" is a key concept in psychological literary work. He argues that attachment refers to the situation that the people being attached to some where this one was a part of his family member, friend or a lover. This attachment will be either secure, anxious or avoidant attachment (Ashcroft, 2000). In the context of the two selected texts, we can see how attachment plays out in different ways.

Applying attachment theory to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Babylon Revisited* draws attention to the many psychological complexities of Charlie Wells' relationships, particularly with his estranged only daughter, Honoria, and the memory of his beloved deceased wife, Helen. In this story, Charlie's struggle to rebuild his life, repair his past mistakes, and reconnect with Honoria is hampered by his deep attachment patterns, which reveal an avoidant and anxious attachment dynamic, leading to profound psychological and relational consequences. By highlighting Charlie's behavior, and examining this behavior through attachment theory, readers can understand the emotional distance he maintains with his estranged daughter and the residual pain of his marriage, both of which underscore his fragile sense of security and self-esteem. In *Babylon Revisited*, Charlie's past life echoes Fitzgerald's profound description of him. "He was never the same since he lost everything in the accident; he never knew what he wanted to do with himself, and so he spent a great deal of money on entertaining himself ." Here, Fitzgerald writes that Charlie's past life was described as one of avoidance and independence.

Similarly, in "Violet Flower", which presents some events in diseased lady , this work that blends elements of attachment and memory. Attachment theory is very clear in this short story written by the creative writer Ansa Al-Maaref, where she presented to us a woman who suffers from Alzheimer's disease and almost does not remember anything from her life except for one person. In many cases, the woman would wander through her old memory and remember a person named "Ahmed" and talk about him without remembering anything else. Old memories and old people are used as a way to improve her psychological state and progress in life. Like all individuals who are



attached to someone they consider safe and reliable, and losing this person can lead to negative psychological effects, and may lead to psychological disorders such as depression. The sick woman constantly talks about “Ahmed” who was an important person in her life, and it seems that this helps her overcome her current psychological state and progress in life. As for the painting of the violet flower, it grows in the snow as a symbol of hope and life that continues to grow and develop despite the difficulties and challenges that individuals may face in life. Thus, it can be said that the story carries a positive message about willpower and holding on to positive memories and people who mean a lot to individuals in their lives. Both novels demonstrate Bowlby's concept of "attachment", where its three types which are anxious avoidant and secure attachment was clarified at this study. language and culture (English and Arabic, respectively) are imposed

Conclusion

This comparative study of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s “Babylon Revisited” and Ansam Maarooof’s “Violet Flower” through the lens of attachment theory reveals profound insights into how individuals deal with personal loss, trauma, and the need for belonging. Both works explore attachment as a fundamental psychological element that shapes their characters’ relationships, identity, and self-worth.

In “Babylon Revisited”, Fitzgerald’s exploration of Charlie’s struggle to reclaim his daughter and repair his past mistakes highlights how insecure attachment patterns, combined with unresolved guilt, hinder emotional connection and stability. In contrast, AlMaarooof’s “Violet Flower” delves into themes of loss and longing in a more symbolic and introspective way, as attachment to cultural identity and memories of loved ones reflects a different but equally compelling form of attachment-based resilience. This study demonstrates how each author approaches attachment dynamics in their unique cultural and historical contexts. By applying attachment theory to these narratives, we uncover the psychological depth of their characters and the ways in which attachment influences their choices and sense of self. This comparative approach not only enriches our understanding of Fitzgerald's works and the well-known, but it also underscores the versatility of attachment theory as a critical framework in literature,



capable of shedding light on universal aspects of human attachment across genres and time periods.

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