

# Symbolism in the rose for emily by william faulkner essays example

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [The House](#) \n \t
2. [The Pocket Watch, the Stationery, and the Hair](#) \n \t
3. [Lime and Arsenic](#) \n \t
4. [Death and Taxes](#) \n \t
5. [Works Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

The short-story “ The Rose for Emily” consists of many symbols, the interpretation of which is of much use to understand the sense of this work. William Faulkner uses much of the symbolism and imagery in order to succeed in his literature endeavors. Undoubtedly, there are many symbols that can be used in the other similar short-stories, and they can be even compared to the other works. Faulkner uses the symbolism, imagery and allegory to persuade readers and help to understand this short-story profoundly.

## **The House**

The house of Miss Emily is one of the most significant symbols in the story as a “ house, like Emily herself, is a monument, the only remaining emblem of a dying world of Southern aristocracy.” (Briones, 2014) In general, it is the symbol in the Gothic literature. In this story, we only see this house from the outside look. There is the following description of this house.“ It was a big, squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and

spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily's house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps - an eyesore among eyesores." (Faulkner, 1. 2). This house presents the symbol of the decay of the old social norms that existed in the society, and that are so obsolete that they cannot longer exist in the modern society. Emily's house symbolizes the need of innovation that was required by many of its members in those times, although there had to be the changes in human minds.

### **The Pocket Watch, the Stationery, and the Hair**

These are the major symbols of time in this story. They matter even much more, and they present the struggle between the obsolete past and the upcoming future that threatens and frightens. When the members of this Board visit Emily to observe the state with the taxes soon before her death, they are able to hear the ticking of her pocket that is hidden in the folds of the clothing. It is a signal that Miss Emily's time is a mysteriously "invisible" force, and she can always be acutely aware of time. Each tick of this clock is her chance to be happy.

The stationery is also a good symbol of time, but in a little different way. In the letter that the town receives from Emily is unscripted "on the paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink" (Faulkner, 1. 4).

## **Lime and Arsenic**

Arsenic and lime are some of the creepiest symbols of this story. Lime presents the white powder that is very good in covering the smelling of the decaying bodies. Ironically, the lime seems to be sprinkled in vain. The smelling of the rotting corpse of Homer Barron seems to spread all across the neighborhood, but possibly the town got used to this smell. The lime seems to be a symbol of the fruitless attempts to hide much embarrassing, as well as creepy. It seems also be a symbol of the style of life in town that is decaying mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

## **Death and Taxes**

Miss Emily's death and her tax situation seem to be similar to Alfred Hitchcock's so called "macguffins". A macguffin is « an object, event, or character in a film or story that serves to set and keep the plot in motion despite usually lacking intrinsic importance". In neither the context of funeral nor in the context of the tax issue, there is no importance of this matter in relevance to the tale of murder and the following insanity.

Symbolic meaning of this story is related to many social problems that can be used by researchers and intellectuals for discussions in the nearest future.

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