

# William faulkner's "a rose for emily" reaction paper

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



In "A Rose for Emily," William Faulkner depicts a conflict between the hopes and dreams one has and the environment that can ruin everything. In this reaction paper to one of the most prominent Faulkner's works, I attempt to describe and analyze the strategies that the author used to make this conflict acute and sympathetic to the reader.

The analysis of the text shows that Faulkner uses different techniques to tell his story and convey it in a manner that the reader can understand and relate to it. In the first paragraph of part I, the writer uses symbolism to portray the main character, Miss Emily Grierson, as an important figure of the community. He writes, "The men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument (Miss Emily)" (Faulkner, 1930).

In his story, the writer also uses the technique of reverse chronology; the story starts with its ending at Miss Emily's funeral. What is supposed to be the end of this story is the beginning, i. e., "When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument" (Faulkner, 1930). He uses this to evoke an emotional response from the reader. We will gradually get acquainted with Emily, but we already know what awaits her in the end.

In "A Rose for Emily", Faulkner uses flashback as a strategy to inform us of the prior events following Miss Emily's death and her lonely life, for example we are told of the day the neighbors complained to the mayor Judge Stevens about the smell emanating from her house and how four men slunk to her house like burglars to sprinkle lime, we are also taken to her past when

people felt a strong personal reaction of sorrow for her, here we are reminded of her great aunt Lady Wyatt and how she had gone crazy.

This strategy has helped the writer inform the readers of the background information that led to the subsequent events in the narrative (Faulkner, 1930).

What happens in *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner? What is this story about? The theme of betrayal is seen quite clearly in all parts of the plot. The father betrays Miss Emily Grierson; he doesn't allow her to go out and be a normal girl; she is denied the pleasure of finding love; according to her father, none of the men were good enough for her. Emily remains lonely after her father's death.

The reader also observes the theme of betrayal when Homer Baron betrays Miss Emily by neglecting her. The narrator explains that they were sure that Miss Emily and Homer Baron the foreman would get married; they had learned that Miss Emily had been to the jeweler and ordered a toilet set with the initials H. B. on each piece.

However, that wasn't the case part IV paragraph one illustrates this, "She will marry him." Then we said, "She will persuade him yet," because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks' Club—that he was not a marrying man." Emily's reaction was violent. It ended tragically by her killing Homer.

One gets the impression that the story tries to portray a conflict between the North and the South, Emily Grierson is seen to represent the victorious South

while Homer represents the North which can be said to have lost the battle when he was killed by Miss Emily using the arsenic poison.

We can see this when the writer introduces the foreman (Homer) in the first paragraph of part III as a Yankee (he emphasizes on his origin), and in the third paragraph the ladies are heard gossiping, "of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer" the Grierson were Southerners". At this stage of the narrative, a reader would get the impression that there is a conflict between the Northerners (Baron Homer) and the Southerners (Grierson).

However, the author denied the existence of this conflict. In an extract from Faulkner at the University: Class Conference at the University of Virginia 1957-1958 showing the answer he gave to a March 11, 1957 question about the existence of this battle, he denies its existence though he acknowledges that if it really existed then it was purely incidental and that he had no intention of portraying that battle (Barnett et al., 2007)

On reading the story for the first time, you get the impression of a suffering Emily Grierson, a lonely woman staying lonely in the same setting after her father's death. Her only connection to the world was her negro servant - Tobe, who was seen once in a while with a market basket going in and out of the house (Faulkner, 1930). One can't help having a strong personal reaction of pity to "A Rose for Emily" main character.

The reader also gets the impression of Miss Emily as a woman held in the past; in the second paragraph of "A Rose for Emily," William Faulkner gives

a scenic account of the setting that Emily Grierson lived. It had previously been the select street for most of the residents of Jefferson, but it had changed, the street now had garages, cotton gins, and gasoline pumps, It wasn't fit for habitation, but still, Miss Emily chose to live there. The narrator describes it as an eyesore among eyesores.

A Rose for Emily was written for everyone who has dreams and hopes. Therefore the story was written for all of us, as we all have dreams and aspirations in life. The story shows the conflict between the hopes and dreams that we have against the environment and others whom we don't share the same dreams.

In this story Miss Emily was a young lady in her thirties she had dreams of one day being loved, loving, getting married and starting a family, soon enough she meets a man (Homer Baron), and they are in love. They are seen together driving in a yellow wheeled buggy, but he soon disappears. This illustrates the battle between Homer Baron and Miss Emily's dreams (Barnett et al., 2007).

The title "A Rose for Emily" gives a glimpse of the intention that the writer had for writing this story, in an interview on the April 15, 1957 William Faulkner on being asked about the meaning of the title that he chose he answered that the woman had no life, she had been kept by her father in the house and locked up and she had murdered her lover who wanted to quit her. The title was, therefore, a gift for Emily for her battles against her father and her lover, who wanted to quit her.

The writer of the story wanted to manifest the injustices that man does to his own kind, Emily's father denied her love, he couldn't allow her to date, unfortunately repressing this urge backfired in a tragic form. All Emily wanted was love, but it all ended tragically (Barnett et al., 2007).

In summary, I have inferred from the story that life is a struggle between different elements. We struggle with our own selves, with our environment and with the people we love. Life can never be smooth enough. Even if we close ourselves to the world, trouble will still come knocking on our doors and that there are two things that are for sure in this world: death and taxes, as shown by the writer in Part I of *A Rose for Emily*". This reaction paper demonstrates the strategies used by Faulkner to cause such an emotional response from the reader.

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