

Rose for emily and the guest explicatory essay

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



When examining the character of Ms. Emily from the story “ A Rose for Emily” and the Arab from the story “ The Guest” their divergent characteristics and origins would normally result in little if any consideration being given for finding similarities between the two.

Despite this assumption, the two characters are remarkably similar since they are both victims of the loss of their individual freedoms. In order to prove this point this paper will first examine the character of Ms. Emily and will point out the various facets of the character that are indicative of a loss of freedom.

After such an examination, a comparison will be done with the character of the Arab with the climax of the examination of the character culminating in the scene involving the 1, 000 francs and the decision to escape to freedom or go to jail.

It is expected that by the end of this examination the similarity between the two characters will be revealed. It is the assumption of this paper that the concept of honor, pride and the perception of society can be similar to a prison of iron bars and stone walls.

Ms. Emily’s loss of freedom can be characterized by her pride, her heritage and the image of being the last of the Grierson’s within their town as being aspects of her as a person. As it can be seen within the story, Ms. Emily can be described as aloof, prideful, haughty and considering herself far above others within the town.

Evidence of this can be seen from the following quote from the story: “ the Grierson’s held themselves a little too high for what they really were “(A Rose for Emily, 545). Such an attitude alienated her from making friends with the other women within the town.

Not only that, it eliminated the possibility of suitors from successfully wooing her as seen from the quote: “ none of the young men were good enough for Miss Emily” (A Rose for Emily, 545).

Even when her father’s death left her nothing but the house she lived in she still continued to maintain the attitude of superiority that isolated her from others within her area.

Based on the ending of the book, where it was shown that Ms. Emily had actually killed her suitor to keep him with her, it can be seen that she was a person that was desperate for love and companionship.

In the end, she let her pride and the perception of the people around her act as a prison against being able to gain the love and affection she desperately craved. Evidence of this can be seen in this part of the story: “ the body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace” (A Rose for Emily, 550).

When reading this part of the story it becomes immediately obvious that Ms. Emily continued to lie with this corpse even till her dying days. This was due to the way in which she let her pride and her arrogance prevent those she considered “ inferior” from associating with her which in the end left her alone and depressed.

This can actually be considered one of the themes of the story “ A Rose for Emily” where the author attempts to show the effects of letting one’s pride and the perception of others dictate your actions.

It must also be noted that the setting itself was during the era after the civil war wherein the perception of others played a crucial role in societal interaction this can be seen from the following part of the story: “ the day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid as is our custom” (A Rose for Emily, 545).

In the story, “ The Guest”, we are introduced to a situation where the character of Daru is tasked to take the Arab prisoner to Tinguit in order to be judged for the crime of slitting his cousin’s throat.

Despite the obvious dangers that such a man presented, Daru treated him kindly, fed him, spoke to him and in the end gave him the opportunity to flee instead of being judged for a crime.

Despite being presented with the opportunity to escape with 1, 000 francs, the Arab chose instead to go to jail. Before proceeding, what you must understand is that the concept of freedom is a pervading theme within the novel wherein the author shows that a person’s ability to choose a particular action actually gives value to their life.

Despite being given the option to flee to safety, he still chose to go to Tinguit and possibly to his death. The reason behind this is actually similar to what can be seen in the case of Ms. Emily involving pride, honor and the perception of others towards them.

What you have to understand is that the actions of the Arab are inherently connected to the way he was treated by Daru. First examine the following section from the story: “.... are you hungry? Yes, the prisoner said. Why do you eat with me? I’m hungry” (The Guest, 6-7).

As it can be seen from this snippet of their conversation, he was treated kindly and with respect instead of with disdain and annoyance as seen in the case of Balducci. This creates a certain degree of indebtedness on the part of the Arab which is expressed through his conversations with Daru and the fact that he could have escaped during the night but did not.

Secondly, he was given a choice instead of merely being taken to Tinguit as seen from the following quote “ You have a two-hour walk. At Tinguit, you’ll find the administration and the police. They are expecting you” (The Guest, 10).

In this instance, Daru solidifies the removal of the Arab’s freedom by entailing that he views the Arab as being trustworthy enough to make his own decision.

While in a literal interpretation of the story it can be interpreted that Daru was trying to give the man his freedom, in actuality his kindness, generosity and general attitude towards the Arab made it so that the Arab lost his freedom to choose.

He could not go against his honor of just escaping since he was being trusted to go to Tinguit by himself. His pride also demanded that he fulfill such a request since he was being treated as a human being instead of an animal.

Lastly, he valued the perception of the doctor towards him and as such he willingly walked to his possible death despite the fact that an alternative solution presented itself. This is evidenced by this particular part of the story: “ the Arab again stood framed in the doorway, closed the door carefully, and came back to bed without a sound”(The Guest, 8).

As it can be seen, the Arab had the opportunity to escape but did not. This is indicative of the chains of honor and trust that were already set that prevented him from escaping. That is why at the end of the story the message “ you have turned in our brother, you will pay” (The Guest, 11) appeared despite the fact that Daru had given the man the opportunity to set himself free.

The fact is that his actions of actually helping the character wound up creating the same social situation seen in the case of Ms. Emily wherein the character felt as if she had to uphold the image that was being fostered upon them.

As such, even if Daru seemed as if he had given the man his freedom it could be considered just the same as dragging him to Tinguit due to the consequences of his actions.

It is based on this that it can be stated that the concept of honor, pride and the perception of society can be similar to a prison of iron bars and stone walls.

Such aspects can restrict the freedom of choice resulting in people fostering an image, attitude and behavior that they may not necessarily want to portray but in the end have no choice but to display.

In a way, Albert Camus and William Faulkner in their individual stories involving Ms. Emily and the Arab have treated their characters similarly by showing how freedoms can be taken away simply by the act of thinking and perception.