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Tiffany Gattis Tavel ENG 151 05 Oct 2012 A Review of a Rose " A Rose for Emily", by William Faulkner is a riveting tale of the perils of love lost. Though the story offers up an elaborate plot, the conclusion did not fully provide closure as would be the natural expectation. Instead, the conclusion was heavily shrouded in mystery and secrecy. " Miss Emily after Dark", by Thomas Robert Argiro, which was published in The Mississippi Quarterly, discusses the many obscurities within the story and the effects of them remaining so right up to the conclusion with relation to the reader. Laura J. Getty's critical essay, " Faulkner's A Rose for Emily" touches on the manner in which these obscurities evoke sensationalism among readers by leaving room for the imagination to run wild with approximation. This is what great stories are built on; allowing each reader perceptive resolution. According to Dictionary. com, the word conclusion is defined as the last main division of discourse, usually containing a summary of the main points and a statement of opinion or decisions reached. There is, by definition, a sense of finality in the word. Despite the suggested intent, not all stories provide this presumed closure. Among the many tales ending in such a manner is Faulkner's masterfully crafted " A Rose for Emily"; a story set in a small, post World War II southern town struggling with post-war socio-economic transformations. The conclusion of this ominous tale allows the readers imagination the freedom to supplement omitted details with personally palatable concepts. Among the central yet under-developed themes were Emily's relationships with her father, the surrounding community, and her assumed lover, Homer Barron. The relationship between Emily and her father, as described by Faulkner, leaves the reader pondering what, and exactly how much was left

unsaid, and the possible implications as they relate to the proverbial white space of the story. " The townspeople are extremely sensitive to Emily's psychological state. " When Emily tries to keep her father's corpse, they believed that she had to do that. We remember all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would cling to that which had robbed her, as people will"(Getty 2). Though it is not unusual for fathers to be protective of their daughters, the rapport described begins to border on what most would consider discomfited and deviant. The relationship was so constrictive that it mired her progression through crucial developmental milestones; likely contributing to the progressive emotional unrest witnessed in the years following his death. " The specter of incest opens the story up to consideration of the psychic damage that Emily may have suffered" (Argiro 2). With her only permissible companion now laid to rest, Emily seems unable, or even unwilling to master the art of normal human interaction. Her self-imposed isolation did nothing to alleviate strained relations with a town already grappling with the adaptations of a new era; the death of the south, as it had been know to its inhabitants, was underway. Though the reader is given the impression that Emily did not recognize the progressive deterioration of her already severely dilapidated living quarters, this seems highly unlikely. More plausible is the possibility that she did in fact recognize the decline, and as a result renounced the inquiries of the masses in an attempt to protect her residual stateliness. " Emily's myth does not enliven Jefferson; instead it discloses an impoverished fantasy of a lost noblesse oblige" (Argiro 3). Throughout childhood, Emily had been psychologically inundated with the notion that she was superior to

southern-born counterparts; a queen amongst paupers. The effects of this are apparent in the nonchalant manner in which she dismisses the legitimate concerns of the townspeople. " I have no taxes in Jefferson", was her sole response when asked about payment that was undoubtedly long overdue; a response that should have resulted in eviction in the absence of the unanimously sympathetic sentiments of the townspeople she clearly did not hold in high regard. " She appears visible enough to the townspeople bent on scrutinizing her every move, yet she remains well beyond their comprehension" (Argiro 1). Emily lived by her own scruples in both her business and personal matters, and gave little or no thought as to social consequences. Her love life was not exempt from these sentiments. " The indignant community is scandalized that she would ever think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer" (Argiro 1). Homer Barron did not at all fit the profile of what the surrounding community considered a suitable husband. Among the many concerns voiced was his assumed sexual preference. He could be seen by all gallivanting about the town with various young men drinking and causing a great ruckus; behavior not at all like that which was expected of a southern gentleman, and certainly not becoming of a suitor of a revered southern belle. Speculation as to his true motives with regard to his public courting of Emily spread riotously throughout the community. The scene evoked mixed emotions because though the relationship did serve to increase Emily's socialization, to the public eye, they appeared hopelessly mismatched. " Emily's liaison with Homer is in many respects remarkable: she makes a leap out of her seclusion and into a new intimate social reality" (Argiro 2). Though Homer's motives will forever remain a mystery, it is

abundantly clear that whatever his rationale could have been, it ultimately cost him his life. Though little clarity was provided as to the circumstance surrounding Homer's death, it can be deduced that the overwhelming fear of loneliness and lost love were among Emily's motivators. " No one knows the intimacies of Emily and Homer with any certainty, but select details may expose various reasons for Homer's corpse winding up on gruesome display in Emily's upstairs bedroom"(Argiro 3). It seems unfathomable that a man of Homer's experience would not have recognized her social immaturity and vulnerability. Homer seemed to take full advantage; accepting gifts which pointed to the prospects of a dignified future with Emily in holy matrimony. Still, he appeared in no hurry to solidify a commitment. In a time when a woman's virtue was considered transposable with her character, such mismanagement could have triggered the emotional instability that resulted in his untimely demise. Despite Faulkner's choice to input such ambiguity into the story line; what emerged was a masterpiece that will likely evoke great debate for centuries to come. It is this imprecision that makes this story such a powerful read; reigniting within its readers a burning, child-like curiosity that sets the imagination afire with conjecture. " The main secrets in Jefferson take place inside that building, and the most important secret is revealed only after the flowers have been placed on Emily's grave" (Getty 2). Like stories of the haunted, abandoned house just at the end of lane, this story will endure through generations of fresh perspectives and renewed deliberation. Work Cited Argiro, Thomas Robert. " Miss Emily after dark." *The Mississippi Quarterly* 64. 3-4 (2011): 445+. Literature Resource Center. Web.

29 Sep. 2012. Getty, Laura J. "Faulkner's A Rose for Emily." *The Explicator* 63. 4 (2005): 230+. Literature Resource Center. Web. 29 Sep. 2012.