

Chronology in 'a rose for emily'

Literature, Russian Literature



William Faulkner takes into account the ever-complicated concept of time in "A Rose for Emily". It is a manifestation his contemplation on the nature of time. It lacks a standard chronology. Faulkner ensnare almost three quarters of century in a few page story. He does it superbly by avoiding a proper chronological order.

Faulkner skillfully put the story up to demonstrate the indefinable and intangible character of time. He constructs it in such a subtle manner that it is hard to detect any chronological order of the plot. Time does not flow in a linear direction but take a circular direction with the progress of story.

Fault consciously or unconsciously does not concern himself with specific dates. A handful of explicit dates are cited in the story. But these indications reveal as plenty of information about the linear chronology of the vents. For example, it is quite clear that remittance of Emily's taxes by Colonel Sartoris takes place in 1894.

It is further provided that he is dead for the last ten years and this the time Emily meets the new aldermen. Story further discloses that Emily died at 74. This hint capacitates us to construct a linear chronology of the events.

The linear sequence of events in Emily's life is as follow; Section 4 illustrates her birth duringcivil war. Section 2 describes a joint ride with her father in an old wagon.

Her father dies. Homer Barron appears on the scene and an amorous affairs starts with Emily in section 3. She purchases male lavatory set and outfits for him in section 4. We are again forced to revert back to section 3 when town

people degrade him and reverted back and summon her cousin. Section 4 is marked with the arrival of cousins and departure of Homer from the town.

He returns back after the exit of her cousins. We again slip back to section 3 where Emily purchase poison from a local vendor and Homer disappears in the next section. Section 2 illustrate stink from her house indicating his death and four aldermen are shown sprinkling water on her grave. Faulkner has used a novel narrative technique as story starts with Emily's funeral (the end) and concludes with the finding of Homer's rotten dead body.

Faulkner's concept of time and its effective utilization does not weaken the story but it is the most obvious strength of its plot, construction and thematic expressions. Although presentation of time in this manner is mostly related is subject to philosophical orientation of the author but it had deep impact on the plot.

He merges past into present and present into past and this feature of the story captivates the reader. "Faulkner gives the story a chronology, but as with so many of his stories, we have to sort it out" (McGlynn 461); Furthermore, it hinders the formulation of reader's judgment about Emily till the end.

The effects of this non-linear chronology on the story are beautifully summed up by McGlynn (1969). He says that "A chronology of 'A Rose for Emily' is useful for at least two reasons: it makes the plot more easily comprehensible, and it helps clarify the function of time in the story" (461).

By evading a clear and linear chronological order of events, Faulkner attempts to provide his reader a riddle comprised of various bits. However,

he provides clues to facilitate this puzzle-solving. The motive behind this exercise seems to involve his reader more deeply in the story.

References

Faulkner, William. *A rose for Emily*. Columbus; Merrill. 1970.

McGlynn, Paul D. *William Faulkner: An Interpretation*; " The Chronology of 'A Rose for Emily,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*. 6. 1969.