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A Rose for Emily

William Faulkner was among prominent American writers in the 1930's who has shown his mastery of the short story in the form of “A Rose for Emily”. He has used different conventional techniques as well as experimental devices to show his artistic preoccupations. The story was written in 1930 to show the effects of social change on Emily Grierson (Gaunce et al.). The main theme of the short story is the resistance to change and is feminist literary theory and criticism. To emphasize this, the author has used different literary devices such as flashback and foreshadowing. Moreover, there is a use of figurative language in the story. This paper will use different literary devices to analyze a social reality of resistance to change in addition to analyzing feminism in that society.

Faulkner has successfully used different literary devices to show the theme of feminism in her story. Miss Emily father had rigid control over her life and behaviour. She was the prisoner of her father as well as male-dominated society. “Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town” (Gaunce et al, 155). He was not dependent on the conventional linear method to present his characters. Rather he has used foreshadowing significantly throughout the story. Foreshadowing refers to the creation of expectation for act before its happening. For example, Emily house had a bad odour, but the author has carefully used different events to disgust this order and did not make it obvious. Judge Stevens said. “It’s probably just a snake or rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I’ll speak to him about it” (Gaunce et al, 157). Thus, foreshowing has been used to show Emily resistance against male-dominated society.

The story is written from feminism and shows how Patriarchy affects her character and her resistance against society. Faulkner has used different ways to portray his character. There is a use of the narrator in the story to deliver information about the character objectively. The narrator in the story is revealing the Miss. Emily's miserable life. She is shown committing crimes to censure the class system in the South in that age (Tezcan). The narrator provides information about Miss Emily's character through the perspective of town people. For example, there is frequent use of "we" instead of "I" to show the collective opinion of the town people. This is showing the influence of society over Emily life. Furthermore, she is using flashbacks to strengthen the theme of his story (Gaunce et al.). Flashbacks are used in the story to show those actions that had accrued before the opening of a story. The narrator in the story is using non-sequential flashbacks to emphasize the theme. Miss Emily died at the start of the story, but flashbacks are used to tell about different events after her death.

Likewise, there is extensive use of symbolism in the story. For example, Emily house shows her inner state. At the start of the story, it was vibrant fresh and clean. With time, the house is turned as dirty, foul-smelling and profane. These show Emily consciousness, which was earlier pure and clean, but with time, it became infected. Another symbol is Emily’s hair used to show her sexuality in the story (Tezcan). For example, after the death of her father, she had short hair to look like a young girl. This was the result of his father raiding her of marry. Moreover, when Homer "disappears" her hair is shown as grey, indicating the demise of her sexuality.

Miss Emily was living in a patriarchy society that had great influence over her life. When she tried to go against the society norms, she lost her sense. In this struggle, she also left her purity of character to show resistance against society.

Works Cited

Gaunce, Julia, et al. *The Broadview Anthology of Short Fiction*. Broadview Press, 2012.

Tezcan, Tuncay. “A Stylistic Analysis of A Rose for Emily by William Faulkner and Its Turkish Translation.” *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 158, 2014, pp. 364–69.