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Enter the Name of Instructor

English

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The Short Story Assignment

‘A Rose for Emily’ by William Faulkner is popular for its complex chronology. It attracts the attention of readers because of its unique narrative style. Many critics consider the narrator, who quotes “we” to be young, decent and masculine; however, by close observation, the readers realize that the narrator is neither young nor a male. The primary theme reflected in the story is ‘death’. It starts with the death of Emily, and when the story progresses, it takes the readers back to the death experiences of Emily during her life. Throughout the story, death remains a noticeable element. It remains noticeable through the depiction of narrator about Emily, which goes on like, “a drowned woman, a bloated and pale figure left too long in the water (Faulkner et al.)” and “a small, spare skeleton”. It shows that Emily was primarily near to death. Some of the critics believe that Emily has been portrayed as an old soul and noble lady who is facing the decline.

At many times in the story, Emily attempted to challenge death by going in a phase of denial. Her affection for the dead bodies becomes apparent with the death of her father. In order to show her fondness for her father, she grasps his dead body. At this point in the story, the narrator’s feelings about her father’s death becomes apparent when the narrator mentions “At last [we] could pity Miss Emily (Faulkner et al.)." Right after the death of her father, people start considering her “humanized”, as she lost the most loved person she had with her. It is the first instance throughout the story when Emily’s habit of denying death becomes apparent to readers. She releases the dead body of her father at the very last moment and does so with extreme reluctance. As the story progress, Homer Barron, the person who shares intimate feelings with Emily, dies. Emily once again challenges death by refusing to accept his departure. Though Emily herself is the murderer of Barron, she refuses to accept his death. As the story progresses, people discover the wired marriage they both had when they discover remnants of his body close to her personal space.

The symbolism of death in the story is also linked to a monument. The monument is a depiction of death since many people associate monuments with death and despair. In the story author compares the feelings of Emily with a deteriorating monument which is about to collapse. This analogy keeps the aspect of death throughout the story alive. As monuments face gradual destruction and people around it come and live in them for a shorter period, similar is the case with Emily. His father, her intimate partner and her students came and went away from her very soon. Faulkner associates the symbol of death with dust as well. As the dust take over the old and static objects, similarly, Emily’s physical attire was diminishing. With time, she was coming close to death which she has tried to challenge throughout her life.

Other than her, dust remains so visible at Emily’s residence. The fine particles of dust joined with her affection with the dead bodies authenticate her notions about death and despair. Throughout the story, Faulkner has depicted the idea of death since his character Emily is associated with this phenomena. It becomes apparent when author mentions ''smelled of dust and disuse (Faulkner et al.).'' Which shows that death and despair remain so associated with her. Similarly, at one place in the story ''faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray (Faulkner et al.)''. It is how death remained associated with Emily throughout the story in different forms.

Works Cited

Faulkner, William, et al. *A Rose for Emily*. Verlag F. Schöningh Paderborn, De, 1958.