



Universidad de Valladolid

FACULTAD de FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS
DEPARTAMENTO de FILOLOGÍA INGLESA
Grado en Estudios Ingleses

TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

‘A ROSE FOR EMILY’: THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

Clara María Pura Nieto

Tutor: Anunciación Carrera de la Red

2020-2021

Abstract

This BA dissertation presents an overview of the critical heritage of 'A Rose for Emily' by William Faulkner. It selects, examines, and analyses the most representative and influential pieces of criticism published on the work, be they published in newspapers, literary magazines, or scholarly journals, from the time of its first edition in 1930 to the critical readings of the 1990s. It defends that, by solving the earliest critical concerns about the style and atmosphere of the short story, it was the work of the New Critics and Structuralists of the 1950s that established its canonical reception as a piece of innovative narrative technique. The new Structuralist revisions of the 70s refined their conclusions, while the psychoanalytical, feminist and gender analyses of the 80s and 90s attempted to illuminate those intriguing aspects of the work that remained obscure, like the motivations behind the actions of its main characters.

Keywords: William Faulkner, 'A Rose for Emily', critical reception, textual history, literary criticism.

Este Trabajo Final de Grado presenta una visión general de la recepción crítica de 'A Rose for Emily' de William Faulkner. Selecciona, examina y analiza las piezas más representativas e influyentes de la crítica publicada sobre la obra, ya sea en periódicos, revistas literarias o académicas, desde la época de su primera edición en 1930 hasta las lecturas críticas de la década de 1990. Defiende que fue el trabajo de los Nuevos Críticos y Estructuralistas de la década de 1950 el que estableció su recepción canónica como pieza de técnica narrativa innovadora al resolver las primeras preocupaciones críticas sobre el estilo y la atmósfera del cuento. Las nuevas revisiones Estructuralistas de los años 70 refinaron sus conclusiones, mientras que los análisis psicoanalíticos, feministas y de género de los años 80 y 90 intentaron aclarar aquellos aspectos intrigantes que permanecían oscuros, como las motivaciones detrás de las acciones de sus protagonistas.

Palabras clave: William Faulkner, 'A Rose for Emily', recepción crítica, historia textual, crítica literaria.

Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| 1. The Manuscripts and Early Publications of ‘A Rose for Emily’ | 5 |
| 2. The Early Reviews | 7 |
| 3. Narrative Structure, Chronology, and the Narrator | 11 |
| 4. Gothic Element, Time, and Space | 14 |
| 5. Syntagmatic Analysis and Reader-Response Criticism | 16 |
| 6. Psychoanalysis | 19 |
| 7. Feminism and Gender Studies | 21 |
| Conclusion | 24 |
| Bibliography | 27 |
| Appendix | 32 |

Introduction

William Faulkner is a most acknowledged and recognized author in the history of American literature. His works have been analyzed not only by critics but also students of literature in general. A torrent of critical analyses was published in newspapers and journals, as the popularity of his novels attracted a growingly larger audience. As Theresa Towner reminds us: “from the beginning of his career, Faulkner got good, bad, and indifferent notices in publications large and small” (95).

It is often said that Faulkner did not care much about what other authors and critics were saying in their reviews. Faulkner himself expressed his lack of interest in critical work. In his visit to the University of Virginia of 1957 he answered to the following question by one of the students attending his lecture in this way:

Q: . . . You don't have to put up with the critics, but I've noticed particularly when a new book comes out all the Freudian implications are pulled out and all sorts of undercurrents rather than just a simple 'Here's what happened,' and, of course, there's always more to it than that, but all kinds of weird things are just pulled out of the hat and thrown around. Would that bother you; does it disturb you to have everything sort of misconstrued?

A: I can't say because I'm not aware of it. I don't read the critics . . . I'm convinced, though, that that sort of criticism, whether it's nonsensical or not, is valid . . . And I'm quite sure that there are some writers to whom that criticism is good, that it could help them find themselves. I don't know that the critic could teach the writer anything because I'm inclined to think that nobody really can teach anybody anything. (Gwynn and Blotner 4, 5)

Faulkner was his own critic. He knew there were mistakes in his novels as he writes in the prefatory note of his novel *The Mansion* (1959), the last book of the Snopes trilogy, saying “the author has already found more discrepancies and contradictions than he hopes the reader will” (qtd. in Towner 95). Apparently, the only critic that had an effect on his writings was Malcolm Cowley and his anthology *Portable Faulkner* (1946), “which did so much to enlarge and quicken Faulkner's general reputation” (Van O'Connor 182). Cowley got one of the biggest editorials, The Viking Press, to publish *The Portable Faulkner*, “which managed to supplant the predominantly unfavorable reception Faulkner had up to that point received in America” (Lester 372).

In spite of Faulkner being an author who was not influenced by the critics, they did influence the opinion of the readership. The rise in popularity and numbers of readers interested in his works was accompanied by a growth of writing by critics that paid attention to his writings in order to analyze them.

Historians of Faulkner's critical heritage coincide that criticism on Faulkner has gone through three different phases that span throughout the course of his literary production. Roland K. Végsó summarized it in this way: "the years of apprenticeship (the 1920s); the major years (1929–1936/40/42/46—sometimes divided into smaller units); and the late Faulkner (1948–1962)" (85). The first period started when he was introducing himself into the world of writing and he published *Soldiers' Pay* (1926). Nothing much of this first period received comment; it was "mentioned only in F. J. Hoffman's introductory essay [*William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism*]" (Van O'Connor 180). The second period contains what are his best-known novels: *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As Lay Dying* (1930), and *Absalom! Absalom!* (1936), among others. The last period started a little before winning his Nobel Prize in 1950 and reached until his death in 1962.

The first pieces of criticism that followed those reviews of Faulkner's earliest work, published in the literary sections of newspapers and magazines, like the *New Republic* or *Explicator*, for instance, dealt mainly with the most innovative aspects of Faulkner's narrative. The first scholarly works that were published in the 1950s have been identified as representatives of the New Criticism. As such, they "tended to consider texts as autonomous and 'closed,' meaning everything that is needed to understand a work is present within it" (Poetry Foundation). According to Taylor Hagood, Faulkner's texts contained a lot of material useful for that kind of approach, as in them "it was easy to find plenty of ambiguities and paradoxes in such highly wrought prose and complex characters and situations" (26). However, New Critics were not pleased by everything that Faulkner did. They "tended to peer down from the lofty power-mantled ranks of critics who possessed superior knowledge and vision and who were defenders of high morality" and usually saw Faulkner as someone who was lucky enough to be able to write a good story (Hagood 27). This was no obstacle for them to celebrate "Faulkner's greatness lay in his celebration of universal human virtue (Caron, 'He Doth Bestride')." Still, one of their most common observations was that Faulkner was not easy to read

and understand: sometimes “even the most learned readers would need to keep a dictionary close by to wrestle with Faulkner’s prose” (Hagood 26).

All these complexities were what interested the advocates of Structuralism. Structuralists analyzed literary texts not only as textual codes, like New Criticism, but also intertextual, looking in particular for “the structural principles operating in a work” (Towner 100). Their interest in Faulkner lay in how the author played with the structure of his stories going back and forth in the plot. Some authors saw him as “Anti-Narrative who uses complex devices to keep the story from being told... as if a child were to go to work on it with a pair of shears” (qtd. in Van O’Connor 181), while others liked the fact that Faulkner’s texts were a ‘continuum,’ which do not necessarily have an ending and can continue not only in the text but also in the reader’s mind: “To keep the form —and the idea— fluid and unfinished, still in motion, as it were, and unknown, until the dropping into place of the very last syllable” (qtd. in Van O’Connor 185).

In the 1980s, Cultural Studies revised the Work of Faulkner. These post-structuralist critics focus on a variety of texts and discourses, tracing the interactions of both through interpretive strategies that include elements of economics, psychology, sociology, gender studies, and new historicism (Poetry Foundation). As an instance of a critic who analyzed Faulkner’s texts from that point of view, Van O’Connor mentions George Marion O’Donnell and his “Faulkner’s Mythology” (1939), an article where Yoknapatawpha county is studied in historical, social, economic and ethical—in regional—terms (181, 82).

This certainly would go against what New Critics would be concerned with. Cleanth Brooks argued that readers “should not read Faulkner’s fictional works as if they are true history or sociology but rather as the works of art they are” (qtd. in Hagood 32). Even these days Van O’Connor agrees that

stressing or rather over-stressing historical and sociological, or regional, aspects of Faulkner’s fiction, even when the mythic qualities are acknowledged, leads to distorting the more basic intention of many, perhaps most, of the stories —to reading them somehow as documents in a legendary history of the South (183).

Indeed, the critical examination of William Faulkner’s works has been large. Several works have revised the critical reception of his works in general, like John Earl Bassett’s *William Faulkner: The Critical Heritage* (1975) or more recently, Kathryn

Stelmach Artuso's *Critical Insights: William Faulkner* (2013). Some have focused on the particular case of a country, like Gordon Price-Stephens' 'The British Reception of William Faulkner 1929-1962' (1965), or period of time, like *William Faulkner: The Contemporary Reviews* (1995). Others have concentrated on particular works, like Bernd Engler's *William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom! Five Decades of Critical Reception* (1987) or Aliz Farkas' 'The Critical Reception of William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* across time' (2017).

This dissertation will look into the critical reception of 'A Rose for Emily'. It aims to better understand how it has been received and interpreted by literary critics and academics throughout history. To carry out this task, first, a search was made on lists and bibliographies of Faulkner's published writings; next, a selection was made of literary reviews and scholarly articles, sorted chronologically, and finally each critical piece was read and analyzed, so to be able to know what interested the critics in each period about the text. In this way can be constructed the critical heritage of 'A Rose for Emily' and we can observe how the text was received throughout different articles and points of view, and what aspects about its style received the greatest interest in each period.

Our reference text of 'A Rose for Emily' will be the 2012 print version of the Penguin Random House editorial. In this dissertation, the title of the short story will be abbreviated as RFE in all parenthetical references.

The Manuscripts and Early Editions of 'A Rose for Emily'

William Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily' was first published in a periodical called *The Forum Magazine*, in the issue of April 1930 (Appendix, fig. 1). It was only six pages (233-38). The journal, published in New York for a national readership, mainly contained articles debating contemporary political and social issues of general interest, that sometimes were used as resources for colleges and universities. Stephen Railton explains that Faulkner had changed his short story before publishing it: the author omitted a conversation between Emily and her servant in the final publication. That conversation is present in the original handwritten manuscript (Appendix, fig. 2) and carbon copy (Appendix, fig. 3) of five sheets preserved at the University of Virginia and it is not included in its first printed version in *The Forum* (Railton, 'Manuscripts etc.'). The basic details of the early printing history of 'A Rose for Emily' can be learned from James B. Meriwether's checklist of William Faulkner's published writings to 1957.

In 1931, the year after its publication in *The Forum Magazine*, a version of 'A Rose for Emily,' "very slightly revised" (Meriwether 146), was published in *These 13*. It was edited together with the revised versions of other short stories and seven new ones published for the first time by Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, in a book format, following the publication of some of Faulkner's major novels such as *Sanctuary* (1929). Although the edition was limited issue of 299 copies, the textual version of 'A Rose for Emily' that appeared in *These 13* was definitive. It was first reprinted in 1932, in *The Golden Book Magazine* (Appendix, fig. 4), an American monthly magazine edited by Frederica Pisek Field, besides the work of other writers such as Herman Melville's 'The Chola Widow' (1854). In 1945, it was published again in *A Rose for Emily and Other Stories by William Faulkner* (Appendix, fig. 5). This collection reprinted eight stories from periodicals, the collection *Doctor Martino and Other Stories* (1934), plus extracts from *The Unvanquished* (1938). It was edited by Saxe Commins, who also included a foreword, and published by the Armed Services Editions, as part of a program that distributed paperbacks of fiction freely among the soldiers during World War II in order to give them a medium of entertainment, education, and information while they were on the front. Its distribution was small, as these pocketbooks were not for sale (Meriwether 143).

The most important time it was published was in 1946 by The Viking Press. This was the first mass release edition of 'A Rose for Emily.' In that year, Cowley edited *The Portable Faulkner*. It was part of the Viking Portable Library, a series designed to provide anthologies for the general reader and college students (Meriwether 143). Like the majority of the seventeen stories and novel chapters that it contained, 'A Rose for Emily' was printed without revision, in the same version already available in *These 13*. Along with the texts, there were notes by Cowley, with an appendix on the Compson family and "a map of Yoknapatawpha County supplied by Faulkner" (143, 145). Therefore, Cowley's collection may be described as the first attempt to popularize Faulkner and 'A Rose for Emily' formed part of it.

After winning the Nobel Prize, Faulkner's short stories started to be recognized by a wide audience and 'A Rose for Emily' was included in all the different compilations of Faulkner's written works that were published from then on. The first collection was released in 1950 by Random House under the title *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*. It included all his forty-two stories together for the first time in his career. Another collection of works by Faulkner was compiled in 1954, called *The Faulkner Reader*, again edited by Random House and by Commins. This anthology also included 'A Rose for Emily' besides a selection of extracts from Faulkner's major novels and of short stories, in addition to Faulkner's Nobel Prize address plus a foreword by the author. In 1955, Faulkner decided to release an anthology whose content was selected by him, and included 'A Rose for Emily'. It received the title of *The Best of Faulkner: Chosen By the Author* and was edited by Reprint Society. Eventually, in 1962 'A Rose for Emily' was released in another collection of short stories called *Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner*.

It has been seen that, although 'A Rose for Emily' was first published in 1930, the final version is that from *These 13* (1931), as it was reprinted in the following collections of stories that included our text. But it was in 1946 when it finally got to be known by a wide audience after being published in *The Portable Faulkner*.

What is important in this dissertation is the critical reception of 'A Rose for Emily' since its publication in 1931 until nowadays. Thus, what interests us are the early reviews to know how it was received since the beginning.

The Early Reviews

The critical reception of 'A Rose for Emily' started with the release of *These 13* (1931). The earliest reviewers write about the content of the stories there collected, among them, 'A Rose for Emily': the characters, the thematic division of the stories, the "world" where they take place. Pontoon J. Doakes is the only reviewer who directly refers to 'A Rose for Emily', saying "it will knock your hat out" (4). In his review, published in *Rocky Mountain News* (20 Dec 1931), he writes that if a book of short stories is difficult to review, in that book written by Faulkner, the difficulty appears insurmountable (4). That difficulty is also seen in the construction of the characters by some other early readers of Faulkner's short stories. Robert Cantwell, in his favorable review in *New Republic* (21 Oct 1931), describes them saying "they act as people act while under some intense nervous strain, the source of which lies in some past condition, outside the story, not clearly stated" (271). Several other critics focus on the "world," the particular background behind the short stories. Lionel Trilling, for example, in a not too favorable review in *Nation* (4 Nov 1931), comments Faulkner creates his own world, making it idiosyncratic (qtd. in Inge 69), meaning the world in which Faulkner sets his stories contains features that make them distinctive and unusual, so readers can recognize him and his style in each plot. But to him, the stories that "seem best" are those "aerated by contact with the common world, by the writer's acceptance of the common" (qtd. in Inge 70), allowing anyone to be able to understand that world created by Faulkner as it shares features with our already existing world. Then, the review in the *Philadelphia Record* (4 Oct 1931) points out that some of the traits of Faulkner's world are "violent, disordered, cataclysmic" (14-B), which may be one of the reasons why some readers reject reading him. It makes the stories more special as not everyone is able to follow them. Most critics warn that what readers should take into account is that *These 13* cannot be expected to contain a humorous part. This can be seen especially in the four war stories "with their stark realism and macabre humor" (*Durham Herald*, 27 Dec 1931), but also in six others, including 'A Rose for Emily', which are set in the South, in Mississippi to be more specific, and that the final three, says Cantwell, set in France and Italy (271).

Despite that, one critic also makes clear that the compilation is “to be read by any with an interest in American letters” (*Durham Herald*) and that Faulkner is a young writer of talent who can only get better in his writings:

He is one writer, among the younger ones in America today, who is clearly possessed of genius. It is a dark, mysterious possession, like some outlandish spell, to be sure. But because he is in a way possessed, his books are individual and are full of the power which comes when a writer has the courage to select material peculiarly his own and the mastery to use it effectively. (*Durham Herald*)

New critical comments were published when *The Portable Faulkner* (1946) was released. It included ‘A Rose for Emily.’ Although they do not expressly refer to our story, what they say about Faulkner’s works is applicable to all the texts compiled. Perhaps, the most important of these reviews of the book came from Caroline Gordon. In her favorable review in *New York Times Book Review* (5 May 1946), she supports her comments by paraphrasing Cowley’s. She starts by warning that, in general, Faulkner’s texts are not being read as the way the author wanted, which is “seeing in it not a series of novels with sociological implications, but a saga, a legend that is still in the making” (qtd. in Inge 247). That saga is formed by different stories set in the same place, a place Faulkner invented to be in Mississippi called ‘Yoknapatawpha County’, where ‘A Rose for Emily’ is set. Gordon states that the short novels, when they are read separately, “are like wooden planks that were cut, not from a log but from a still living tree” (qtd. in Inge 247), referring to the fact that they all come from a common place and share traits. It was interpreted that what Cowley does in *The Portable* is to collect all those chapters stories “with a view to giving a general panorama of life in the mythical Yoknapatawpha County” (qtd. in Inge 248), which, according to Sylvia B. Richmond in *Chelsea Record* (7 Sept 1946), makes of *The Portable* a “collection of some of his best stories about his Mississippi County,” “arranged chronologically and cover[ing] the history of the county” (3). About the characters in Faulkner’s world, Gordon adds “it is no accident that he continually uses words like ‘grave, absent, bemused’ to describe them,” as they “move rapt in the contemplation of their individual fates” (qtd. in Inge 249) and admires the way in which the author takes care of them and his invented place: “he writes like a man who so loves his land that he is fearful for the well-being of every creature that springs from it” (qtd. in Inge 250), stressing how he has compassion for all

the created beings (qtd. in Inge 249). It seems that Faulkner was starting to be better known.

Yet, the critics were still stricken by Faulkner's originality. After publication, *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950) received reviews from 1950 to 1951. The collection contains all the varieties of Faulkner's writings, the variety of life itself. It includes 'A Rose for Emily' besides selections from novels and not only short stories. Most of the reviewers agree that Faulkner does not follow any pattern neither stays as a writer of a single genre. The content of this collection was made from early volumes, having the appearance of an "omnibus," says Horace Gregory (qtd. in Inge 301); that variety of writings lets the reader observe how "the moods pass from the grave and the grim to the haunting and the humorous," writes William D. Patterson (qtd. in Inge 305), moving from one mood to another. In the reviews of *Collected Stories*, there is again a clear distinction of worlds when talking about Faulkner. For Patterson, it is that world surrounded of "people possessed, of cruelty and violence" (7); for the reviewer in *Time* (28 Aug 1950), Faulkner shuttles between two worlds: the first one is the common and grey world of everyday life; the second one, is that world called Yoknapatawpha County where he sets his stories related to the South in which the plot contents the past and the future generations of that South (qtd. in Inge 308). Some critics like William Peden, who wrote for the *Saturday Review of Literature* (26 Aug 1950), believe that the best stories are those connected directly or indirectly with that second world (12), where of course 'A Rose for Emily' is located. Hodding Carter, as a representative of the South people in *Delta Democrat-Times* (27 Aug 1950), prefers to clarify that Faulkner's South is not the same as it was at that time (4), meaning that it was not a dark and violence place. The question of how the South was represented receives much criticism. Gregory blames Faulkner for spreading the 'Southern Gothic' among a more and more writers of the South:

It has, I fear, provided an inspiration for large bales of creeping moss, magnolia fiction from the South, and which has now, even as I write, grown into giant, mushroom-like proportions, has escaped the modest bindings of several books. (qtd. in Inge 303)

At the same time, he makes it clear that already by the year 1950 'A Rose for Emily' was not only the best known of Faulkner's short stories, but considered to be the best

one: “Of (all) the stories reprinted in the present collection, ‘A Rose for Emily’ is the best known, and it is also among the best of its kind” (qtd. in Inge 303).

It was time for critics to examine the complexity of Faulkner’s narrative more in depth. In the *Hartford Courant* (3 Sept 1950), Edward Parone’s review introduces the idea of the ‘we’ who tells the stories, present in, for instance, the narrator of ‘A Rose for Emily’. ‘We’ can be a “city or a village with a searching scrutiny,” he explains (14) and points out that there lies the difficulty that sometimes leads to confusion when we read: it is not the main character who tells the story but the people who have heard about or are witness to it. This confusion, they find, is not only created by the ‘we’ as a narrator but also in the way details are described: “Faulkner’s reader must constantly struggle with the problem of whether a certain confusing detail in plot or characterization, a lapse in syntax, an ambiguity in language, is accidental, the result of this tigrish relationship to his work, or quite intentional” (qtd. in Inge 317). George Smart recommends that the reader takes time reading each story: “the stories are nearly all complete in themselves, have to be read pretty much at a one-at-a-time pace” (2-A). Some like Cantwell, who had already reviewed *These 13*, appears to give the readers some relief saying that “this collection of his short stories is so much clearer than Faulkner’s work in general” (qtd. in Inge 314).

When *The Faulkner Reader* came out in 1954, Charles Poore’s words in *New York Times* (1 Ap 1954) were very favorable: with this anthology you get the full sweep of Faulkner, a great romantic storyteller (29). Now that Faulkner was renown, they remind readers that it is practical to make a rapid review of his work (qtd. in Inge 360), as years before it was impossible to obtain a printed copy of his writings (qtd. in Inge 361). Webster Schott states “it’s an excellent introduction to Faulkner, superior in a number of ways to *The Portable Faulkner*” (14). He adds that, in earlier decades, when Faulkner was studied in college “it was fashionable to dismiss his fiction as obscure and degenerate” (14) while when he wrote his review in *The Kansas City Star* (24 Jul 1954) the fashionable was to praise everything related to him without taking time to select and to separate the good and the bad (14). In contrast to the previous reviews that postulated that Faulkner’s world is obscure, dark, like Schott’s when he observes the decay of the South in ‘A Rose for Emily’ in his review (14), Poore says “(it) is not always decaying. It is growing.” (29)

Critics are still trying to figure out what kind of writer Faulkner is. At the beginning there is resistance owing to the difficulty of Faulkner's narrative technique and the darkness of his world and characters, but there are those who envision a unique writer with a huge future. 'Rose for Emily' seems to have stood out at this time (1931-1955) as the best-known and best-quality short story. Critical analysis of the story will begin in the 50s.

3

Narrative Structure, Chronology, and the Narrator

The time for scholarly criticism on 'A Rose for Emily' started in the 1950s, while that of aesthetic or qualitative appreciations seemed to have come to an end. At that stage, criticism on the short story was interested in three main aspects: the narrative technique and the narrator, the chronology, and the structure of the short story written by Faulkner. The principles and practices of New Criticism and Structuralism coexisted in these studies.

Floyd C. Watkins, in "The Structure of 'A Rose for Emily'" (1954) began the discussion of the structure of the short story. He starts by saying that the story is divided in five parts and each part is based on different incidents of isolation and intrusion (509). In his reading, the movement between the parts is caused by the visits of Emily's antagonists to her house, all of them becoming a contributing element to the suspense in the story. In part I, Emily's house is visited by the antagonists in order to collect the required taxes. In the second part, townspeople enter her garden in order to stop the odor they all are complaining about. Part III does not include any visit to her house but instead she is stalked when she is buying the poison. The visits appear again in part IV when her relatives from Alabama come into the house to take care of her. Eventually, part V shows the biggest intrusion, as Emily is not there to stop townspeople from discovering her secret in the bridal chamber (Watkins 509). This structural pattern leads Watkins to postulate that the structure of the short story is symmetrical, "with the platform at the beginning, middle, and end" (509-10). In the fashion of New Criticism, he also believes Faulkner "has made the form a perfect vehicle for the content" (510): while in the central part the indomitableness of the decadent Southern aristocrat may be observed, the enclosure parts show the invasion of the aristocracy.

A second element, crucial to understand this question of the order and the structure of the narrative, engaged the work of the critics: the chronology of the narrative. In “The Chronology of ‘A Rose for Emily’” (1969), Paul D. McGlynn refers to chronology in general as a useful tool that “makes the plot more easily comprehensible and helps to clarify the function of time in the story” (461). What is remarkable in Faulkner’s ‘A Rose for Emily’ is that “the chronological data are scattered” (461), which he aims to show by reconstructing the true sequential order of events. In his reading, Emily’s father dies the same year Colonel Sartoris remits her taxes, in 1894, and at that time she is in her thirties, so McGlynn speculates she is probably born in 1864 and dies at the age of 74 in 1938 approximately (461). In the years 1895 and 1896 it is when Emily meets Homer and when the smell episode takes place; in 1896 Emily is seen buying poison, and from the year 1904 to the year 1918, Emily gives lessons on china-painting. Then, in 1926 she is asked to pay her taxes by the new generation and finally, Emily dies in 1938 (McGlynn 462). McGlynn’s reconstruction led other critics to share their opinion about the chronology. About two years later, the same journal published Helen E. Nebeker’s article “Chronology Revised” (1971). She disagrees with the chronological order proposed by McGlynn and transfers the dates ten years earlier. She holds that Mr. Grierson did not die the same year Colonel remitted Emily’s taxes and that in fact, he died ten years earlier in 1884, moving Emily’s birth date to the year 1854. She also suggests that it is in 1894, when she is giving china-painting lessons, that her taxes are remitted. With this new order, Emily would have died in 1928, two years before ‘A Rose for Emily’ was released (Nebeker 472, 73).

Along with structure and chronology, a third aspect became of interest for the critics: the role of the narrator. It was a further element contributing to the complexity that the early reviewers had already identified. In that same year 1971 the article “The Narrator in ‘A Rose for Emily’” came out in *The Journal of Narrative Technique*. Its author, Ruth Sullivan, also deals with the chronological arrangement of the elements of the narration. She explains how Faulkner uses the flashback technique at the start of the story by telling about Emily’s burial and ends his story with the post-mortem events discovered by the curious townspeople. Whereas in parts I and II the narrator swings us back into Emily’s past life, the following parts III and IV move forward until the moment she dies (167). Not interested in restoring the original sequence of events, Sullivan’s main contribution is a study of the narrator who is responsible for the

chronological shifts. Sullivan starts by saying simply that “A Rose for Emily is a first-person narration” (159) and part of the story. It could be a neighbor and probably more than one person, a plural ‘we’ (160), but in any case, someone anonymous, of whom we do not know any name at all, neither any age (161), because Faulkner only lets us know the name of those people who have a close relationship to Miss Emily.

What seems to engage Sullivan the most, is that from her perspective, the main and most significant action performed by this anonymous narrator is watching, or we should better say stalking: it is “a story about a woman watched for a long time by a narrator-group curious to know every detail of her appearance, conduct, family life, and environment” (161). This is how, as the townspeople watch her, it appears evident that they feel curious about her and feel admiration, respect, and affection towards her (like when at the very beginning of the story as the narrator announces that the whole town went to her funeral through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument), but also that, on the other hand, their curiosity is “equally stirred by discomfort and revulsion” (161) as when she is described by using pejorative adjectives such as ‘fat,’ the same adjectives that, according to Sullivan, are used when describing the house, making the house look as “an eyesore among eyesores” (161).

Sullivan speculates more. Commenting on the narrator’s curiosity, to her, the ‘we’ feels continuously the necessity of intruding into Emily’s intimate life in order to let the reader know every “juicy gossip about her sexual life” (162). Sullivan explicitly says the ‘we’ narrator is a voyeur (163) and that it is owing to the curiosity about Emily’s sexual life. Sullivan further states that there is a level where Emily and the narrator are mother and child, meaning ‘we’ acts as one whose psychic development is infantile (166) in the following way: “the infantile curiosity of the narrator spies upon the parent, needing to know from minute to minute where she is and what she is doing” (169). This is how Sullivan explains the narrator’s stand toward Emily. The child can feel curiosity about the sexuality of Emily as a mother, admiring her as a virginal woman, but later degrading her because of her affair with Homer, whose masculine figure can represent a rival for the narrator (172). In fact, Sullivan postulates that the narrator is one that only performs psychological and intellectual activities (166) and can only be identified as a physical person when ‘we’ attends Emily’s burial and finally enters her chamber.

Sullivan’s psychological slant will be later expanded by the application of psychoanalysis to ‘A Rose for Emily’ it in the 1980s. For the moment, between the 50s

and 70s, critics analyzed from the text the questions that interest the New Criticism and Structuralism, such as the narrative and chronological structure and the role of the narrator, giving an academic answer to the aesthetic concerns about the difficulty of Faulkner's texts that were pointed out from the beginning.

4

Gothic Element, Time, and Space

By 1968, Watkins called William Faulkner “probably the most-discussed American writer of our time” (317). Critics had much more to say about ‘A Rose for Emily,’ already acknowledged as the author’s best short story. While some were dealing with the internal narratological questions of structure and narrator, others found their interest in the connections that the text kept with the world outside: the time, space and literary environments of ‘A Rose for Emily.’ Around the 1960s, critics started to be interested in writing about the contrast in the story between the South, represented by the past generations, and the North, represented by the new generations, as well as the Gothic literary element that may have influenced it.

In 1958, the *Explicator* had published William Going’s “Faulkner’s ‘A Rose for Emily’”. Probably the readers of this journal of literary criticism favoured a more traditional approach to the narrative and a political reading of ‘A Rose for Emily.’ Going gives those more traditional readers his interpretation of the rose as a symbol. First, Going interprets that Emily deserves a rose in the romantic meaning; then, that she “stands for a rose—the treasured memory of old Confederate veterans,” and thus, that the sweet perfume of a rose works as a contrast to the odor introduced in the short story.

The relation kept by ‘A Rose for Emily’ with the South through Poe’s literary tradition had already been pointed to by Leo Spitzer in “A Reinterpretation of ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’” (1952). In 1960 the *Georgia Review* took up this theme and published Edward Stone’s analysis in ‘A Rose for Emily’ of those symbols that are directly related to the Southern Gothic stories. In his article “Usher, Poquelin, and Miss Emily: The Progress of Southern Gothic” (1960), Stone starts by situating the setting and time (433). He explains that it all happens in Jefferson during the first decades of the 1900s, as can be gathered from the mention to the garages and gasoline pumps and the fact that

the sidewalks and streets were being paved at that time; the reader knows this because Homer is one of the laborers in charge of doing that work (434). The South was being transformed by progress, he underlines. He then goes on to comment on the Gothic elements, starting by Emily's house. In the story, we as readers can observe it is described as a place that once was not as ugly as it is when Emily is older and dies. It is now a half-ruined eyesore house, which seems to resemble the protagonist: "Emily Grierson is a sinister relic . . . She lives on into an old age in the house . . . a place associated with an unspoken and mysterious horror" (435). 'Mystery' and 'unspoken' are two words that can be perfectly used to describe Emily's behavior as she speaks a few times. Those words are also fit for Gothic novels and the horror palpable in the atmosphere. The fact that Emily has locked herself up "in a massive, impregnable, outmoded house," like "a human ghoul who is all that is left to her" (437), and concealed Homer's dead body, adds up two other Gothic elements to the story: the ghost and death. The possibility of Emily's necrophilic relation with a corpse creates horror in the reader, to increase the Gothic atmosphere (440). Moreover, as for the suspense of the story, it is created by using the 'we' narrator. According to Stone, "Faulkner's ubiquitous and omniscient point of view seems used deliberately for this purpose (441, 42). To Stone, Faulkner has used old materials in a new way and modernizing the Southern Gothic (437).

The South continued to be present in some of the critics' minds for over a decade. "In Atmosphere and Theme in Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'" (1968), Ray B. West Jr. writes about the South as well but differently. He begins by stating that the short story works as a paradox and that paradox is between two conflicting views of time: time as something that does not happen and time as a mechanical progression. This is revealed by the contrast between Emily, who is stuck in the past, in the Southern traditions, and Homer, who arrives from the North and denies those traditions. West interprets that Emily will never advance in time as she does not accept death as the final sign of the passage of time (205-11). But in fact, the narration does show that time goes by. This is reflected on the progress of the South, but visible in her appearance, because she goes from looking "like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows" (RFE, III) to a "small, fat woman" (RFE, I) whose "skeleton was small and spare" (RFE, I). The only thing is that she does not realize it, because her universe was

not the same as that of Jefferson (West 205-11). It is as if Emily would live in a sort of ‘Southern’ state of mind that is separated from the reality around her.

In short, we observe that in the 50s and 60s not everything was New Criticism and narrative structure without reference to the external. In fact, these two currents were mixed with the cultural and literary environment of the south, present in one way or another in the text.

5

Syntagmatic Analysis and Reader-Response Criticism

In the year 1977 the critic William O. Hendricks analyzed the text in an article called “‘A Rose for Emily’: A syntagmatic Analysis” in the journal *PTL*. This article is connected to the ones of McGlynn, Nebeker, and Sullivan because of the structuralist references of time and space that it contains. Interested in the structure and grammar of plot, and its complex narrative manipulations of temporal order and space setting, the author proposes a syntagmatic analysis of ‘A Rose for Emily,’ aimed to present “a relatively complete, explicit description of the formal construction of one single short story” (257). As a starting point, Hendricks proposes a brief consideration of the units into which the plot may be broken. The basic unit is called “narrative proposition” formed by a plot action and the dramatis personae who participate in it (259). Those dramatis personae, in ‘A Rose for Emily,’ are divided into two different sets: the protagonist set whose members are Emily, her family, Colonel Sartoris, and Judge Stevens; and the antagonist set whose members are Homer, the narrator, the townspeople, the druggist, and the new generation (260). At the same time, those sets can be labelled according to what each represents in the plot and the actions they perform. The labels are past and present. In this way, the readers of the story can easily guess which set represents the past, the protagonists, and which one is labelled as present, the antagonists. However, Hendricks suggests that Emily is not exactly a representative of the past, the way West would have suggested, rather she is more a negation of the present (264), for instance, Colonel Sartoris’ death and her obligation of paying the taxes, while Homer Barron is the opposite of what Emily represents: a contradiction of the past (264), because he brings with him the present as he comes to the town to pave the streets, a sign of modernity. This may be the main reason the

townspeople do not accept their affair, because they represent the two opposite extremes.

For Hendricks, the story is set in a linear string of narrative propositions (265). Those narrative propositions can be sorted into several sections, which in turn are segmented into episodes (268). The only element required to establish that hierarchy are time indicators allowing the relative position of the episodes (275). Acknowledging the difficulties of identifying those, the solution proposed by Hendricks is “‘A Rose for Emily’ actually consists of two interrelated subplots” (277). Each is constituted by different episodes: one relating to the remission of taxes, the other, actually embedded in it (288), to everything related to Mr. Grierson’s death (277). In the subplot that Hendricks refers to as PS-PR-E (past-present-Emily), Emily plays a passive role; while in the other referred to as PR-E-B (present-Emily-Barron), her role is more active (278). The final part of the story where the townspeople discover Homer’s dead body, does not fit in any subplot, but rather works as an instance of what is called “metanarration”, which Hendricks defines as “a sign to the reader that he has misperceived the preceding events.” (290) Very importantly, Hendricks considers that the episode of the smell, which is a clue provided by Faulkner to his surprise ending, may work as a link of both subplots as it belongs to PR-E-B subplot and at the same time can be part of PS-PR-E subplot (278). The reader has misperceived all the clues related to this final event (290).

All these structural aspects of the narrative involved the reader, who by the time Reader-Response Criticism had introduced itself in the narrative structure. In 1979, the journal *Poetics Today* published an article called “Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings” written by Menakhem Perry. He there talks about how “the ordering and distribution of the elements in a text may exercise considerable influence on the nature, not only of the reading process, but of the resultant whole as well” (35). During the process of reading the one in charge of constructing a meaning is the reader, and it is constructed according to his already existing likings and knowledge, constructing frames that will involve different dimensions of order (Perry 36, 37). Some authors, including Faulkner, use this strategy so that they can control the reading process and channel it in a certain direction with the purpose of leading the reader into a trap (40). “[The reader] is not supposed to identify the organizing principle, merely to be affected by it” (Perry 40). In order to explain it all, he is going to support his arguments by analyzing ‘A Rose for Emily’.

Obviously, the story of 'A Rose for Emily' does not follow a linear ordering of facts. In his analysis, Perry examines the effects of the text-continuum in 'A Rose for Emily' that other critics had ignored. This story is very peculiar, as the reader cannot guess anything related to Emily's mental health until the last part of the story:

Had the reader known from the start about the murder of the lover and the possibility that she might have been lying for several years beside his body, this would have undoubtedly produced a different reading of the beginning of the story. (Perry 312)

As that information was concealed, the reader can feel compassion for Emily and how rudely she is treated by the townspeople. By revealing it at the end, it is already too late for its effect to be exclusive (312).

The reader's compassion for Emily is constructed throughout the text (Perry 312). To start with, Perry says the description of the house is representative of its owner, for example, when Faulkner utilizes metaphors such as "lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay" (RFE, I), where a relation to human behavior is implied (315). Then, as the story develops, the reader may first envision that she has a dissociation of reality, as she does not distinguish between past and present. It happens when she is asked to pay her taxes and she rejects to do it as Colonel Sartoris has remitted her of doing that, but she does not admit he is already dead. Finally, in the description of the interior of her , when Faulkner writes "it smelled dust and disuse--a close, dank smell" (RFE, I), the reader may for the first time notice the repulsive and grotesque in Emily and her life (320).

However, the reader will most likely keep liking Emily, because Faulkner "slowly shifts his description from a concentration upon the repugnant to a perspective focusing on the beautiful as well" (Perry 321), a contrast of information, by which the story remains untold and keeps its mystery until the end. This is how "[t]he effect of the frames constructed early on in the story, and reinforced over and over again in the sequel, retains its power to the very end" (326). To him it seems evident that if Faulkner had placed the scene where Emily buys poison in the same part of the story where she commits the crime, the story would have lacked the "breathing space for altogether different implications" (329). Instead, the scene about the bad smell is introduced and "the 'equivocal' attitude of the townspeople parallels the 'dual' attitude of the reader

towards Emily” (336): both are denied certain information about Emily until the end of the story.

At this point of his analysis, Perry expresses that this is the way the reader can construct the reader-oriented motivations: each additional reading will narrow the gap between the reader and the narrator (357). By this Perry means that each time you read the text, you might find new details you missed the first time you read it.

In this critical structuralist trend of the 70s, criticism is interested in the inner arrangement of sequences of the story, but at the same time the narrative structure opens up to include the reader.

6

Psychoanalysis

When ‘A Rose for Emily’ was written, Freudian psychoanalysis was already known in the United States. Despite Faulkner’s claim that he was not familiar with Freud, psychoanalytical criticism found much evidence in his writing that could lend itself to their means of interpretation..

In 1980, Jack Scherting put forth an analysis called “Emily Grierson's Oedipus Complex: Motif, Motive, and Meaning in Faulkner's ‘A Rose for Emily’”. Here he set out to answer the question why Emily Grierson had poisoned her lover Homer Barron (397). Even though Brooks and Warren had tried to answer to the question why she had killed him, in their *Understanding Fiction* (1959), by alleging it was related to her “being rejected and not accepting being jilted by the lover” (qtd. in Scherting 398), Scherting finds no evidence for that (398). He defends instead that we must analyse Emily’s pathological mind to be able to answer the question (399). To him, in this short story “Faulkner employed the Freudian principle of Oedipal fixation” (399), or better said, the Electra complex, because the relationship is between the daughter and her father. In his interpretation, it is the Oedipal complex that prompts Emily to kill him.

One thing the reader is aware of is how Emily was never allowed to go out and strike up any relationship because her father “had interposed himself between any male interested in courting her” (Scherting 400), which will be one of the reasons of her peculiar behavior. It would appear that when Mr. Grierson dies, Emily will be able to do whatever she wants to do. The problem is she has never been prepared for what is

outside her house, so it is obvious it will not be easy to deal with that new world. The way Scherting sees it is this: that her father has “prevented her from maturing sexually in the normal and natural way” and as a consequence, “her sexual drives (will) emerge in a tragic form” (400). His Freudian interpretation emerges when Scherting writes that, as she was not allowed to transfer her libido to an outside object, a contact with the opposite sex, her libido will depend upon his father, and his death will be the cause of the trauma (400) that will alter her perception of reality: “She is unable to discriminate between a Southern gentleman and a Yankee laborer, past and present, sleep and death,” in Scherting’s words (401). What the reader will find throughout the story is that Emily is looking for something that replaces her father and her attachment to him. Homer Barron will become the object in which she is going to fix her libido. In Scherting’s words “Homer Barron is a surrogate for Emily’s father” (401), whom she insured would not be taken away “by concealing . . . the corpse of the man who gratified her unsolved Oedipal desires . . . He would be always there to comfort her” (402). The Freudian truth of the matter Scherting sees is that by going to bed with Homer, Homer “was cuckolded by Emily’s deceased father” (403).

Four years after Scherting published his analysis in *Short Fiction*, the psychoanalytical interpretation of ‘A Rose for Emily’ turned Lacanian. In *Modern Fiction Studies* Dennis W. Allen’s “Horror and Perverse Delight: Faulkner’s ‘A Rose for Emily’” (1984) read the story from a Lacanian perspective. The Oedipal complex as analyzed by Scherting can only explain “her appropriation of a symbolic phallus but it cannot explicate her choice of a watch as the privileged object” (687). The watch is what Allen calls “a phallic paraphernalia” (686), a symbol of power and control of the passage of time (687). Allen suggests “Emily consummates her relationship with her father by becoming him after his death” (690). Thus the watch is an important accessory to feel masculine as it allows her to control everything as her father did. Eventually, feminine and masculine will join into a unity in intercourse as sexuality blends opposites (Allen 691), which means that Emily will be a representative of what is feminine and at the same time of what is masculine, as she is a woman with masculine traits.

Poststructuralist criticism is exploring aspects of Cultural Studies of ‘A Rose for Emily,’ once the New Criticism and Structuralism had enshrined the story as a classic reference for innovation in narrative structure.

Feminist and Gender Studies

The Poststructuralist criticism will also explore those aspects related to feminism and gender in the text.

Judith Fetterley analyzed 'A Rose for Emily' from a feminist point of view in her book *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (1978). She classifies the short story as a richly study of the consequences of growing up and the reasons for the resistance to do it (24). She contends that Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily' is "the story of how the system which allows you to murder your wife makes it possible for your wife to murder you" (24). By talking about the story in this way, she refers to the fact that, outside the story, some men believe they can murder their wife and get away with it, but the thing is that men do not consider women to be able to do that, so that 'A Rose for Emily' will be the perfect instance of that situation being possible and real. From this feminist point of view, the grotesque aspects of the story are a result of its violation of the expectations generated by the conventions of sexual politics (34).

In her article of 1971 on the narrator, Sullivan already suggested the narrator was driven by the sexual curiosity he felt towards Emily. Fetterly builds on that and suggests that what shocks the reader and the townspeople at the end of the story is, actually, the fact that it is a woman who has murdered someone (34). If this action was carried out by a man, people would not have been shocked. Fetterly also builds on the North/South question by adding that "it is a story of the patriarchy North and South, new and old, and the sexual conflict within it." (35) In order to support it, she paraphrases Faulkner who once described his own short story as "a story of a woman victimized and betrayed by the system of sexual politics, who nevertheless has discovered, within the structures that victimized her, sources of power for herself" (qtd. in Fetterly 35). Emily, in order to avoid being stalked by her voyeur, isolates herself in her house trying to stop the town's obsession with her (35). In this way, her relation with the townspeople and the relation with her father is similar, as "her status as a lady is a cage from which she cannot escape" (37). Mr. Grierson controlled everything related to her daughter's relationships outside the house. Somehow, he is always watching Emily even after his death owing to his portrait being found above her dead body at the end of the story. In fact, throughout the whole text, Emily is called by the townspeople 'Miss Emily'. That

'Miss' is nowhere in the title, Fetterly argues, as it is only a label people use in order to increase her status of spinster. By referring to her as 'Miss,' people expect from her a girly behavior, so that when she does not follow the rules according to it, people allow themselves to interfere in her life (38). An instance of the several intrusions in her life is found when she is remitted to paying her taxes. In spite of being an act of solidarity, Fetterly reads the action as an attempt to prevent her from paying it. A woman must depend economically on a man, even though Emily does not need it as she is able to earn her own money thanks to her china-painting classes (38, 39). True enough, Emily takes advantage of the situation of being a victim to get away with her murdering Homer. When she buys the poison, nobody thinks about her future plans. Instead, they think she is about to commit suicide as a weak woman who has been abandoned by her lover. For them, she is only a crazy woman (41). Again, in the episode of the smell, she knew nobody would call her to tell her about it, because a lady cannot be told she smells and that her crime could not be discovered (41). Nobody dares to question a lady like her.

Hal Blythe's article "Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'" (1989) suggests that Homer is homosexual as the possible real reason of rejecting his marriage with Emily, whose beau ideal could be homosexuality (49). Blythe centers his article on the meaning of the name of Homer itself, as "calling to mind the poet of antiquity, evokes images of larger-than-life epic heroes" (49). The meaning of 'Homer' in the Greek society is directly related to a man who shows love interest in young men, in other words, a pederast (Blythe 49). Nevertheless, years later Judith Caesar responds to the idea of Homer's homosexuality in an article published in *Explicator* called "Faulkner's Gay Homer, Once More" (2010). She rejects the idea of Homer as a pederast because people would have gossiped about him spending time with young boys in the story and it is nowhere to be found there as none likes a story of pedophilia (197). She states readers assume Homer is homosexual when reading the short story due to the sentences "he liked men" and "he was not the marrying man" (RFE, IV), considering them code phrases meaning Homer was gay (Caesar 195), but "if Homer were homosexual . . . the story's plot would not make sense on a realistic level" (Caesar 195), it could distract the readers of the elements related to Emily's crime, breaking the rigid roles formed by gender and social class that drive Emily crazy (Caesar 197). Some readers speculate Homer was only taking advantage of his affair with Emily to conceal his sexuality while he was

working paving the sidewalks, but actually Homer did not leave Jefferson when he finished his work as one can understand when reading “the streets had been finished some time since” (RFE, IV), so he was not concealing anything (Caesar 196). Caesar proposes that Homer liked men as social company. He was socially approved male bonding and heterosexual misogyny within the context of the times (196). Then, it is normal to see Homer hanging out with male company as a friendship and not because feeling attraction to them.

Before moving onto the final conclusion of this dissertation, it must be said that, according to John L. Skinner in his article “‘A Rose for Emily’: Against Interpretation” (1985), the short story “seems curiously resilient to critical assault: and yet, like many of Faulkner’s works, it surely demands greater regard for its formal subtlety and less energy on ingenious, but misguided, interpretation” (50). However, the articles analyzed in this dissertation are useful to show how Faulkner’s work has been read and can still be read who knows how many more ways.

Conclusion

Faulkner is a most acknowledged and recognized author in the history of American literature by the readership and the critics. 'A Rose for Emily' has been his most read and commented short story.

The original text is preserved as a manuscript and as a carbon copy, published for the very first time in *The Forum Magazine* (1930). The text, with some modifications, was published later in *These 13* (1931) and *Golden Magazine* (1932). It continued being published in collections of Faulkner's stories like *The Portable Faulkner* (1946), *The Faulkner Reader* (1954) besides some of his major novels such as *Sanctuary* (1929).

The first critical reactions came with the publication of *These 13* between 1931 and 1955. They appeared in journals and literary magazines. Although few made reference to 'A Rose for Emily' specifically, it is noticeable that at that time critics were getting an idea of the type of author Faulkner was. They look at aesthetic aspects of the narrative and make moral criticisms in some cases. In general, several things are novel to everyone, some of them shocking: the chronological organization of the plot, its location in Jefferson, and the characterization of the realistic and macabre environment that the characters he creates also share, including how the South is unfairly represented through it. Even so, some critics were able to see in this work the genius of a young writer with a future.

From the 1950s onwards, when he is already an established writer and has even received the Nobel Prize, the academic critics start to analyze 'A Rose for Emily' independently. The first articles published on the story by authors like Floyd C. Watkins shared the interests of New Criticism and Structuralism. They focus on the narrative, the chronological structure of the work, and the narrator. They discovered to the academic public for the first time the chronological breaks of its five parts, and how they are not organized in an orderly sequence of events (for Paul D. McGlynn between 1894 and 1938, and for Helen Nebeker between 1884 and 1928), and the particularity of the first-person, but group narrator.

During the following decade, traditional criticism delved deeper into some of the aspects that the early reviews had pointed out as shocking. Critics like William Going or Edward Stone are not interested in the text for the text's sake, like the New Critics or Structuralists before them, but, outside the text, in those aspects that relate it to the

literary and social environment of the South: the contrast of North and South in the story, the symbolism of the rose in relation to the feminine ideal but also of the South, even the inheritance that in 'A Rose for Emily' may have the imaginary Gothic of Edgar A. Poe.

In the 1970s, structuralism took the most important role and returned to the text and its structure. It disregards chronology to look for another type of structure based on the linguistics and grammar of the text. The critic William O. Hendricks locates in 'A Rose for Emily' narrative units called 'propositions' that are strung together and that represent the past and present worlds and the groups of protagonists and antagonists, making it clear that Emily is not as embedded in the past as claimed. Other authors like Menakhem Perry are interested in seeing how the re-composition of these narrative units is done in the mind of the reader. Following Reader-response Criticism, they include the reader within the text as the creator of the text, since only the reader is able to accompany the narrator in the narrative and acquire the role of narrator himself, thus managing not to feel repulsion towards Emily, but compassion for her treatment by the neighbors, since the murder is only revealed to him at the end, when the narrator does it.

Eventually, Poststructuralist Criticism and Cultural arrived. Once the structural composition of the story had been explained along with its relationship to the regional and literary environment of the South, scholars focus their interest on all aspects of cultural studies that also help to explain more mysterious aspects of the story, such as the motivations of the characters, especially Emily and the reason why Emily murders Homer. Jack Scherting proposes, via psychoanalysis, that this is the result of an unresolved Oedipal complex. The impulses repressed by the father are transformed into this violent act. The feminist view of Judith Fetterly says that it is actually a gesture against social conventions around what is expected of a woman like Emily. She takes advantage of the image of a weak and victimized woman she wants to make of herself to carry out her purpose. For his part, Homer and his refusal to marry Emily, was interpreted by Hal Blythe and Judith Caesar as a homosexual, received with enthusiasm by the boys of the town upon his arrival and that perhaps that is why Emily ends her life.

In short, after the earliest critical concerns about the style and atmosphere of the short story, the New Critics and Structuralists of the 50s studied the text as a piece of innovative narrative technique. In the 70s, Structurlists polished their conclusions,

while the psychoanalytical, feminist and gender analyses of the 80s and 90s analyzed the aspects that were not commented on before, like the motivations behind the actions of its main characters.

Although Faulkner said he found nothing interesting for him to create in what the critics said, they have not failed to find things of interest. 'A Rose for Emily' has so many interesting facets that no decade has gone by without showing interest in analyzing it. In fact, it could be said that to know the critical heritage of 'A Rose for Emily' is to know the critical history of Faulkner's work in its entirety.

Bibliography

Editions of 'A Rose for Emily'

'A Rose for Emily.' *The Forum Magazine*, April, 1930, pp. 233-38.

'A Rose for Emily.' *The Golden Book Magazine*, March, 1932.

These 13. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1931.

A Rose for Emily and Other Stories, Armed Services, ed. by Saxe Commins, 1945.

The Portable Faulkner. New York: The Viking Press, 1946.

Collected Stories of William Faulkner. New York: Random House, 1950.

The Faulkner Reader. New York: Random House, 1954.

The Best of Faulkner: Chosen By the Author. Reprint Society, 1955.

Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner. Modern Library, 1962.

Primary sources

A Rose for Emily and Other Stories. Penguin Random House, 2012.

Railton, Stephen. "Illustrating 'A Rose for Emily'." *Digital Yoknapatawpha*, University of Virginia, 2018.

Railton, Stephen. "Manuscripts &c: 'A Rose for Emily'." *Digital Yoknapatawpha*, University of Virginia, 2015.

Criticism

Allen, Dennis W. "Horror and Perverse Delight: Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1984, pp. 685-96, www.jstor.org/stable/26282801/.

Basset, John Earl. *William Faulkner: The Critical Heritage*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Books, 1975.

Blythe, Hal. "Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'." *Explicator*, vol. 49, no. 2, 1989, pp. 49-50, DOI: 10.1080/00144940.1989.9933908/.

- Caesar, Judith. "Faulkner's Gay Homer, Once More." *Explicator*, vol. 68, no. 3, 2010, pp. 195-98, DOI: 10.1080/00144940.2010.499087/.
- Cantwell, Robert. "Faulkner's Thirteen Stories." *New Republic*, October, 1931, pp. 271.
- Cantwell, Robert. "Faulkner's World." *The Freeman*, October, 1950, pp. 26-28.
- Caron, Timothy P. "'He Doth Bestride the Narrow World Like a Colossus': Faulkner's Critical Reception," *Companion to William Faulkner*. Blackwell Science, 2007, pp. 479-98, DOI: 10.1002/9780470996881/.
- Carter, Hodding. "Faulkner Tells of All of Us." *Delta Democrat-Times*, August, 1950, p. 4.
- "Collected Stories (1950)." *William Faulkner: The Contemporary Reviews*, pp. 299-320, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511519314.024/.
- "Cultural Studies." *Poetry Foundation*, 2021, www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/cultural-criticism-cultural-studies/.
- Doakes, Pooton J. "Promise of Genius Is Seen." *Rocky Mountains News*, December, 1931, p. 4.
- Fetterly, Judith. *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*. IPS, 1978.
- Going, William. "Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'." *Explicator*, XVI, no. 27, 1958.
- Gordon, Caroline. "Mr. Faulkner's Southern Saga: Revealing His Fictional World and the Unity of Its Patterns." *New York Times Book Review*, May, 1946, pp. 1-45.
- Gregory, Horace. "In the Haunted, Heroic Land of Faulkner's Imagination." *New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review*, August, 1950, pp. 1-12.
- Gwynn, Frederick L. and Joseph L. Blotner. "Faulkner in the University: A Classroom Conference." *College English*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1957, pp. 1-6, www.jstor.org/stable/372272/.
- Hagood, Taylor. *Following Faulkner: The Critical Response to Yoknapatawpha's Architect*. Boydell & Brewer, 2017, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt1kzcc6n/.
- "Haunted Landscapes." *Time*, August, 1950, p. 79.

- Hendricks, William O. "'A Rose for Emily': A Syntagmatic Analysis." *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature*, vol. 2, 1977, pp. 257-95, www.academia.edu/37171874/_A_ROSE_FOR_EMILY_A_SYNTAGMATIC_ANALYSIS/.
- Lester, Cheryl. "To Market, to Market: The Portable Faulkner." *Criticism*, vol. 19, no. 3, 1987, pp. 371-92, www.jstor.org/stable/23110413/.
- McDonald, Edward. "Violent World of Faulkner in *These 13*." *Philadelphia Record*, October, 1931, pp. 14-B.
- McGlynn, Paul D. "The Chronology of 'A Rose for Emily'." *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1969, pp. 461-62, www-proquest-com.ponton.uva.es/scholarly-journals/chronology-rose-emily/docview/1297931914/se-2?accountid=14778/.
- Meriwether, James B. "William Faulkner: A Check List." *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1957, pp. 136-58, www.jstor.org/stable/26402988/.
- Nebeker, Helen. "Chronology Revised." *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 8, 1971, pp. 471-73, www-proquest-com.ponton.uva.es/scholarly-journals/chronology-revised/docview/1297936503/se-2?accountid=14778/.
- "New Criticism." *Poetry Foundation*, 2021, www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/new-criticism/.
- Nichols, Charles H. "The Achievement of William Faulkner." *Phylon*, 15, 1954, pp. 209-10.
- Parone, Edward. "A Man like Tangled Fire." *Hartford Courant*, September, 1950, p. 14.
- Patterson, William D. "Short Tales by Faulkner Show Range." *New Orleans TimesPicayune*, August, 1950, p. 7.
- Peden, William. "Sartoris, Snopes and Everyman." *Saturday Review of Literature*, August, 1950, p. 12.
- Perry, Menakhem. "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings." *Poetics Today*, vol. 1, no. 1/2, 1979, pp. 35-361, www.jstor.org/stable/1772040/.
- Poore, Charles. "Books of the Times." *New York Times*, April, 1954, p. 29.
- Richmond, Sylvia B. "In Spite of the Fact!" *Record*, September, 1946, p. 3.

- Scherting, Jack. "Emily Grierson's Oedipus Complex: Motif, Motive, and Meaning in Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'." *Studies in Short Fiction*, 17, 1980, pp. 397-40, www-proquest-com.ponton.uva.es/scholarly-journals/emily-griersons-oedipus-complex-motif-motive/docview/1297937150/se-2?accountid=14778/.
- Schott, Webster. "Unstinted Praise Reward of Faulkner, Once Rated 'Obscure and Degenerate'." *Kansas City Star*, July, 1954, p. 14.
- Skinner, John L. "'A Rose for Emily': Against Interpretation." *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1985, pp. 42–51, www.jstor.org/stable/30225110/.
- Smart, George. "Good Variety in Faulkner." *Boston Post*, October, 1950, p. 2-A.
- Stelmach Artuso, Kathryn. *Critical Insights: William Faulkner*. Salem Press, 2013.
- Stone, Edward. "Usher, Poquelin, and Miss Emily: The Progress of Southern Gothic." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, 1960, pp. 433–43, www.jstor.org/stable/41395745/.
- Sullivan, Ruth. "The Narrator in 'A Rose for Emily'." *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1971, pp. 159–78, www.jstor.org/stable/30224976/.
- "The Faulkner Reader (1954)." *William Faulkner: The Contemporary Reviews*, pp. 357-66, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511519314.028/.
- "The Literary Lantern." *Durham Herald*, December, 1931.
- "The Portable Faulkner (1946)." *William Faulkner: The Contemporary Reviews*, pp. 245–52, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511519314.021/.
- "These Thirteen (1931)." *William Faulkner: The Contemporary Reviews*, pp. 65–74, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511519314.010/.
- Towner, Theresa. *Cambridge Introduction to William Faulkner*. Cambridge UP, 2008, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511817045.005/.
- Trilling, Lionel. "Mr. Faulkner's World." *Nation*, November, 1931, pp. 491-92.
- Van O'Connor, William. "The State of Faulkner's Criticism." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 60, no. 1, 1952, pp. 180–86, www.jstor.org/stable/27538125/.

- Végső, Roland K. *Faulkner in the Fifties: The Making of the Faulkner Canon*. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2007, DOI: 10.1353/arq.2007.0012/.
- Watkins, Floyd C. "Faulkner and His Critics." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1968, pp. 317-29, www.jstor.org/stable/40753992/.
- Watkins, Floyd C. "The Structure of 'A Rose for Emily'." *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 69, no. 7, 1954, pp. 508–10, www.jstor.org/stable/3039622/.
- West, Ray B. "Atmosphere and Theme in Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'." *The Writer in the Room: Selected Essays*, Michigan State UP, 1968, pp. 205-11.
- William Faulkner: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. by M. Thomas Inge, Cambridge UP, 1995, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511519314/.

Appendix

known desires in childhood, ought, if they can, to seek reconstruction at the hands of a capable psychiatrist. When this is not possible, there still remains a palliative measure. It will not cure, but it will make almost any form of serious nervousness a great deal more tolerable. This involves a confession of faith quite as much as a broadening of knowledge, and requires an ability to act on this faith and this knowledge.

You must bring yourself to know and feel that there is no craving buried in the depths of your being which you cannot face. It does not matter how shocking, repulsive, ugly, dangerous, or wicked it may be. One just like it lies buried in all other personalities. There are many such cravings in your mysterious and

hidden well of desire, but you must be able to feel that there is not one which you cannot face courageously and deal with sensibly. You do not need to satisfy these desires. You have only to recognize them to make them more or less manageable. You must realize that the most destructive things in the world are the fear and guilt which come in advance of conscious intentions and deliberate acts.

Of course it is impossible to believe these things completely and fully; but it is not impossible to believe them with steadily increasing sincerity, and to acquire mounting confidence in the ability of your grown-up mind to find acceptable substitutes for any craving that may well up in its crudest form from the hidden reservoir of all motive and desire.

A ROSE for Emily



by WILLIAM FAULKNER

WHEN Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old Negro manservant — a combined gardener and cook — had seen in at least ten years.

It was a big, squarish, frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily's house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay

above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps — an eyesore among eyesores. And now Miss Emily had gone to join the representatives of those august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery among the ranked and anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers who fell at the battle of Jefferson.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor — he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron — remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. Not that Miss Emily would have accepted charity.

APRIL 1930

233

Fig. 1. First page of 'A Rose for Emily' published in *The Forum Magazine* in 1930. Accession #6074 to 6074-d, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms, in a heavy walnut bed, her gray head propped on a pillow
yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight, her voice cold and strong to the end.

"But not till I'm gone," she said. "Don't you let a soul in until I'm gone, do you hear?" Standing
beside the bed, his head in the dim light haloed by a faint nimbus of napped, perfectly white hair, the
negro made a brief gesture with his hand. Miss Emily lay with her eyes wide open, gazing into the
opposite shadows of the room. Upon the coverlet her hands lay on her breast, gnarled, blue with
age, motionless. "Hah," she said stiffly. "Then they can. Let 'em go up there and see what's in that
room. And you come to the back way, either. Will you?"

"I can't leave to," the negro said. "I ~~have~~ ^{know} ~~know~~ ^{that room} ~~is~~ ^{in there.} ~~all the time.~~ I can't leave to."

"Hah," Miss Emily said. "You ~~leave~~ ^{leave} do, do you. How long have you known?"

Upon the negro made that gesture with his hand. Miss Emily had not moved her head. She forced
into the shadows where the light dim center was lost. "You should be glad. This house is to be
yours. I made the ~~will~~ ^{will} ~~years ago~~ ^{years ago} ~~Calms Southern was it.~~ ^{Calms Southern was it.} ~~He'll see that you get it without~~
... What are you ~~going~~ ^{going} to do with it? Shall I send Missus the money early?"

"I can't want ~~no~~ ^{any} money," the negro said.

"You can't help yourself. ~~will~~ ^{will} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~what~~ ^{what} You'll have to take it."

"I won't ~~take~~ ^{take} it. I ~~can't~~ ^{can't} want any ~~money~~ ^{money}."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"Going to the postoffice."

"The postoffice? Where you have to give your money to keep your ~~house~~ ^{willful} ~~will~~ ^{will} in the rest of
your life?"

"I can't want no," the negro said. "I'm going to the post office. I already told them."

"Well," Miss Emily said. She had not moved her head, not moved at all. "Do you mind telling me
why you would be so to the postoffice?"

Fig. 2. Fifth page of 'A Rose for Emily,' Autograph manuscript. William Faulkner Foundation Collection, 1918-1959, Accession #6074 to 6074-d, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms, in a heavy
walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow
yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight, her voice
cold and strong to the last.

"But not till I'm gone," she said. "Don't you let a
soul in until I'm gone, do you hear?" Standing beside the bed,
his head in the dim light nimbused by a faint halo of napped,
perfectly white hair, the negro made a brief gesture with his
hand. Miss Emily lay with her eyes open, gazing into the oppo-
site shadows of the room. Upon the coverlet her hands lay on
her breast, gnarled, blue with age, motionless. "Hah," she said.
"Then they can. Let 'em go up there and see what's in that
room. ~~And you come to the back way, either. Will you?~~ ~~And~~ ~~Let~~ ~~'em.~~ ~~And you come to the back way, either. Will you?~~ ~~And~~ ~~Let~~ ~~'em.~~ ~~And you come to the back way, either. Will you?~~ Satisfy their minds that
I am crazy. Do you think I am?" The negro made no reply, no
movement. He stood above the bed, ~~gnarled, blue with age, motionless.~~ ~~gnarled, blue with age, motionless.~~ ~~gnarled, blue with age, motionless.~~ ~~gnarled, blue with age, motionless.~~ ~~gnarled, blue with age, motionless.~~ motionless, moving: a secret and unfathomable soul behind
the death-mask of an ape and haloed like an angel. "Let 'em
go up there and open that door. And you won't be the last one,

Fig. 3. Thirteenth page of 'A Rose for Emily' Carbon typescript copy of *A Rose for Emily*. William Faulkner Foundation Collection, 1918-1959, Accession #6074 to 6074-d, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

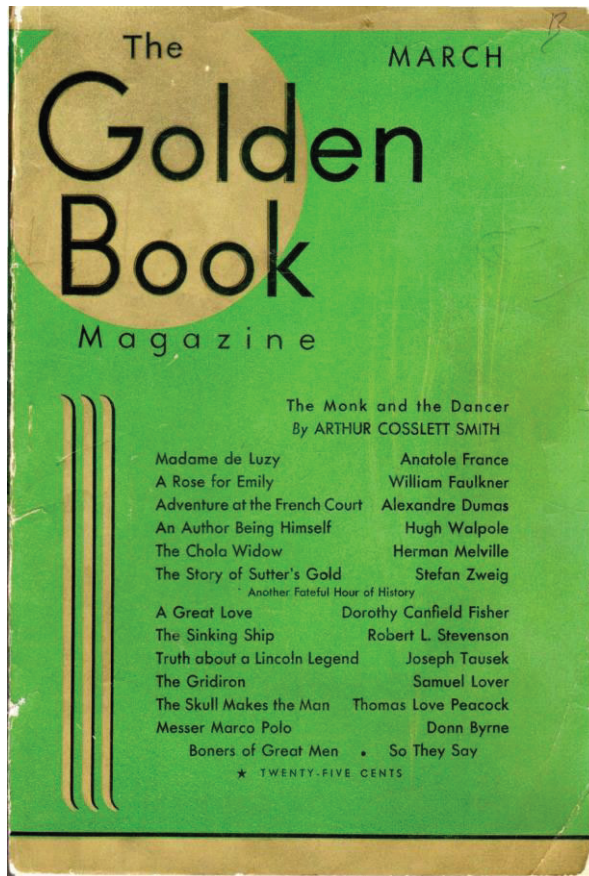


Fig. 4. Front cover of *The Golden Book Magazine* (March, 1932), with Table of Contents.

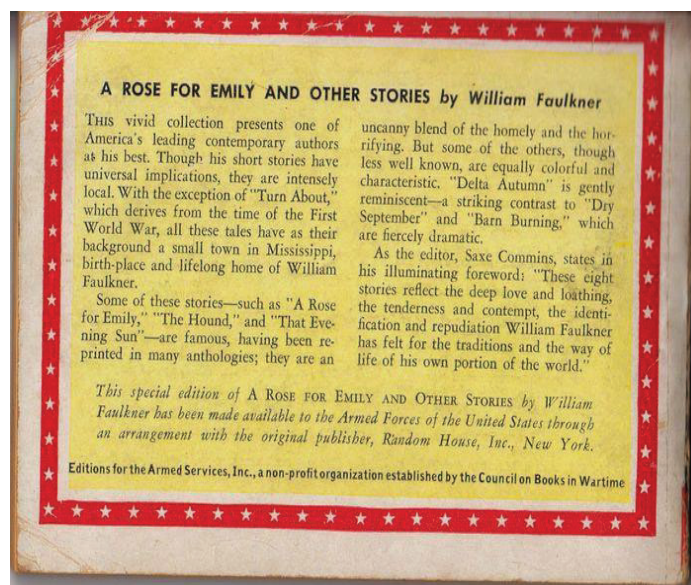


Fig. 5. Back cover of *A Rose for Emily and Other Stories*, with blurb. Armed Services edition, [1945]. Edited, and with a foreword, by Saxe Commins.