

Faulkner and Deconstruction of Style in “A Rose for Emily”

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Abstract---As a modernist, William Faulkner aimed at not developing a style. According to him style is one of the tools of the craft, and whoever spends too much of his time on developing a style, or following a style, probably does not have much to say, and in case of being beautiful, there is not too much in it. William Faulkner believes that the story commands its style, and in a way, creates its style. So Faulkner in his short stories does not use stream-of-conscious narration found in his major novels. It is important to note that Faulkner is stylistically a very aware author and has a purpose in choosing different stylistic technique in his stories. Accordingly, in “A Rose for Emily”, flashbacks and foreshadowing is used in order to produce a desired effect.

Keywords—style, William Faulkner, time, flashbacks, foreshadowing

I. INTRODUCTION

THE devices that Faulkner uses in "A Rose for Emily" often confuse the readers of the short story. The story is not in the chronological order, surprisingly it begins by explaining the scene of Emily's funeral then the narrator goes back to different scenes to introduce Emily's father, her Negro servant, Homer Barron, and the Board of Aldermen. This way of narration implies that people do not have a regular life in modern society otherwise they will be trapped in the prison of tradition. Those who want to make themselves free from these hectic life, would be castrated from the society just like the protagonist of this story. Emily does not live with other people through the story, she was considered as a monument. This can be considered as a symbol of a person who wants to be out of the law of society in the modern world. Faulkner feels that as a modernist he should move beyond the old way of thinking and applying this technique can be a response to this need. In this case recognizing the actual sequence of events in the story seems more important than the themes and symbols.

I. DISCUSSION

The setting of the story is in the early 1900s in a street that was once esteemed and of rich people but now changes to a city of cotton factories with lower class inhabitants. Miss Emily Grierson is an anachronism, which could be called as a throwback to another time and way of thinking.

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Among these inhabitants Emily tries to stick herself to the past, she is considered as an outsider because she has her own sense of law and conduct, such as when she refuses to pay her taxes" The tax notice was also enclosed, without comment."(1) or not mentioning her purpose for buying the poison " Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up. ".(4)

In “A Rose for Emily” there is no system of evaluation and the author touches various issues to show that there is no absolute evil or good. Both those aspects form human soul . The author emphasizes on the fact that it is useless to judge other people even based on observations. for example after she purchases the poison, the townspeople conclude that she will kill herself. " So the next day we all said, 'She will kill herself'; and we said it would be the best thing. "(4) or when she was with Homer, they think he will marry Emily. " When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, “She will marry him. ”(4)

Jumping between past and present for introducing a new notion of time in a modern world is used as a technique in this short story. In order to reach this goal the author needs a narrative technique that would connect one scene to another. For this reason Faulkner writes in a way that each piece of the story told by the narrator triggers another piece of the story. For example, the new aldermen's trying to collect Miss Emily's taxes motivates the narrator to remember 30 years earlier, when Miss Emily's neighbors complain that a smell is coming from her house, and they want the city fathers to do something about it. Faulkner ties these two scenes by using the same verb – "vanquished" – to describe Miss Emily's actions: "So she vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the smell."(2)

Foreshadowing as a foreseeing of future events in the story could conclude to a surprising ending. Faulkner uses lots of examples of such literary device in this work. First Emily's reluctance to give up the body of her father once he dies. She kept the body five days in her house until finally she speaks about the corpse releasing to have a burial for her father five days after his death .In this circumstances the people of town are known about the death of her father so finally she has no decision unless giving up the body .Second she purchases poison. Third Homer vanishes but no ones has seen his leaving. Forth the house odor could be another sign .

Foreshadowing here can provoke the reader to ask himself "what smell?" The smell would be the corpse of Homer Barron, which was revealed at the end of the from a drugstore. She did not reply the druggist when he informed her that by law he was obligated to ask her the purpose for the arsenic,

she just stared at him "eye to eye, until he looked away and got the arsenic and wrapped it up."(4)

Emily wants to be out of the Law of Society and she needs freedom, this feeling is revealed through the conflicts that Emily had with some of the characters and herself. Her father, her fiancé, inhabitants of the town are all considered as opposing forces that restricted her.

II. CONCLUSION

As a modernist writer, Faulkner is known for his writing style with precise attention to the details of characters' state of minds. He tries to switch different times and voices, by breaking the time sequence and re-arrange it with a new aspect. Faulkner's work is innovative not only sociologically, but also psychologically. His style of narration lets readers to experience the state of characters with ought judging them . It enables the readers to understand the story through the character's own eyes; get inside his or her deepest thoughts and feelings.

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