

“A Rose for Emily”:
An Ambivalent Narrator in the Patriarchal
Southern Community*

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[Abstract]

In “A Rose for Emily,” William Faulkner, one of the leading writers in the Southern Renaissance, delved into the inner realities of Emily, the last descendant of a Southern aristocratic family. The narrator “we,” in the first person plural form, starts the story with the description of her funeral, develops it in a flashback technique with the cyclic structure of time, and ends with the observation and arresting of the moment, betraying abruptly the insides of her house in a grotesque atmosphere. The narrator, representing the Southern community consciousness, shows its ambivalent attitudes toward Emily in that it values the Old Southern codes of honor but is also ready for ‘more modern ideas,’ now colliding or confronting with, and now denouncing, her. The narrator, at times sympathetic with Emily, seeks to pull the reader into the narrative so as to support Emily’s desperate inner struggle to survive in the transitional South. Emily seems to be in the Oedipal situation, under the Southern patriarchy in which the white masculine culture dominates and orients the consciousness of the Jefferson community that the narrator and the characters

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belonged to. All the while, Emily tries to recover her repressed sexuality and to revenge, with subversive voices, the Southern patriarchy.

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I. Introduction

Those who were born in and belonged to the Old Southern regions all shared the social values of pride, honor, valor, virginity, chastity, innocence, etc. In Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1929), some of the strict Southern codes (See Tindall 399) are inscribed deeply into the collective psyche. The reader can catch the Southern codes through the eyes of the narrator-as-community, and, through Emily's perspective. Emily, despite her calm and static appearance, stubbornly and stealthily conflicts with the control of Jefferson community.

The seemingly omniscient narrator in the first person plural form in "A Rose for Emily" sometimes shows his limits or unreliability in unearthing Emily's furtive motives, as shown in his failure to recognize her as the killer of a Yankee foreman until the final scene. The narrator, roughly speaking, fluctuates in his recognizing and evaluating the old/new values and the pros/cons of Emily's psyche and her social status in the past/present. Thus, with the ambivalent narrator's aerial boundary, Emily's quixotic psyche and her macabre behavior of murdering Homer are full of paradoxical mysteries.

A modern reader should recognize Faulkner's historical consciousness. Emily's psychic trauma, located in an Oedipal situation, (See Scherting 110-119) also has a

historical resonance and its shadow of the South. In addition, Faulkner quizzically uses the inverted sexual roles of his characters in defiance of the Southern patriarchy. Emily is described to be under the pressure of its system all the time. Emily wants to shatter the fixed notion of ‘a Southern Lady’ without being noticed by the ambivalent narrator’s eye, which paradoxically requires her to manipulate the narration. Faulkner’s use of inverted sexual identity is, literally, to recover Emily’s repressed sexuality and to revenge against patriarchy.

Historically, the invasion of the North into the Deep South including Faulkner’s Oxford, Mississippi must have caused the psychic trauma to the defeated regions and its community. Some of the Southerners’ weird appearances, as shown by Emily, are Faulkner’s reflection of Southern history and of their existence from the Civil War through the late 19th to the early 1920s.

The older generations of the South lost their economic power and masculinity/femininity, as shown in Emily’s disrupted family and her inverted sexual identities. Like the shocking ending of this short story, the radical change in economic structure left nothing but their own house. In the introductory Part 1, the ambivalent narrator overviews the history of Emily’s house in his vehement tone.

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. (CS 119)

The “big,” “white” house in the South symbolizes the economic and political

power of the white's supremacy. In the eyes of the ambivalent narrator, however, its surroundings were already "encroached and obliterated" by the economic invasion. So, as if it were the symbol of the Old South, "only Miss Emily's house was left." The ambivalent narrator observes the fall of "the august names of that neighborhood" and compares the differences between the past and the present. Now, the powerless Griersons' house is narrated as "lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay" as if symbolizing Emily herself. The narrator is estimating the economic value of the deteriorating house to the extreme, as "an eyesore among eyesores."

Thus, the seemingly objective narrator bids more obliquely on the present, discarding the diminishing things of the past. The narrator shows his fluctuating consciousness, by either preferring to accept the present or follow the ethics of the past when evaluating Miss Emily's sexual adventure.

II. An Ambivalent Narrator

The traditional agrarian life in the South was based on land, plantation, a big house, family and black servants, which has been deteriorated with the intrusion of modernization, as shown in the appearance of Homer Barron's "construction company." (CS 124) The disruption of a traditional family, shown in the Griersons, epitomizes the Southerner's loss of their property. Emily's house is "symbolic of the isolation she comes to live in." (Skei 310) So, the narrator's description of "its stubbornness and coquettish decay" (CS 119) may reveal Emily's inner reality and corruption. Unlike its surroundings, Emily's psychological time seems to be focused on the Old South.

However, whether Emily keeps to the Southern values, or shows her corruption by

violating the social codes of virginity and chastity, is not so apparent until the end of this story. Emily might have insisted on marriage first, and then she should have lived in her house, making love only with Homer. That would be the right way to follow the Southern codes of those living in the Jefferson community. The ambivalent narrator, with his limits, could not grasp the cause of Emily's seclusion and discover her secret married life at her own will, and in her own way, to kill a man, which must have caused a serious social problem against male's domination.

Under the watchful gaze of the narrator, Emily goes on to commit, both ironically and tragically, three forbidden acts: first, Emily dates with Homer openly; second, she joins Homer in a private marriage which is not acknowledged by the community; and third, she carries out a horrible killing. In the narrator's description of Homer, which reminds us of the scene of Thomas Sutpen's arrival in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) Homer is sexually and racially not so clearly identified as his appearance is described, "a big, dark, ready man," (CS 124) preferring the boys and mixing with "the niggers." (CS 124) His name is also similar in its sound to "homo." Faulkner uses this kind of pun frequently in other works, too.

The ambivalent narrator who examines and considers both the old and the modern thinking does not find the forbidden act that Emily has been plotting until witnessing her secret and killing her sweetheart in a bridal. Emily is manipulating, reversely, the community consciousness by deceiving herself, fixed on the static image and by having a poker face behind which she can hide the genuine purpose of her subversive act.

Now and then we would see her in one of the downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carven torso of an idol in a niche, looking or not looking at us, we could never tell which. Thus she passed from generation to generation—deer, inescapable, impervious, tranquil,

and perverse. (CS 128)

The most representative narration that the narrator is deceived completely by Emily is when he describes “when the smell developed” (CS 122) as if “It was another link between the gross, teeming world and the high and mighty Griersons.” (CS 122) My assertion here is that Emily, to survive in the transitional South, should transform into another being, and, in the narrative, should outwit the ambivalent narrator’s observation and other character’s, as well.

Emily has been suffering from her Oedipal situation repetitively, first with her father and then through his surrogate, Homer. that she wishes to get out of it through her revenge. This is my point in this article. Emily’s revenge drama is introduced to the narrator just after her furtive task is completed. So, Emily’s resistance against the Southern patriarchy succeeded, although she failed in defying of time and consequently died at seventy-four in “a bridal”(CS 129) room. Faulkner’s narrative, thus, reminds us of his complicated vision of the diminishing South and its people, who defy adamantly, in their heart in conflict.

The ambivalent narrator, who respected “the high and mighty Grierson,”(CS 122) illumines, contrastively, Emily’s isolation and the “crazy”(CS 123) blood inherited in the Griersons, “who held themselves a little too high for what they really were.”(CS 123) Emily’s isolation becomes deeper after the two losses of her father and her sweetheart: “a window that had been dark was lighted and Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol.”(CS 123)

The flux of time seems to have stopped in Emily’s consciousness. The complexities of the story which has its own cyclic structure, reveal the existence of time lag, as shown in Emily’s static image and her demented behavior. Emily seems to have stopped intentionally, and willfully, her psychological time, although failing in stopping her physical time. However, Emily’s time lag used to be a coerced one

by her strict father, and she could resolve the problem with her growing sexuality by dating with Homer.

With a sceptic view of her psyche, the ambivalent narrator admits Emily's present plight when she lost her father, which may symbolize, ironically, the disruption of the Southern code.

We did not say that she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.(CS 124)

While sometimes distancing himself from time, shifting from the past to the present, the narrator's consciousness still remains shackled by the social convention of the Old South, showing apparently his ambivalent attitude toward Emily, and continuing to keep a keen eye and ear on the last tragic descendant of a Southern aristocrat family.: “Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.” (CS 121)

Following the narrator's observation, Emily's psychological time seems to be directed toward the honorable and glorious South of the past. It is adaptable to her family who are not to be seen in the narrative except her sadistic father, and the only black servant, who might suffer from the loss of other family members in the past. “A deputation” (CS 120) of “the Board of Aldermen” (CS 120) is thus repelled by Emily who does not want to be oriented by the outer force of the “next generation.”(CS 120) The heritage of aristocratic Grierson family is not affluent as before, “set on what had once been our most select street.” (CS 119) As the community consciousness of the narrator illumines, the Grierson used to be the heart of the Jefferson community, economically and geographically.

The ambivalent narrator does not denounce Emily's stubbornness when he narrates the past history of the Grierson family but just observes what happened to "a Southern lady" in parenthesis.

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But, Miss Emily--"

"See Colonel Sartoris." (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.)

"I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobel!" The Negro appeared. "Show these gentlemen out." (CS 121)

In part II, the above moment is associated with the earlier past when "their[the city authorities'] fathers thirty years before about the smell" (CS 121) were "vanquished" (CS 121) by Emily. Faulkner uses the verb which reminds the reader of the history of South, as also shown in his use of "horse and foot." (Tindall 407) To Faulkner's eyes, the stubbornness of the Southerners is the most characteristic feature of the agrarian South.

On the while, the stubborn Emily disregards the historical tragedy with the invasion of the North into the South. Emily, living in the past, conflicts with "the next generation, with its more modern ideas." (CS 120) With her sense of loss mixed with her desire and defiance of the Southern patriarchy, Miss Emily becomes a tragic figure in a deadlock. To the Jefferson community's consciousness represented by the ambivalent narrator, Miss Emily is "a fallen monument." (CS 119) Miss Emily is both "fallen" and "monument"al being to the community's consciousness, having pros and cons of her secret life.

The narrator in "A Rose for Emily" is a mirror of the consciousness of the Jefferson community and shows some ambivalent attitudes toward Emily's shifting social position and her sexual adventure. Witnessing both the tradition of the

aristocratic South and its degradation after the Civil War, as shown in the fall of Griersons moving from its highness to its disruption, the ambivalent narrator confines himself to the preferable dogma of the Jefferson community with a tone of the Old South's ethics: "SO THE NEXT day we all said, "She[Emily] will kill herself"; and we said it would be the best thing." (CS 126) However, the sexual violence among the seemingly august Griersons is embedded, contradictorily, in the narrator's observation of the static Emily and her father, who is "clutching a horsewhip." (CS 123) Emily's father represents the strict old South's patriarchy and its ethics, but his (sexual) violence continues by his surrogate, Homer Barron, which is implied in his appearance with "whip in a yellow glove." (CS 126)

The ambivalent narrator not only shows the abruptly intrusive surroundings in the present but also the inner realities of the Griersons in the past: "We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip." (CS 123) The stubborn Southern patriarchy with "a masculine culture," (Tindall 407) symbolized by Emily's strict father "clutching a horsewhip," was destined to disappear with the social upheaval. And as time went by, the black servant, Tobe had a chance to get out of the bondage after Emily's death. (See Tindall 406-8, 491, 496-7) Tobe seems to have wished to be a free man rather than framed in the Southern white patriarchy which still remained. To check the deleted parts of the typescript of "A Rose for Emily," we may find the black servant's renouncement of the property, Emily's house, contrary to her will, shown in the deleted dialogue with her. (See Polk 23-4, Barnet 369-72)

The narrator's consciousness glimpses the scene of the death of the Southern patriarchy which is epitomized by the black servant's escape from the South, with the horrible description of a death of a Yankee, and with some remnants of a fallen

Southern lady.

The Negro met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed, sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again. (CS 129)

However, throughout the story, the narrator's consciousness, like Emily's appearance, just remains, ironically, in the Old South. The narrator may have witnessed and observed Emily's life through his prejudiced notion, rooted in the Old Southern hierarchy which involves the Southern patriarchy, sexism, and racism.

With no one left in the family after her father's death, the demented Emily, who does not distinguish the past with the present, comes to a deadlock. Emily's past was totally dominated by her egoistic father who controlled her psychologically and might have had an incestuous relationship with her in their secluded house, preventing other guys from accosting her. In a symbolic description of sexual desire between father and daughter, Faulkner seems to adopt roughly, the Freudian idea of Oedipal complex, as described in Quentin-Caddy, his sister, a mother figure, relations in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). Considering Quentin's femininity and Emily's masculinity, I assert this indication is adequate to analyze the Oedipal situation of Emily in the repetition of the patriarchal South. Surprisingly, Emily dramatically, and shockingly, overturns the apparently stable and firm hierarchy of the South and delivers symbolically her subversive voice, which might reflect the author's secret voice, as well.

From the start of the narrative, Faulkner uses a very symbolic statement in which the readers should be very careful to understand his peculiar Southern story which is

not just a regional one, but has a universal meaning in his treatment of the “human heart in conflict.” (Meriwether 119)

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 man-servant—a combined gardener and cook—had seen in at least ten years. (CS 119)

In Part I of “A Rose for Emily,” the main theme of the narrative is suggested roughly, which is similar to the first Chapter of Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925) in that the general estimation of the protagonist’s values is indicated in advance and the narrator’s shifting attitudes toward the protagonist are described complicatedly. Starting from the whole Jefferson community’s responses to Emily’s death, we may find the social hierarchy moves through the dominant “men” to “the women.” The Southern women were domesticated and had just a “curiosity to see ... her [Emily’s] house” in the patriarchal South, of which sentence ends with some remarks about Emily’s servant, “Tobe.”

Without anyone except Emily, his secluded owner, Tobe had to be “the only sign of life about the place” (CS 122) which may be “Emily herself if we read symbolically.” (Sullivan 66) Tobe’s role crosses the boundary of male/female differentiation. Housework, gardening, cooking, etc., might be the Southern women’s job in the past. The narrative structure reflects the Southern social hierarchy in which the marginalized beings were females and blacks. The first paragraph is composed of only one sentence and its ending utters, “no one save an old man-servant” entered Emily’s faded house “at least ten years.” (CS 119) The present time when “The Negro” (CS 121) ran away, shows the social change with diminishing properties of

the Southern slavery system and implies the end of it.

Regardless of the community's strict eyes and its fixed notion of "a real lady," (CS 124) Emily's final social role by doing her "*noblesse oblige*" (CS 124) lies not in "not think(ing) seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer" (CS 124) but in giving "lessons in china-painting" (CS 128) when she becomes a middle-aged woman around forty. However, "the newer generation became the backbone and the spirit of the town, and the painting pupils grew up and fell away and did not send their children to her," (CS 128) "The front door closed upon the last one and remained closed for good." (CS 128) The narrator detachedly observes the social change that happened in the Jefferson community. Emily's "closed house seems to reflect Emily's changing bodily condition as time goes by. Emily, as a transitional generation, played her social role, but the abrupt social change did not accept the spinster so well as before with a spirit of the Southern hospitality, and, as a consequence, alienating and marginalizing Miss Emily, the Southern lady, presumably born and raised affluently.

III. The Patriarchal Southern Community

Faulkner has been viewed that his novels show an ambivalent attitude toward a woman, or, has been denounced he described a woman as the origin of misogyny. (See Brooks *Hidden God* 26-7) However, it may be just a reflection of the culture and the community that the writer belonged to, and not his but the narrator's or the characters' that he created. So Faulkner, like Shakespeare and other major writers, may be in the risky position to be attacked with no reason in himself. Judith Bryant Wittenberg, in her writing of "William Faulkner: A Feminist Consideration" in *American Novelists Revisited: Essays in Feminist Criticism* (1982) pointed out, "yet

a number of the misogynist readings do precisely that, accepting the characters who make negative comments as "Faulknerian spokesmen." (See Wittenberg 326)

Ironically, most of those readings were done by male critics. All the while, the movement to counterbalance such prejudiced readings were done by women critics, as Wittenberg illuminates, "considering that Faulkner's fiction does betray at one level an ambivalent attitude toward females." (Wittenberg 326) Wittenberg asserts the significance of female revisionists for "their attempts to subvert the reductivist placing of Faulkner's women in narrow categories and to show the author as far more aware of and sympathetic to the complexity of the female psyche." (Wittenberg 326)

As Wittenberg analyzed adequately, Judith Fetterley in her "A Rose for 'A Rose for Emily,'" in *The Resisting Reader* (1978) examined Faulkner's works thoroughly "of the way women are constricted or used by males and by the southern social system." (Wittenberg 326) Therefore, the main idea of female's image as a protagonist in Faulkner's art has the image of endurance. Dilsey in *The Sound and the Fury*, Lena Grove in *Light in August* (1932), and even Miss Emily may have the positive image. They suffer and endure in the oppressive Southern patriarchy where sexism and racism were predominant. They are not just victims but they are triumphant in some way in a mythic atmosphere. Generally speaking, most of Faulkner's protagonists are in a state of the Oedipal situation and they need a desperate solution to it.

Speaking of the Southern Renaissance after the late 1920s, Richard H. King indicated that "the relationship between present and past which the Renaissance writers explored was fraught with ambivalence and ambiguity." (King 7) The effect is, to Faulkner, his own creation of the grotesque and the monstrous beings whose equivocal features are observed and narrated by the community with its historical

consciousness and its social values, of the past and the present, which they sometimes collide with and confront with.

In “A Rose for Emily,” Faulkner uses the incompatible elements inherent in the narrator’s consciousness in its roughly cyclic structure of the narrative by using an anachronic array of time sequence. The outcome of his modernist technique produced his grotesque protagonist living in the past. So, what Dennis Allen indicated as follows is the very proof of conflicting consciousness of the Southerners: “Both grotesquely fat and excessively thin, living and dead, female and male, Miss Emily is, finally, ‘undecidable,’ the co-presence of opposites.” (Allen, Dennis 695)

While dealing with “virginity and death” (Rimmon- Kenan 250) which is linked in *The Sound and the Fury*, Rimmon-Kenan propelled a psycholinguistic approach as follows:

One Quentin commits suicide and another Quentin—a girl, named after him—comes to life in the Compson family. Born under the sign of loss, she seems to serve as a substitute for her absent mother and dead uncle, but her life becomes a repetition—not a recuperation—of theirs. (Rimmon-Kenan 251)

In the case of Emily, her sign of loss is suggested as her dead father and his surrogate, her sweetheart, Homer Barron. Both of them have a deep influence upon Emily with their repetitive disappearances, symbolically.

When Emily reaches “about forty,” (CS 128) she gives “lessons in china-painting” (CS 128) to “the daughters and granddaughters of Colonel Sartoris’ contemporaries.” (CS 128) Although Faulkner did not describe in detail what happened on the first floor, I think the situation narrated here is more shocking than the final scene. While giving her lessons “for a period of six or seven years,” (CS 128) to the now blossoming and growing innocent children, Emily had the carcass of Homer Barron

on the second floor. Even the ambivalent narrator is dumb in recognizing or mentioning his worries about the contradictory happenings here.

The children of the old generation "were sent to her[Emily] with the same regularity and the same spirit that they were sent to church on Sundays with a twenty-five-cent piece for the collection plate." (CS 128) With its authorial voice, the narrator tints Emily's social role with a holy "spirit"(-ual) dimension. The effect is that Emily's social value is highlighted, ironically, under the narrator's surveillance. Emily was doing her "*noblesse oblige*" (CS 124, 125) in her own way, but it was also to survive as a spinster, and "Meanwhile her taxes had been remitted." (CS 128) However, when she committed a social crime by killing a man, Emily is out of the patriarchal Southern code, crossing tragically the boundary between life and death.

Anyone's defiance of time, to Faulkner, is destined to fail. However, Emily seems to have wished to arrest the moment. Emily's life is like a death-in-living after her family's fall and, not following the patriarchal codes, Emily chooses to override the division in life-death cycle, anachronistically. Living in the past psychologically and living in a deathlike situation, Emily in the present moment catastrophically has wished to exist out of time, but in vain. However, the compelling and fluctuating narrator could not read and catch Emily's hidden code of honor. The ambivalent narrator's strict code of the South focused on the past may look somewhat superficial to Emily. Since Emily should have lived in the present moment to survive, desperately, and in the past, psychologically. Thus, Emily's peculiar subjectivity has its own reason to survive, privately, in the public community. The seemingly strange behavior and grotesque psyche of the marginalized beings in Faulkner's works have some sublime meaning with a Christ image. Emily's social role for her community is not just to remit "her taxes." As Howe indicated of Faulkner's characterization with the image of endurance, it is "related to the agony of Christ and the condition

of man.” (Howe 3rd 96) which “evokes his deepest and sometimes uncontainable feelings.” (96)

On the contrary, Cleanth Brooks, being focused on Emily’s “pride, strong will and independence,” (Fargnoli 195) interpreted that the story is “a warning against the sin of pride: heroic isolation pushed too far ends in homicidal madness.” (Brooks, 14) According to Howe’s observation, “seldom in Faulkner’s work is there a mature recognition of the happier possibilities in the relations between men and women, the possibilities, I might specify, of fulfilled love.” (Howe 97) Howe mentioned, also, Faulkner had a biased attitude toward women. (See Howe 97-99)

So, the gothic atmosphere anticipates the deadly catastrophe of the impossible social/public relations between Emily and Homer. Emily is described to have a family pride and nobility inherited from her family who represent the Old Southern aristocrats and their descendants. In a sympathetic tone of the community narrator’s voice, Faulkner contrasts the couple’s appearances as follows.

“Later we said, “Poor Emily” behind the jalousies as they passed on Sunday afternoon in the glittering buggy, Miss Emily with her head high and Homer Barron with his hat cocked and a cigar in his teeth, reins and whip in a yellow glove.” (CS 126)

Homer’s appearance emphasizes that he is macho. And most of the words for describing him above, “cock..., teeth, reins,...whip,..yellow glove” have a Faulknerian sexual connotation, similar to his comic descriptions of Anse in his *As I Lay Dying* (1930). A Faulknerian use of pun is also found here, when the ambivalent narrator is conscious of the community’s surveillance “behind the jalousies,” while enjoying voyeurism himself by peeping into the couple’s incompatible relational development. The effect is that the community narrator’s ambivalent consciousness gives priority to

keeping Emily under surveillance while wearing a social mask by hiding himself "behind the jealousies." The last word means something like a curtain and sounds like "jealousies," so the community narrator "we," armored with the Old Southern code, reveals his hidden sexual desire.

To the community's consciousness, Miss Emily's stubbornness to keep her dignity upright and her loss of virginity are inscribed, as the narrator's paradoxical surveillance "behind the jealousies" continues to check that she always "carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen." (CS 125) Emily is sharply conscious of her family tradition as "a real lady" (CS 124) of a Southern aristocrat's. "It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson." (CS 125) Emily's stubbornness and egoistic treatment of the druggist show dramatically "her imperviousness, as seen when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic." (CS 125) The purpose of Emily's buying the poison is not decipherable at all by the narrator who represents the consciousness of the Jefferson community. "So the next day we all said, "She will kill herself"; and we said it would be the best thing." (CS 126) Contrary to the community's idea of a woman's committing a suicide to resume her honor, Emily's unexpected removal of Homer is a significant violation of the male dominating Southern community. Emily's misdemeanor and murder to the eyes of the community are antisocial and subversive acts. When the people of the community think of her suicide as "the best thing," Emily's horrible act in secret might be regarded as the worst one to the Southern patriarchy, regardless of their victim's Northern origin. Here, I would like to indicate that Howe, reading this story "as a caustic parable of Southern experience," (Howe 70) was suspicious of interpreting the couple's relations as "Miss Emily representing the decadent South and Homer Barron the rapacious North." (Howe 265) Howe says, this kind of interpretation "seems to me ill-conceived in general and indefensible in

particular.” (Howe 265) Although there might be still a possibility in, or a preference to, interpreting in the fixed notion of the South/North division, I go along with Howe’s opinion. Such a dichotomy is in peril of a cliché, which may be more adaptable to, and dealt with, in sociology and history. Let me focus on the narrative structure itself and the narrator’s/character’s inner realities.

So, the expectation of the Southern community is their marriage. The collective consciousness of the Jefferson community keenly acknowledges the historical and social change. At the same time, the southern community is self-conscious of their static state not to move out of their traumatic past willingly, in spite of the clicking and eroding time, which is illumined by Emily motionlessness even after her father’s death and her homicidal act. As “her upright torso motionless as that of an idol” (CS 123) signifies, Emily’s timeless posture is used in the negative allusion to the Oriental image of Rock Buddha. Ironically, in reality in the narrative, Emily is hiding her intent of subverting the patriarchy. While seemingly following the ethics of the Old South, Emily is furtively defying against the erosive time.

While arguing the validity of the first person narrator, Hans H. Skei presumes that “he (‘we’) has much of his information from general gossip around the town, and some from first-hand observation,” (Skei 110) Furthermore, Skei assumes that Faulkner was “watching these people[his townspeople] in some crucial moments of their lives, arresting their motion for a moment to create a tableau and showing them in all their struggle and despair, without comments, but with a pervasive voice.” (111) The effect is that it “ultimately distributes sympathy and antipathy, and conspires with the reader in creating the artifice that he chooses to construct.” (111) Thus, Skei illumined Faulkner’s aesthetics, “watching... arresting...and showing them...” as shown in Emily’s image. The conspiracy with the reader is possible through the narrator “to give her a chance to get rid of the cousins” (CS 127) in

parenthesis: "(By that time it was a cabal, and we were all Miss Emily's allies to help circumvent the cousins." (CS 127)

Emily is oppressed a lot by her father and she even denies his death, but around that time she dates openly, and kills, her lover, to keep him from running away. The collective consciousness of the Jefferson community recognizes the fact and acknowledges the cause of Emily's isolation and her transformation into a monstrous being to revenge of "rob"bing her: "We remembered all the young men her father had driven away...and we knew that nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will." (CS 124) The ambivalent narrator, here, recalls the existence of Emily's coercive father, who repelled all the suitors, and then shows a sympathetic attitude toward Emily.

IV. Conclusion

The furtive and monstrous behaviors of Emily's are against the narrator's expectation and are the deviation from the norm and the values of the masculine culture. The ambivalent narrator under the influence of the Southern patriarchy did not sense Emily's subversive plotting in advance. Emily starts off her sexual adventure openly to get out of her "framed" (CS 123) sexless life. The ambivalent narrator concedes Emily's Oedipal situation when she becomes thirty.

We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she

wouldn't have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized.

(CS 123)

Here, the ambivalent narrator admits and “vindicate”s that Emily, at this age, has the social/natural right and “her chances” to recover her sexuality, the return of the repressed from her childhood. So, the narrator acquiesces the responsibilities of surveillance of the community. The ambivalent narrator acknowledges that Emily’s pursuit of freedom and sexuality has been forbidden and repressed by his community. The narrator sympathizes with Emily’s desperateness and conspires with the reader to support her willful plan. The ambivalent narrator is self-conscious of his repressing Emily’s inner self. Conversely, Emily is also more aware and afraid of the social/sexual barriers. Thus, Emily struggles stealthily and achieves her goal to gain her sexuality in a horrible way in her forbidden “bridal.” (CS 129) However, the outcome of Emily’s social misconduct in her “rose color” (CS 129) atmosphere is death: “the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquered even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him[Homer].” (CS 130)

The only witness of Emily’s secret in her sexual inversion or perversion to the extreme is Tobe. As a black servant, Tobe is also a marginalized and alienated being in the tyrannical white patriarchy. Unlike Emily who will willfully cause her disgrace in the Southerner’s perspective and betray her subversive voices against the fixed notion of virginity and marriage, ‘Tobe’ exists but has almost no voice at all. So were “the old Negro” (CS 120) in the Old South domesticated most thoroughly than the stubborn female, Emily, the descendant’s of the white family. The narrator even says, “we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro. He talked to no one, probably not even to her[Emily], for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.” (CS 128-9) Here, a Faulknerian hyperbole comes up with a comic expression, but it is apparent that the racial identity as a black was more

liable to the dogma of the community than the sexual identity as a woman in the South. And here, as Faulkner's typescript proves his forbidden narrative which was deleted, there might be a property left over from Emily after her death. (See Polk 23-4, *Barnet* 369-72) In the deleted dialogue, the black servant chose to go "to the poorhouse" (*Barnet* 371) with no reward for his lifetime services for the Griersons. The only choice, then, is to get away from the Jefferson community.

Emily's father, a symbolic figure of the Southern patriarchy, passed away when Emily was over her marriageable age. When his surrogate, Homer, tries to run away, the ambivalent narrator, imbued with the community ethics, recollects his fault with a flashback technique. However, the narrator, with the Jefferson community's voice, will never allow Emily's romantic relations with a Northerner. Emily's plotting of her stealthy love in an extreme way is not the only thing to blame. It is the strict Jefferson community and her perverse father that caused Emily to make critical problems and to commit a social crime. As an ambivalent narrator sympathizes with her present state, Emily has an excuse for her love which is socially forbidden. The narrator, in a sympathizing tone, describes Emily's suffering from the sense of loss and, her demented state after her father's death and her pursuit of his surrogate.

Faulkner's motif, which is also a metaphor for his creative writing, is hinted at the ambivalent narrator's witnessing, with a mixed feeling, "a long strand of iron-gray hair." (*CS* 130) It acts as a signifier of Emily's sexuality and vitality with its "iron-gray" color, which ironically represents the Southern Confederate Army. After her early thirties, Emily's hair hasn't changed color over 40 years. In "A Rose for Emily," Faulkner wrote a revenge drama with its ambivalent narrator fluctuating from the past to the present. Faulkner's protagonist defies and revolts against the Southern patriarchy with its sexism and racial differentiation.

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국문초록

<에밀리를 위한 장미>: 가부장적 남부 공동체의 모호한 화자

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미국 남부의 르네상스기를 이끌었던 작가 중 한 명인 윌리엄 포크너는 「에밀리를 위한 장미」에서 남부의 한 귀족 가문의 마지막 후손인 에밀리의 내적 실재들을 탐구 하였다. 제 1인칭 복수형의 화자는 에밀리의 장례식에 대한 묘사로 시작하여, 시간의 순환 구조 속에서 과거 회상으로 이야기를 전개해 나아가며, 과기스런 분위기 속에 그녀의 집 안에 남겨진 것들에 대한 관찰과 순간 포착을 거쳐, 갑작스런 폭로로 이야기를 마친다. 남부 공동체의식을 대변하는 화자는 에밀리에 대한 모호한 태도들을 보이는데, 이는 화자가 명예라는 옛 남부의 코드를 존중하지만 또한 변화를 수용할 채비도 갖추고 있기 때문이다. 화자는 때때로 에밀리와 충돌하거나 대치하며, 비난하기도 한다. 또한 화자는 이따금씩 에밀리를 동정하고, 과도기의 남부에서 생존하려는 에밀리의 필사적인 내적 투쟁을 지지하는 내러티브 속으로 독자를 끌어들인다. 에밀리가 오이디푸스적 상황에 처한 원인은 남부의 가부장제에 있다고 여겨지며, 그 속의 남성 중심의 문화는 화자와 등장인물들이 속한 제퍼슨 공동체의 의식을 지배하고, 이에 적응토록 강요한다. 반면에, 에밀리는 자신의 억눌린 섹슈얼리티를 되찾고자 하며, 전복적인 목소리로 남부의 가부장제에 대한 복수를 시도한다.

주제어 : 모호한 화자, 가부장제, 오이디푸스적 상황, 남부 공동체, 포크너

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