



## MENTAL ASYLUM: APPROACHING PSYCHOPATHY IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S A ROSE FOR EMILY

\*Rakhshanda Sartaj, \*\*Dr. Saiqa Siddiq, \*\*\*Dr. EhsanUllah Danish,  
\*\*\*\*Faiza Kiran

\*Lecturer (English), Hazara University Mansehra, Mansehra

\*\*Assistant Professor (English), Gomal University, D I Khan

\*\*\*Assistant Professor (English)/Director Tank Campus, Gomal University, D I Khan

\*\*\*\*M. Phil Scholar (English), The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus

### ABSTRACT

*The current paper attempts to explore the character of Emily Grierson as a neurotic, mad, dementia, and flawed character, leading toward the knit and in-depth characterization in William Faulkner's A Rose for Emily leading to psychological disorder which is near to mental asylum. He shows how seclusion can drive a person to insanity through Emily. A Rose for Emily explores the feminine psychology by depicting an elderly unmarried woman who refuses to accept her father's death and preserves his body in her room for an extended period. She later murders her lover, Homer Barron, and spends four decades resting next to his corpse. Miss Emily's mental condition can be easily identified without the need for a particularly focused reading. Similar to the characters in the narrative who are obsessed with Emily's lifestyle characterised by solitude and deep thought, where the readers are left, contemplating the peculiar behaviour of the female protagonist. The reason why it is impossible to comprehend Miss Emily's psychological condition and her fragmentation into conflicting personalities is due to the underlying motivation. This research examines Miss Emily's mental condition from a psychoanalytic perspective and aims to demonstrate that upon further examination, her psychopathic traits and her profound silence do exhibit significant and coherent symptoms, leading her to mental asylum. This story also serves as a critique of a society that chose not to intervene and assist her.*

**Key terms:** Female psyche, humorous, profound, madness, dementia

### INTRODUCTION

“You are safe as long as you are not mad or a woman”, “Are’nt we all a little mad?” “as quoted by **Tabitha Suzuma** in her book *A Note of Madness*. It is quite humorous to the eye that such phrases when looked at superficially. But digesting it a second time, a profound reader could get a sense of some hidden and dark implications. So “madness is precisely a condition of impossibility for thought”. Mind and body affect each other, thus concluding mental illness is a flaw. Although Miss Emily is often calm in her novel, *A Rose for Emily*, she leads a highly tumultuous existence in terms of her innermost thoughts and emotions. The woman's silence is a consequence of contending forces that govern her existence. These powers refer to the concepts ‘id’, ‘self-image’, and ‘superego’, coined by Sigmund Freud to denote the three distinct divisions of the human mind. This set of three is such a lot of pertinent to Miss Emily's relapse and her tumble from mental stability to madness. Inspecting Miss Emily's mind essentially includes a basic investigation of her isolated mind, including the ‘id’, ‘inner self’, and ‘superego’.

The ‘id’ refers to the unconscious part of the human mind, driven by basic and innate desires and demands (Evans 75). The ego, also known as the reality principle, acts as a mediator between the desires of the id and the limitations of the external

world (105). The third component of the human mind is the 'superego', which strives to achieve what is socially sanctioned and morally correct (226). The 'id' and 'superego' represent opposing boundaries between one's desires and what is morally acceptable, while the 'ego' is responsible for satisfying the 'id' within the confines of societal norms or the 'superego'. The primary responsibility of one's inner self is to discover a mutually agreeable perspective that is pleasing to both parties involved.

The three parts of Emily's mind, the 'id', 'ego', and 'superego' can promptly be recognized and examined in *A Rose for Emily*. Miss Emily's self is overpowered by the 'id' that appeared through her instinctual want to have a man; a craving she has been denied because of the way that 'the young fellows were not very adequate for Miss Emily and such' (51). The longing for Miss Emily's 'id' is an uncontrollable and overpowering impulse that ultimately overruns her, driving her to a deadly demonstration of her darling so she can have and control him.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Brutality**

Brutality was not the focal point of writing in the ending phase of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ejohwomu and Igwilo (2017) referenced that brutalism gets back with another conspicuousness. Further, brutalism produces separation in a person. Brutalism is a demonstration of viciousness against others, making the casualties endure. It is normally physical; the most exceedingly terrible, it might prompt the demise of the person in question. In abstract works, in any case, the subject of viciousness and mercilessness is generally to set off the perusers' mindfulness in that the physical, mental, and profound experiences of people can be legitimate. Further, Orwell (1984) additionally presents the topic through steady observation, censuring the way that individual flexibility of activity and beliefs is not permitted (Arendt, 1963: 2)

#### **Greed**

Covetousness is the craving to have more than whatever is required, particularly in riches. Is one of the normal features of human instinct? For sure, practically all religions treat eagerness as improper and evil (Wang et al., 2011). All things considered, many of the financial experts accept that covetousness is great, empowering the entertainers to seek after a monetary turn of events (Greenfield, 2003). Aside from the sentiments, individuals overall view that covetousness is fairly risky, for it can set off a person to successfully satisfy the longing, regardless of whether it is awful.

#### **Id, Ego, and Superego**

An intellectually sound individual can be fixed and fitted to Id, Ego, and Superego. The principal job of the id is giving quick energy or pressure, animated by inner or outer excitement. It is the essential wellspring of actual energy and there lies the impulse. The id continues as before ever, and it cannot be changed by experience since it is not in that frame of mind with the rest of the world. In the interim, self-image is the perplexing association of the mental cycle, interceding the id and the outside world. It separates dreams from the real world, an issue separated from the id's job. The super-self image is the moral or the legal part of the character. It addresses the ideal, taking a stab at flawlessness and disregarding the truth or joy. It fills in as a singular ethical code. Super-inner self creates from a self-image as the result of a kid's digestion of his folks' norms about what is great and terrible (Boag, 2014).

Sigmund Freud as referred to in Makaryk (1993) referenced that analysis offers a hereditary hypothesis of the development of the human brain as a “mystic contraption”. Key to Freud’s hypothesis is his idea of the oblivious psyche, where the body and the sexual history of the human subject continue in all creations of the cognizant brain. For Freud the idea of sexuality isn't one of simple science or cheerful inclination yet is fairly the complex of substantial mental longing which shows itself in earliest outset as well as grown-up life.

### **Analysis and discussion**

Emily Grierson’s fervent pleas for human affection and approval categorise her as a character who, according to most assessments, is considered to be mentally unstable. The concept of mental disease has long been a topic of controversy, questioning the definition of sanity. Who is absent? Who has the authority to pass judgement? Each successive generation formulates its own conceptions on the origins and attributes of insanity, as well as the expected appearance and behaviour of an individual deemed mad. Emily can be perceived in various ways: as the Other, the mentally unstable elderly woman, or the tragic operatic protagonist. The aspects of her character can be most effectively elucidated using notions derived from literary analysis and criticism. Michael Foucault characterises the history of madness as the history of the ‘Other’ - something that is both internal and foreign to a particular culture, and therefore needs to be excluded and contained to minimise its otherness. In contrast, the history of the order imposed on things is the history of the ‘Same’ - something that is both dispersed and interconnected within a given culture, and therefore needs to be categorised and grouped into identities. Foucault argues that the concept of insanity should be determined based on the specific society’s understanding of illogical conduct, rather than a combination of symptoms.

William Faulkner portrays the entire psychological breakdown of Emily Grierson in his work *A Rose for Emily*. Grierson’s detachment from the truth about herself and the world gradually drives her to completely detach from reality and ultimately descend into madness. At the beginning of the performance, the story is divided into five sections. In part one, the narrator discusses the time of Emily Grierson’s death and how the entire community attended her funeral at her house, which had not been visited by anybody from outside for more than ten years. In segment II, the narrator portrays a time thirty years prior when Emily defies yet another authoritative demand on behalf of the town leaders, as the townspeople detect a potent odour emanating from her land. Her father has recently passed away, and Emily has been abandoned by the guy whom the townspeople believed Emily was going to marry. During part III, the narrator portrays an extended period of illness that Emily endures following this event. Following her father’s death in late spring, the municipality hires workers to clear the pavements, with a construction company led by northerner Homer Barron overseeing the project. Homer quickly becomes a prominent character in the community and is observed with Emily on carriage excursions on Sunday evenings, which angers the population and intensifies the arrogance and pity they feel towards Emily. They perceive that she is neglecting her family’s sense of honour and being involved with a man of lower social status. As the project progresses and Emily’s reputation is more undermined, she visits the pharmacy to get arsenic, a potent toxin. It is imperative to ascertain the intended

application of the arsenic in a legally compliant manner. She provides no compelling justification, and the package arrives at her residence labelled ‘for rodents’.

In part IV, the narrator portrays the fear that some of the residents have that Emily will employ the poison to take her own life. Aside from occasional glimpses of her via the window, there is no communication from her until her death at the age of 74. Only the worker is observed traversing the entire residence. In part V, the narrator depicts the events that transpire following Emily’s demise. Emily’s lifeless body is lying in the parlour, and the women, elderly residents of the town, and two cousins come to provide aid. After a considerable duration, the townsfolk forcefully demolish the entrance to an elevated room that had been sealed for four decades. The chamber remains unchanged, with wedding preparations and a man’s outfit arranged in anticipation. Homer Barron’s body lies stretched out on the bed, exhibiting advanced stages of decomposition. The observers next observe a gap in the pillow next to Homer’s body, as well as a lengthy strand of Emily’s silver hair on the pillow. This leads them to realise that the poison was intended for Homer Barron, not Emily.

In his psychoanalytical review, Norman Holland brings up that Miss Emily’s strange conduct in light of mystery and depravity uncovers a Freudian ‘exacting obsession’. Freud hypothesizes that the negative response from guardians can lead the youngster to create a “anal retentive fixation.. For example, if the guardian’s force and power their clout on the youngster, he/she might respond by deliberately keeping down in disobedience. A youngster, Freud adds, will form into a grown-up who detests wreck, is fanatically clean, dependable, and exceptionally cautious about cash (Eysenck 288). Miss Emily’s personality development suitably accommodates Freud’s “anal retentive fixation. Indeed, during the “anal retentive fixation, a youngster deliberately and insubordinately responds to his folks’ power which is a similar case with Miss Emily whose quietness and purposeful inner-directedness is a resistive response against a patriarchal culture that attempts to force on her manly one-sided standards like tolerating male power and predominance. In like manner, Freud’s contention about the feeling of cleanliness describing an anal retentive fixation character is detected in Miss Emily’s home which, regardless of its rot, shows a high feeling of the organization being “outfitted in weighty, cowhide-covered furniture with a discolored overlaid easel before the chimney [and] a colored pencil picture of Miss Emily’s dad” (49).

Reliability is likewise one more quality of a fastidious attitude. This attribution is featured in Miss Emily when she had an extraordinary gathering with the Board of Council members. On time, “they were conceded by the old Negro” (48), and on time they were shown out by the standard, worn-out Negro. Obstinance, one more personal quality of an ‘exacting’ character, is uncovered in Miss Emily’s disposition in many occurrences. He refuses to let the drug specialist realize her explanations for purchasing poison. Additionally, the woman’s refusal to pay charges vouches for her hard-headedness as well as her ugliness which is one more quality of Freud’s ‘exacting’ character. Unnecessary to express that every one of the qualities talked about above are appeared through occurrences of quiet displaying Miss Emily’s subversive demonstrations of obstruction and defiance to the man-centric town of Jefferson.

Instead of the fact that she is largely silent throughout the majority of the events that taken place in her narrative, Miss Emily lives a very noisy life in terms of the inner

workings of her psyche. The woman's silence is the result of the struggle between the forces that rule her existence. Sigmund Freud coined the terms 'id', 'ego', and 'superego' to describe the three distinct divisions of the human psyche. These forces are referred to as the 'personality', 'ego', and 'superego', respectively. The regress that Miss Emily experiences and her descent from sanity to insanity are both topics that are addressed in this trilogy. A rigorous examination of Miss Emily's divided psyche, which includes her 'id', 'ego', and 'superego', is required in order to have a complete understanding of her mental state.

According to Evans, the 'id' refers to the unconscious component of the human mind, which is an innate force that is driven by primal needs and desires (75). The 'ego', which is often referred to as the 'reality principal', acts as a mediator between the desires of the 'id' and the possibilities that reality can offer (105). The 'superego' is the third component of the human psyche, and it is the part of the mind that strives to achieve what is considered to be ethically acceptable and socially acceptable (226). The 'id' and the 'superego' are two opposite extremes of what one desires vs what is right. The 'ego' is responsible for fulfilling the 'id' while operating within the boundaries of what is socially correct, which is the 'superego'. It is the fundamental task of the ego to locate a middle ground that is acceptable to both sides. Within the narrative of *A Rose for Emily*, the three components of Emily's mind, namely the 'id', 'ego', and 'superego', are easily discernible and subject to close examination. Due to the fact that "none of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such" (51), Miss Emily's self is dominated by the 'id' that is exhibited via her innate need to possess a man. This desire has been denied to her since she has been deprived of the opportunity to fulfill it herself. It is an uncontrollable and overwhelming drive that eventually permeates Miss Emily, driving her to commit a homicidal deed of her beloved in order to entirely own and dominate him. This desire is referred to as Miss Emily's 'id'. When the citizens of the town come face to face with Emily, her 'superego' reappears, and 'superficial impressions drawn from a distance and are not necessarily resonant of Emily's inner self" (Argiro 449). The 'superego' is the term used to describe Emily's psychological state. Accordingly, despite her voracious sexuality, the woman is still considered as a monument and a tradition (*A Rose* 47) in the townspeople's gaze who, in death, "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" (47).

The character of Miss Emily, who is depicted as a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head (49), is a representation of a social ethics stereotype. The reason for this is that the residents of the town even bring their children to her house so that they may learn how to paint on porcelain. Miss Emily, since she is both virtuous and conventional, is the person that the people of Jefferson aspire to be. She is seen as a 'superego' by the community, which means that she is socially acceptable and ethically appropriate. The term 'ego' refers to the point at where Emily's two extreme selves, the 'id' and the 'superego', intersect. Emily's "ego" is built upon silence. Through her quiet behavior, Miss Emily is able to conceal an 'id' that is both invasive and nasty, and she is able to conform to a 'superego' that is more moral. For example, to take the fact that she is able to teach art to children in the basement while simultaneously concealing the body of her boyfriend in the upper floor.

This is an unsettling act that is obscured by her quiet and her 'ego'. Respectively, the woman discovers in her 'ego' a region of equilibrium in which she is able to satisfy the sexual urges that are fueled by her 'id' while simultaneously satisfying the requirements of her 'superego', which is the ideal portrait that the citizens of the town have made for her. The 'id' of Miss Emily, on the other hand, is undeniably the most influential component of her brain. The unmarried woman is unable to control her sexual cravings towards the patriarch, and as a result, she refuses to bury the body of her father and then poisons her lover. Consequently, the chaotic psychological disorder that Miss Emily suffers from is the result of the 'id' having a greater influence than both the 'ego' and the 'superego'. A condition of this nature results in the formation of a painfully divided self, despite the fact that the woman's life appears to be peaceful and quiet on the surface. In addition, the Freudian concepts of 'repression' and 'transference' are extremely pertinent to the psychotic structure of Miss Emily. According to the psychoanalytical hypothesis, the term 'repression' refers to 'the process by which certain thoughts and memories are expelled from consciousness and confined to the unconscious' (Evans 192). Freud makes the observation that the process of 'repression' does not result in the destruction of the concepts or memories that it is intended to suppress. On the contrary, it merely serves to conceal them within the unconscious. Following the said, it is always likely that the 'repressed' may return in a distorted form, such as through symptoms, dreams, slips of the tongue, and other similar methods (192).

The process which is referred to as 'the return of the repressed', contributes to the phenomenon known as 'transference', which refers to the transfer of a feeling or desire from childhood to another person or object in adulthood. It also involves the relocation of prior relationships with other figures, particularly those with parents, into another person or object (237). Mistress Emily has struggled with sexual repression ever since she was a young child. Each and every young man who made a proposal to her was turned away by her father, who also banned her from communicating with people of the other sex. Because of this, 'with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will' (52). Emily's sexual suppression is demonstrated by the fact that she is addicted to her father, who is the only guy in her life. This sexual repression is what leads to transference, which occurs when Miss Emily passes her intense sexual impulses from her father to her lover Homer Barron, who is described as a 'big, dark, ready man, with a big voice, and eyes lighter than his face' (53). In a similar manner, the repressed violence of the patriarch is transmitted to Miss Emily's father after his death. This is because she kept his corpse until it decomposed, and then she transferred it to Homer Barron, who was poisoned and left unburied for forty years. Miss Emily Grierson, who lives a life of silence, eventually becomes uncontrollable and uncontrolled from the perspective of the patriarchal society in which she is a member. It is because of her existence that she is constructed as a counter discourse against the Law of the Father. Her presence is linguistically unintelligible. Emily's hysteric state disturbs the main masculine discourse of the text and establishes a voice of a hushed body and a suppressed sexuality. She dreams of a lost body and lost desires inside a father's house that may be described as a tomb. Miss Emily, like many of Faulkner's other female characters, demonstrates an extraordinary ability to escape to a mirror stage or a pre-gendered, pre-Symbolic order. In this order, quiet and physiological wants take the place of the Symbolic Law of the Father. When viewed through the

patriarchal spectacles of the town of Jefferson, such a premeditated departure is interpreted as a psychological trauma; yet, the lady intends for it to be interpreted as an instrument of insurrection and resistance.

### Conclusion

The readers are left pondering Miss Emily's capricious and offbeat way of behaving, leading her to premise to mental asylum which is the justification for why one cannot try to ponder Miss Emily's upset mind and her division into quiet clashing selves. Miss Emily's silent and capricious life after her dad's passing is created into a condition of 'psychosis'. Without a trace of her dad, Miss Emily becomes torn between the 'no name of the Father' representation and her sexual longings. Such an issue triggers the woman's condition of psychosis seen in her way of behaving, holding her dad's carcass for three days, and, surprisingly, her appearance, trimming her hair in a masculine style. In similar way, Miss Emily's mental condition is solidly exhibited in her deadly demonstration of Homer Barron. Killing Homer Barron, Miss Emily turns out to be profoundly insane and mentally stuck. Extreme psychosis is solidly shown by the way that she went through years with the cadaver of her sweetheart and tracked down in this act her most wanted delight. However she kills Homer Barron, Miss Emily unendingly accepts he is as yet alive, a demeanour she had with the carcass of her dad, which vouches for her profound maniacal state.

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