

# **Student Essay on "A Rose for Emily": The Narrator's Psyche**

**"A Rose for Emily": The Narrator's Psyche by William  
Faulkner**

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# Essay

William Faulkner's short story "A Rose for Emily", is narrated in a unique point of view; rather than speaking in a single voice, the narrator uses a collective voice of "we", as though there are multiple observers. The purpose of using "we" is to speak for the town's citizens as the narrator to create a sense of intimacy between the reader and the story. The town carries the story of the progress of Emily's life and also judges her actions (perceived or actual) much like a chorus in a Greek tragedy.

The short story has a theme of corruption and evil. The opinions and comments reveal the psyche of the collective narrator, or the values of the town. The narrator's position is occasionally ambivalent, making judgements both for and against Miss Emily. The narrator judges the main character, Miss Emily as a fallen "monument", but simultaneously as a member of the upper class of society and therefore above criticism and in a class outside of the ordinary townspeople.

At the beginning of the story the collaborative narrator seems young and sympathetic and is impressed by Miss Emily's station in life. The narrator seems to age with Miss Emily and relates all the events of her lifetime. At the end of the story the narrator is proud to recognize the Miss Emily's dignity. The character or the narrator develops over the story just as a person's character would develop with maturity.

The narrator is very affectionate in the way he speaks about Emily. We can examine the narrator's values when he respects Emily for using her position in society to evade the law when she goes to buy poison and does not give a reason of her intent. In general the narrator is sympathetic to Miss Emily and admires her ability to use her perceived standing in society to "vanquish" the members of the town council. We can also question the narrator's motive in why he felt a need to share this story with us, perhaps wanting us to pity the elderly people whose values and status are no longer widely accepted.