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SOME PECULIARITIES OF LITERARY DISCOURSE IN REPRESENTING COHESION IN THE WORK OF “A ROSE FOR EMILY” BY WILLIAM FAULKNER

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Abstract. *This thesis examines the specific features of literary discourse that contribute to the cohesion in William Faulkner’s short story “A Rose for Emily”. By analyzing the narrative structure, thematic development, and use of stylistic devices, the study highlights how cohesion is maintained despite the non-linear timeline and fragmented storytelling. Special attention is given to Faulkner’s use of language, repetition, and symbolisms that create internal links between different parts of the story. The research demonstrates how these elements work together to shape the reader’s perception and maintain narrative unity, even as the plot shifts across various points in time. Ultimately, the study offers insights into the complexities of literary cohesion and the peculiarities of Faulkner’s narrative technique.*

Key words: *Literary discourse, cohesion, cohesive devices, repetition, collective narration, temporal shift, collective voice, non-linear narrative, narrative techniques, narrative unity, non-linear timeline, fragmented storytelling, cyclical nature.*

INTRODUCTION

William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” is widely regarded as one of his most compelling works, rich in themes of tradition, change, isolation, and death. The short story’s unique structure, shifting between different time periods, offers a fascinating case for analyzing how literary cohesion is achieved within a fragmented narrative. Despite its non-linear timeline and disjointed storytelling, the work maintains a sense of unity and coherence that guides the reader through the plot and its underlying messages. This thesis aims to explore the peculiarities of literary discourse in Faulkner’s story, with a focus on how cohesion is represented. Cohesion in literature refers to the various ways in which parts of a text are linked together, allowing the narrative to form a meaningful whole. In “A Rose for Emily”, this is achieved through a combination of stylistic techniques, including Faulkner’s use of repetition, symbolism, and specific linguistic choices. These devices not only bind the narrative together but also deepen the reader’s understanding of the characters, themes, and the Southern Gothic atmosphere of the story. The purpose of this study is to examine how Faulkner’s literary techniques create connections within the text, ensuring that, despite its fragmented nature, the story remains cohesive. By analyzing these techniques, the thesis will provide insight into the complexities of literary discourse in “A Rose for Emily” and contribute to a broader understanding of how cohesion operates



in literary works. Main body. Cohesion in literature refers to the devices and structures used to tie elements of a narrative together, ensuring that a story feels complete and unified. This includes the use of linguistic features like pronouns, conjunctions, and repetition, as well as narrative strategies like thematic connections and symbolic imagery. In “A Rose for Emily”, Faulkner employs these techniques to hold together a narrative that is non-linear in its timeline but unified in its theme.

Faulkner’s decision to present the events of “A Rose for Emily” out of chronological order reflects his broader literary goals of highlighting memory, decay, and the cyclical nature of time. By presenting the story in fragments, Faulkner mirrors the disjointed and decaying world of Miss Emily herself, which is reflected in the community’s view of her life and actions. This fragmented structure requires the reader to reconstruct the timeline, which is achieved through Faulkner’s use of cohesive devices. One clear example of repetition in “A Rose for Emily” is the frequent mention of “death”. From the very beginning, the story opens with Emily’s death: “When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral...”¹. This sets the tone for the entire story, and death is mentioned repeatedly, whether in the description of her father’s death, Homer Barron’s mysterious disappearance, or the “smell” that emanated from her house, which the townspeople later realize came from the decaying body of Homer. These repetitions link different parts of the narrative together, even though the timeline is disjointed.

The theme of death recurs throughout, reinforcing the atmosphere of decay and the inevitability of time. To cite an example of symbolism as a cohesive device is that a key symbol in the story is Miss Emily’s house. The house is introduced early in the story as a symbol of decay and resistance to change: “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.”². As the story progresses, the house continues to symbolize not only Emily’s own physical and emotional decay but also the fading grandeur of the Old South, resisting the encroaching modernity around it. The house connects different time periods in the story—from Emily’s youth, when it was an admired symbol of wealth, to her later years, when it falls into disrepair. The condition of the house mirrors Emily’s own decline, and it serves as a recurring symbol that provides cohesion between the different timelines.

The narrator of “A Rose for Emily” is not a single individual but a collective voice representing the townspeople. This technique provides a sense of unity and cohesion throughout the story because the town’s perspective remains consistent, even as the timeline shifts. For example: “When the town got free postal delivery, Miss Emily alone refused to let them fasten the metal numbers above her door and attach a mailbox to it.”³. This collective

¹ “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner (1930), chapter I

² “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner (1930), chapter I

³ “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner (1930), chapter I



narration gives us insight into how Emily was perceived by the community at different times in her life. It binds the story's separate moments together, offering continuity as the town observes and reflects on Emily's life over the years. The townspeople's judgments and gossip link various events—her father's death, Homer Barron's arrival, the eventual discovery of Homer's body—into a cohesive whole, even though these events are not presented chronologically. The story's timeline is non-linear, jumping back and forth in time. Faulkner achieves cohesion by linking flashbacks to the present through thematic connections or narrative clues. For example, early in the story, after describing Emily's death, the narrator jumps back in time to her relationship with her father: "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..."⁴. This flashback provides context for Emily's later isolation and reluctance to accept change, explaining her eventual relationship with Homer Barron. The flashbacks are strategically placed to provide necessary background information, ensuring that the reader understands Emily's motivations and the reasons behind the events that unfold later in the story. At the very end of the story, when the townspeople break into Miss Emily's upstairs room after her death, they discover the decayed body of Homer Barron, and beside it, a long gray hair on the pillow: "Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair."⁵. This single gray hair serves as a final symbol that links the past and present, connecting Emily's secret life with the revelation of Homer's murder. The hair represents Emily's long-standing attachment to Homer, even after his death, and offers a resolution to the mystery that had lingered throughout the story. This symbolic detail ties together the narrative threads and completes the story, providing a final sense of closure and cohesion.

Conclusion. In "A Rose for Emily", William Faulkner uses a variety of cohesive devices, including repetition, symbolism, collective narration, and temporal shifts, to create unity in a non-linear narrative. Through these techniques, Faulkner binds together fragmented moments in time and themes of decay, isolation, and resistance to change into a cohesive story. This study has shown that these literary techniques not only link the different parts of the narrative but also deepen the reader's understanding of the story's central themes and characters. Ultimately, Faulkner's approach in "A Rose for Emily" illustrates the power of cohesive devices in shaping complex, multi-layered literary discourse.

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⁵ "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner (1930), chapter I



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