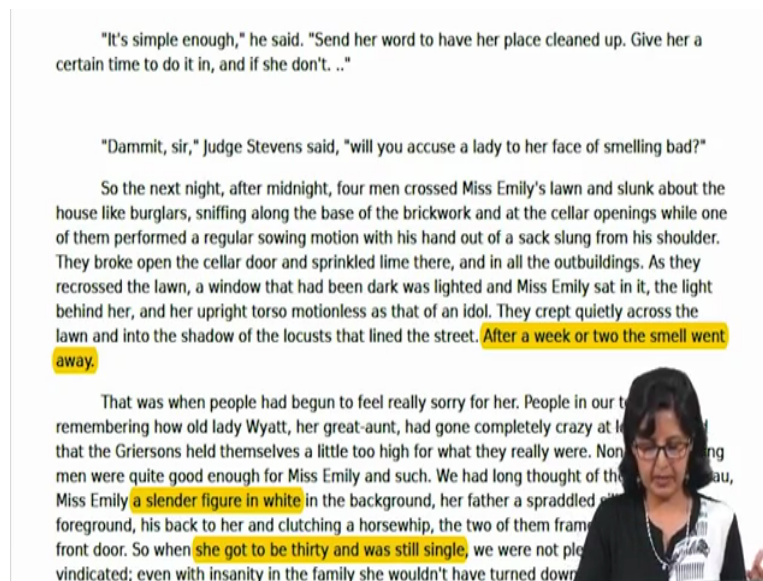


Introduction to World Literature
Professor Dr Merin Simi Raj
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Lecture 09
A Rose for Emily - Part 2

Hello and welcome to today's session where we continue to discuss the short story by William Faulkner *A Rose for Emily*. As we had started looking at in the previous session this is a story in which William Faulkner has exemplified the life of this woman, Emily, in the carting context of the American South. We also briefly recall that Faulkner has usually been trying to portray the life of the American South and the context of this short story is also in the aftermath of the civil war, after the abolishment of slavery, a period during which economic and social reconstruction is happening in America.

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"It's simple enough," he said. "Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don't. ."

"Dammit, sir," Judge Stevens said, "will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?"

So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily's lawn and slunk about the house like burglars, sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack slung from his shoulder. They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings. As they recrossed the lawn, 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. They crept quietly across the lawn and into the shadow of the locusts that lined the street. **After a week or two the smell went away.**

That was when people had begun to feel really sorry for her. People in our town remembering how old lady Wyatt, her great-aunt, had gone completely crazy at last, thought that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of the young man, Miss Emily **a slender figure in white** in the background, her father a spraddled figure in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the front door. So when **she got to be thirty and was still single**, we were not pleased; but she was vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn't have turned down

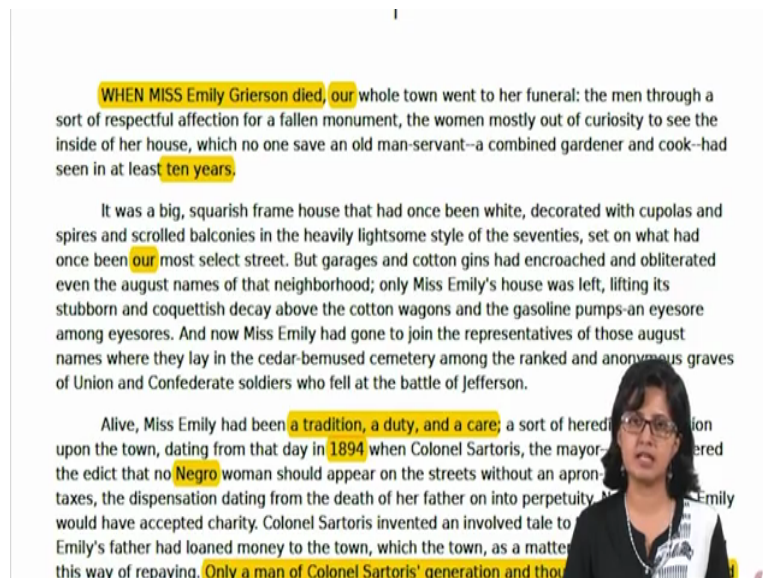
We were also trying to take a closer look at the short story towards the end of the second section, we realized that Emily according to the narrator is beginning to show certain signs of very peculiar behaviour rather abnormal kind of behaviour when she holds on to her father's dead body and refuses to admit that he is dead and she had to be forced and coerced into giving up the dead body after three days.

So this also gives us a sense that Emily is a character who is forever in denial, her idea of history, her idea of society, her value system, her idea of her own life it is frozen in time. She is completely oblivious to the changes which happen in terms of seasons, in terms of

generations, in terms of the changing order of systems, in terms of these societal norms or the governmental norms; she is completely oblivious to those things.

We find that getting displayed in minor as well as major ways in this short story. There are five sections altogether in this story and many critics have pointed out that this also is a perfectly written story in that sense, there is a kind of a formatic perfection which has been attributed to this story and the way it has been divided into five neat sections and there is a sense of chronology which is distributed across this narration, several critics and readers tried to give a sense of at least a tentative sense of the dates and the to reveal the exact nature of the chronology which this story projects, except for one date that the story mentions which is 1894.

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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.

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. And now Miss Emily 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.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor, had issued the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron. Miss Emily had been tax-paying, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. Miss Emily would have accepted charity. Colonel Sartoris invented an involved tale to the effect that Emily's father had loaned money to the town, which the town, as a matter of course, repaid in this way of repaying. Only a man of Colonel Sartoris' generation and thought

This appears in the first section of the story when we are being made privy to this information that it was an 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. So except for this date we only have certain other kinds of indicators of time.

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When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less.

The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days, with the ministers calling on her, and the doctors, trying to persuade her to let them dispose of the body. Just as they were about to resort to law and force, she broke down, and they buried her father quickly.

We did not say 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.

III

SHE WAS SICK for a long time. When we saw her again, her hair was cut short making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows—sort of tragic and serene.



For instance they say the section 3, the third section of this story begins by saying she was sick for a long time. When we saw her again her hair was cut short making her look like a girl with a vague resemblance to those angels and colored church windows, sort of tragic and serene. There are different indicators of time that we get, there are different descriptions of Emily given at various points of time which also will give us the understanding that Emily is also aging and that Emily is changing in different ways physically but what comes across is interesting through these changes which are manifested physically is that, she continues to remain perhaps pretty much the same mentally.

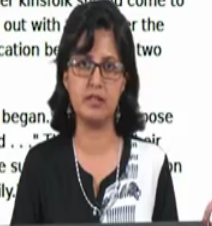
We do not find her attitudes changing at least that is a notion that we get when we are introduced to the story through this narrator, we do not get any sense of Emily responding or reacting to the changes, she remains quite constant almost throughout holding on to the things that are dear to her and in a state of denial, in a state which forces her to remain frozen in time, refusing to accept the new changes, the new order which is coming into being at the governmental level, at the society level and also in the many ways that mean that she sees locally around her.

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The town had just let the contracts for paving the sidewalks, and in the summer after her father's death they began the work. The construction company came with riggers and mules and machinery, and a foreman named **Homer Barron**, a Yankee—a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face. The little boys would follow in groups to hear him cuss the riggers, and the riggers singing in time to the rise and fall of picks. Pretty soon he knew everybody in town. Whenever you heard a lot of laughing anywhere about the square, Homer Barron would be in the center of the group. Presently we began to see him and Miss Emily on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy and the matched team of bays from the livery stable.

At first we were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, "Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a **Northerner**, a day laborer." But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget noblesse oblige—without calling it noblesse oblige. They just said, "Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her." She had some kin in Alabama; but years ago her father had fallen out with them for the estate of old lady Wyatt, the crazy woman, and there was no communication between the two families. They had not even been represented at the funeral.

And as soon as the old people said, "**Poor Emily**," the whispering began. "How could it be so?" they said to one another. "Of course it is. What else could . . ." Their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the street; on as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: "Poor Emily."

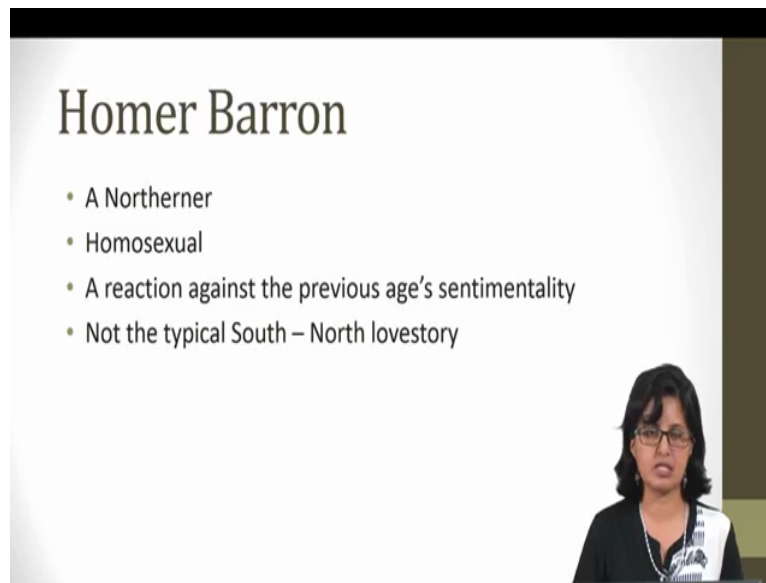


In the third section we were also introduced to this at the other important character Homer Barron. This is how the story introduces her, a four man named Homer Barron, a Yankee, a big dark ready man with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face, the little boys would follow in groups to hear him cuss the riggers and the riggers singing in time to rise and fall of picks.

Pretty soon he knew everybody in town. Whenever you heard a lot of laughing anywhere about the squire, Homer Barron would be in the centre of the group. Presently we began to see him and Miss Emily on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy and the matched team of bays from the livery stable. So Homer Barron becomes important for this narration, because of his association with Emily, he is a Northerner, a Yankee and he is entirely different from the conservative South, he comes across as someone who represents whatever Emily is not, he is presented as a very lively character very much liked by everyone in the locality and his presence is visible and audible unlike that of Emily is.

And we find that Emily and Homer Barron are together for some time and the town begins to gossip about how typical South, white woman like Emily well fit in with this will fit in with this alliance with a Northerner like Homer Barron.

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The slide features a title 'Homer Barron' in a large, dark serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list with four items: 'A Northerner', 'Homosexual', 'A reaction against the previous age's sentimentality', and 'Not the typical South – North lovestory'. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, square video inset showing a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark top, looking towards the camera.

When we are presented with Homer Barron, the typical expectation is that a love story will follow but unlike our expectations challenging the readers, expectations Faulkner is takes us on a different ride altogether. Homer Barron is a Northerner and he is also we come to know as a story progresses he is a homosexual perhaps he is interest as more in men and that also makes him an unsuitable husband for Emily.

The story does not say that in too many ways, it is something that we infer in the process of the readings and the introduction of Homer Barron and the presentation of the relation between Emily and Homer it can be seen as a reaction against the previous age is sentimentality. The way of Faulkner presents this story it is very evident that he does not want to present a typical North-South love story, he does not want to follow with the typical tradition where the South woman falls in love where the North man and then they come together amicably resolving all the differences between them, here it is a very stark reaction, it is a counter response against the program sentimentality and the prevailing expectations.

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And as soon as the old people said, "Poor Emily," the whispering began. "Do you suppose it's really so?" they said to one another. "Of course it is. What else could . . ." This behind their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: "Poor Emily."

She carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness. Like when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic. That was over a year after they had begun to say "Poor Emily," and while the two female cousins were visiting her.

"I want some poison," she said to the druggist. She was over thirty then, still a slight woman, though thinner than usual, with cold, haughty black eyes in a face the flesh of which was strained across the temples and about the eyesockets as you imagine a lighthouse-keeper's face ought to look. "I want some poison," she said.

"Yes, Miss Emily. What kind? For rats and such? I'd recom—"

"I want the best you have. I don't care what kind."

The druggist named several. "They'll kill anything up to an elephant . . ."
is—"

"Arsenic," Miss Emily said. "Is that a good one?"



As well as the town is excited about this new relation, they begin to gossip about it between Emily and Homer. they also realize that it is not perhaps going it is not perhaps leading towards a marriage, we do find a series of things happening in between we find Homer going away, we find Emily is relatives coming to stay with her and there are all kinds of speculations that the town indulge us an and the town is always following and paying attention to what Emily is doing and this is the point of view through which Emily is presented to us.

We find the entire town almost talking Emily, paying attention to what she does and is talking almost every move of us, it is in that sense that the town begins to talk about when talk about why Emily wants to buy rat poison, I let me take you back to the beginning of the story where we understand that the narrator is an unreliable narrator who also uses the pronoun we.

It is a collective opinion of the town that this narrator is trying to express, so we get to know that the entire town is interested in gossiping about whatever Emily is doing and here when we are introduced to this episode to this segment where she goes to buy rat poison, she buys arsenic.

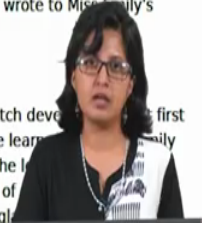
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IV

SO THE NEXT day we all said, "She will kill herself"; and we said it would be the best thing. When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, "She will marry him." Then we said, "She will persuade him yet," because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks' Club—that he was not a marrying man. 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.

Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister—Miss Emily's people were Episcopal—to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back again. The next Sunday they again drove about the streets, and the following day the minister's wife wrote to Miss Emily's relations in Alabama.

So she had blood-kin under her roof again and we sat back to watch developments. At first nothing happened. Then we were sure that they were to be married. We learned that she had been to the jeweler's and ordered a man's toilet set in silver, with the largest piece. Two days later we learned that she had bought a complete outfit of men's clothing including a nightshirt. and we said, "They are married." We were really glad.



And the pharmacist, the druggist is also equally apprehensive about selling it, Robert nevertheless because of the prestige and the privilege that she enjoys in the South she manages to get it without even really convincing the druggist and people begin to assume in the food section that she is about to commit suicide, so that seems to which they talk about Emily or they think it is ok to make judgments or to make any kind of prophetic in comments about Emily is life and the decisions that she would be taking.

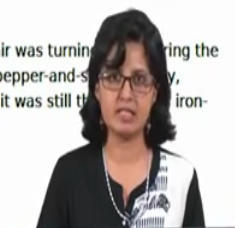
It is also a typical southern trait where the conservative attitude also leads them to believe that they do have the legitimate permission to talk about women especially single women in a way which is not really becoming.

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So we were not surprised when Homer Barron—the streets had been finished some time since—was gone. We were a little disappointed that there was not a public blowing-off, but we believed that he had gone on to prepare for Miss Emily's coming, or to give her a chance to get rid of the cousins. (By that time it was a cabal, and we were all Miss Emily's allies to help circumvent the cousins.) Sure enough, after another week they departed. And, as we had expected all along, within three days Homer Barron was back in town. A neighbor saw the Negro man admit him at the kitchen door at dusk one evening.

And that was the last we saw of Homer Barron, And of Miss Emily for some time. The Negro man went in and out with the market basket, but the front door remained closed. Now and then we would see her at a window for a moment, as the men did that night when they sprinkled the lime, but for almost six months she did not appear on the streets. Then we knew that this was to be expected too; as if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman's life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die.

When we next saw Miss Emily, she had grown fat and her hair was turning white. During the next few years it grew grayer and grayer until it attained an even pepper-and-salt gray, when it ceased turning. Up to the day of her death at seventy-four it was still that iron-gray, like the hair of an active man.



An in Section four, we are also given a few more details about the various phases that Emily goes through it tells us about the last time when the town, so Homer Barron and for almost six months how Emily did not appear on the streets and the next time when the town saw Emily she had grown fat and many details like that and we are also giving given another concrete detail in section four just like the year 1894 in the first section.

After the day of her death at 74 we get to know that she was 74 when she died at the time of this narration, right. After Emily Griersons is death, we know that we are being introduced to the to a story which spans over seven decades, a little more than seven decades.

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downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carved 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—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse.

And so she died. Fell ill in the house filled with dust and shadows, with only a doddering Negro man to wait on her. We did not even know she was sick; we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro

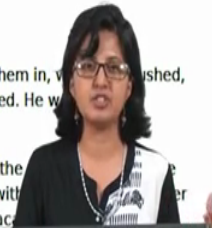
He talked to no one, probably not even to her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.

V

THE NEGRO met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with a flourish, and a sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He went through the house and out the back and was not seen again.

The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and mac-



In the fourth section after giving us a few more details about the frequent appearances that Emily made during this period of time we are led to an abrupt end. The last segment in section four she died in one of the downstairs rooms in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and mouldy with age and lack of sunlight. This description also tells us about the decay and the aging that would Emily and the house had undergone and by extension it also refers to that tradition that Emily and her house represented how they had become very old, how they had become out-dated and how they had become yellow and mouldy with age and lack of sunlight.

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John L Skinner

- “The exact chronology is actually of little interest or relevance and may indeed be irrecoverable. Any small discrepancies in the text are quite compatible with the character of the narrator”



Before going to the final segment of this story it will be useful to briefly talk about the importance of the exact chronology in this story. As pointed out many researchers and critics they have tried to recreate the chronology trying to find out when exactly what happened like most other works of Faulkner is, her also has left us left as a lot of clues, he has left a lot of clues for the readers to recreate the chronology to fit the puzzle and there are also a few things that he would deliberately leave as a gap.

John L Skinner in one of his essays on A Rose for Emily he points out the exact chronology is actually of little interest or relevance and may indeed be irrecoverable. Any small discrepancies in the text are quite compatible with the character of the narrator. In spite of this we also make a brief attempt to recreate the chronology.

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The slide features a title 'The dates in the story (tentative)' in a serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list of events. In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a small inset image of a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark top, who appears to be presenting the slide.

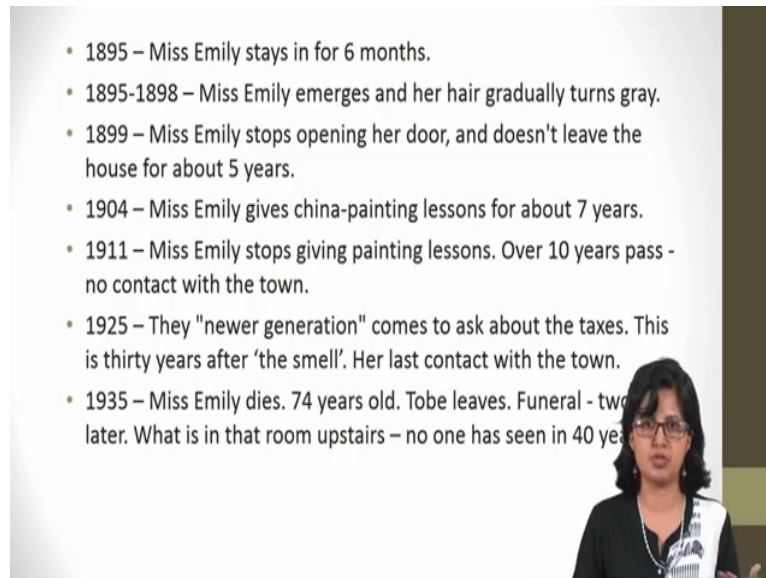
- 1861 – Miss Emily Grierson is born
- 1893 – Miss Emily's father dies.
- 1894 – Miss Emily meets Homer Barron (in the summer).
- 1895 – Homer is last seen entering Miss Emily's house (Emily is "over thirty;
- 1895 – The smell

These are tentative dates there could be a difference of two to three years and this is a recreation based on the single date that we get at the outset of the story 1894, the year when the mayor decides to exempt the Grierson from the taxes. So roughly it is it can be considered that miss Emily Grierson was born in 1861 the range could be up to 1864, she it is safe to assume that she was born somewhere between 1861 and 1864 and by 1893 and in this way we continue to create, it is when Emily is father dies and it is a 94 that Emily meets Homer Barron.

It is notable here to mention that Emily meeting Homer Barron after the death of her father is very important because when her father was still alive he had not approved of a number of suitors who would not fit in with the family tradition or the aristocratic setting. In 1895 that is

when Homer is last seen entering Miss Emily's house and around this time Emily is also over 13. 1895 is when the incident related with this smell occurs.

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- 1895 – Miss Emily stays in for 6 months.
- 1895-1898 – Miss Emily emerges and her hair gradually turns gray.
- 1899 – Miss Emily stops opening her door, and doesn't leave the house for about 5 years.
- 1904 – Miss Emily gives china-painting lessons for about 7 years.
- 1911 – Miss Emily stops giving painting lessons. Over 10 years pass - no contact with the town.
- 1925 – They "newer generation" comes to ask about the taxes. This is thirty years after 'the smell'. Her last contact with the town.
- 1935 – Miss Emily dies. 74 years old. To be leaves. Funeral - two days later. What is in that room upstairs – no one has seen in 40 years.

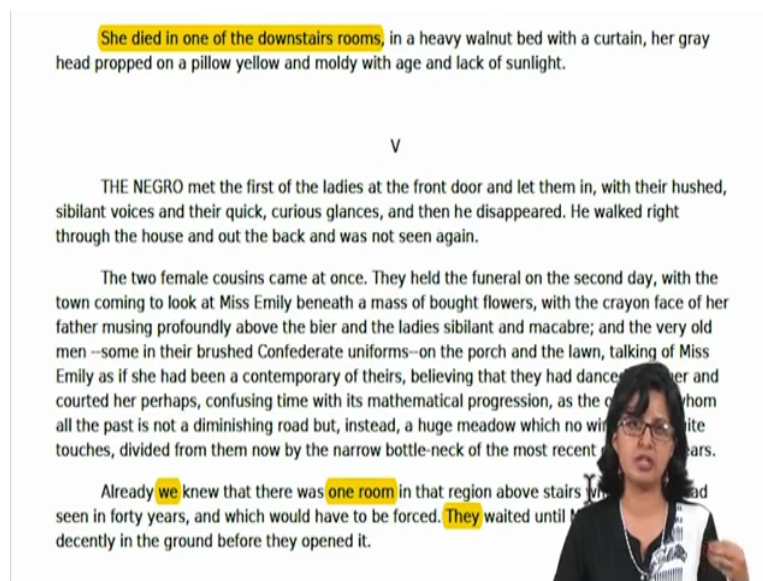
And in 1895 you also know that Miss Emily stays in for six months between 95 and 98, Emily emerges she is more visible to the town and people notice that her hair begins to gradually turn gray by 1909 again she does not leave the house for about five years by 1904 she is again visible for about seven years giving china-painting lessons by 1911 she stops giving these lessons and then again she spends almost a decade almost 10 years without maintaining any contact with the town, please bear in mind that these are not exact dates, these are mostly tentative, it can be a couple of years more or less.

By 1925 this is when the newer generation begins to enquire about the Griersons, they begin to talk about the taxes, they are more aware of the changing economic order they also want to incorporate the Griersons, Emily's family into the taxpaying category and this happens almost thirty years after the smell and the smell the incident of the episode of the smell where people complain even to the judge about the smell which is coming out from her backyard that happened that had happened shortly after her father's death and this incident which happens in 1925 where the newer generation go to ask her about the taxes, that is perhaps the last contact that she has with the town and of course we also know that she is oblivious to the changing times and the changing rules and she refuses to accept this request or even interact politely with them.

By 1935 at the age of 74, we find that Emily Grierson is dies, Tobey her manservant the Negro, that is how he is described he leaves the house and Tobey is also one interesting character, he does not maintain any contact with the town either, he can be seen as an extension of Emily. We do not get to know anything about Tobey except for the fact that he goes out once in a while to the market and people find it extremely difficult to extract any secret or any information from him, he remains as this trusted black servant in the Grierson is house until the moment Miss Emily dies and this is one concrete way in which we find the story and Emily is house preserving the Southern tradition preserving the hierarchy of grace, a hierarchy of glass till the moment family's death.

And towards the end, we also realized that the funeral is about to happen two days later and then the climax happens when the narrator takes us to that room upstairs which no one has seen in the last 14 years and what happens in that room and the sight that they see and the resulting interpretation that is a resolution of the story and that one incident gives a lot of meaning to this entire series of episodes that we have been introduced to.

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She died in one of the downstairs rooms in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.

V

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.

The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men—some in their brushed Confederate uniforms—on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the country whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter white touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent years.

Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced. They waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it.

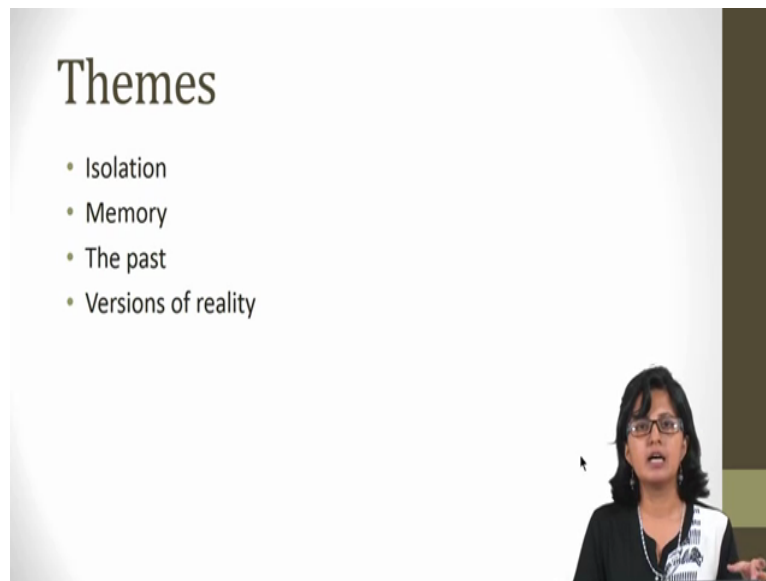
In the final section this is the passage which talks about that room. Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in 40 years and which would have to be forced they waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it and even at the time of her death, we realized that the town does not continue their interest in her, they had always been gossiping about her and even at the time of her death their interest is in unearthing more secrets about Miss Emily.

This also but perfectly justifies the use of the title *A Rose for Emily*. This is going to be that moment the climax is that going to be that moment when the confidentiality, the secrecy with which Emily led her life it is going to be torn apart the veil is going to be removed and it also tells us about this our continuing innovation in the conservative South into private affairs even after the order had changed, there are multiple ways in which we find change occurring in this short story in the form of the new generation asking for taxes in the form of people seeing the decay and the aging of a tradition of this aristocratic household but what remains pretty much unchanged, yes the town is attitude towards this woman who was at one point privileged and who also was under the eye of their surveillance, mostly on account of her single status.

So what the town people see when they open this door that may get the story away, so we will not be going to that section. So that final segment brings in a certain kind of a closure but at the same time it does not really resolve anything and that is the point I think Faulkner also wanted to leave behind. This story is not about finding a solution, it is not about resolving any kind of conflict, it is not about a coming together of different segments of people and it is certainly not would erasing the differences, what the climax does to this story is only to add more flavour to Emily is character.

It only helps us to tie certain loose ends and to see how and why the smell had come in the first place and why this room was not being made open for the others and why occasionally perhaps Emily refused to come out of the house or entertain guests or interact with others there is a tying up of loose ends that happen other than that the intention is not to provide any kind of a resolution at the end.

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Coming back to again look at some of the important themes in this story, it is about isolation. We find Emily being isolated and she is presented in a counter way visibly the town, we find the entire community gossiping and almost conspiring against us this woman Emily. So the kind of isolation that she feels it is can be looked at from different angles, it is gender specific, it is class specific and it was also about the kind of individual that Emily is.

There are certain things about Emily which completely cannot be understood within the framework of gender and within the framework of class alone, there is also certain another kind of her personality which is perhaps in a continuation of her of the dominating nature of her father or perhaps the inability in her to find suitable friends, the only kind of relationship that she sustains throughout is this master-servant relation that she has with the negro Tobey.

So other than that we find her completely isolated and what isolation does to this woman is being explored very effectively in the course of the story and even while Emily remains isolated the collectiveness with which the town pursues her in a way that they almost stalks her without her knowing about it that also comes across as an interesting thing. The story also effectively uses the element of memory, the story is in the form of a kind of a recollection we have a narrator who is not a reliable narratives, an unreliable narrator but the way Faulkner makes use of this narrator he is cleverly manipulating this narrator to remember things in a particular order, so that the narration will have certain element of suspense.

It will also have a racy effect to it and it also ensures it never loses the attention of the readers and even when the story begins after having read through the entire story we understand that the narrator already knows certain details, he already knows the secret, he already knows what the Rose is but he chooses to reveal that only towards the end of the story and when we look at this from point of view of the author, Faulkner we know that the story is written long after Emily is dead.

So this is a recreation of not just Emily's past but it is also a recreation of the past of America's South, it is a recreation of how things were before a few decades during the time of reconstruction, during the time when the society was undergoing a lot of change after the civil war. So memory plays a significant role here, so there are also a number of critics who have looked at this story from the aspects of gender from the aspects of race but what becomes interesting is that the racist tone which this story at times conveys, the male gaze which becomes evident in this story, they all become quite normalized when it is looked through the lens of memory.

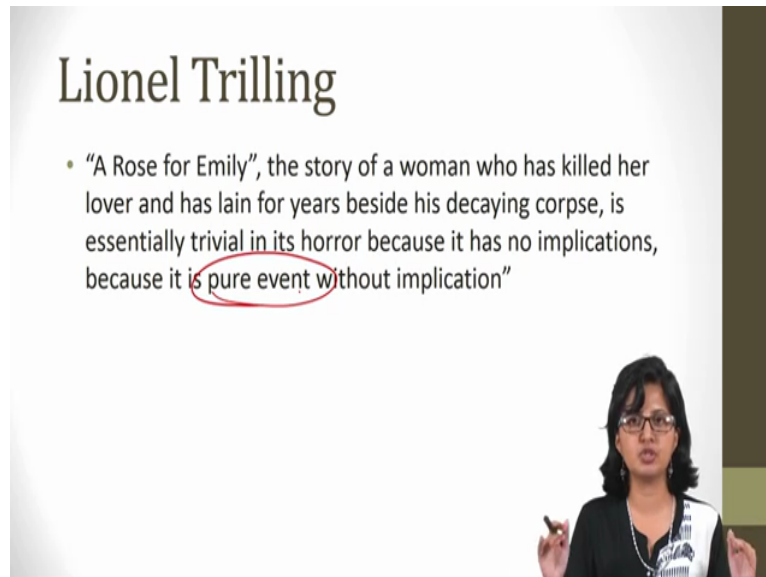
So this it is impossible to pronounce the value judgment over either the narrator or the character of Emily as pointed out earlier there is a sympathetic tone which is built into this story even when it is presented in a detached way, even when it is presented in a matter of fact historical sense. We also get the sense of the past of various characters, if you look at this story it is not just about the past of Emily it is also about the past and the present that the community collectively is inhabiting and if we can take the narrator as the spokesperson of this community of this town, we know that the narrator is in a certain way reliving his own past thinking about how they used to look at the Griersons is then maybe 40, 50 years back and how they look at the Griersons is today and how that day when the funeral is held.

It is a resolution for these that the town people as well for the narrator as well because they all had been waiting to know what was there in that room which was not for about four decades, they all had been waiting to get some kind of an admission into the Grierson's house because they could only see Emily from a distance, they could only see this house from a distance, they were never made privy to the private affairs of neither Emily nor this household.

So this journey through the past becomes a historical journey and a personal journey at almost the same time and finally we are also given different versions of reality, the reality

with which the narrator encounters, the reality from the community is point of view and the reality which Emily is constantly in denial of and these various versions sit together quite comfortably in this narration and that is perhaps the master craftsmanship that Faulkner also displays.

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As we wrap up this lecture, I leave you with this observation by Lionel Trilling. A Rose for Emily the story of a woman who has killed her lover and has lain for years beside his decaying corpse, is essentially trivial in its horror because it has no implications, because it is pure event without implication. This is an observation which has been oft quoted whenever A Rose for Emily is discussed.

This is a story which is described as pure event because there is no implication this story has love, there is murder, there is history, there is even necrophilia as we come to the end of the story but what makes the story beautiful is this aspect of pure event which has no implication and to be able to narrate a story which has no implication to be able to put in succession a series of events without any implication that perhaps is the power and craft of a storyteller like Faulkner.

I thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.