Analysis Of Miss Emily Essay, Research Paper

In William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily,” Miss Emily is Portrayed as a recluse from society who is set in her ways, “a sort of heredity obligation upon the town”(3). Faulkner uses several elements in the story to produce the character of Emily. Some of these elements may not be seen clearly, however, they are stated in the story. The reader is led to believe that Emily is heartless and sometimes a little demented, although feeling sorry for her at times. This picture is painted through her actions and words, through other characters actions and words, and through the narrator’s direct comments about Emily.

Emily’s actions and words show she is set in her ways, often being bold and direct. When the men from the town come to collect her taxes, she is direct with them, “I have no taxes in Jefferson”(10). She states this many times, not allowing the men to speak. Finally showing them to the door as if to say she will not hear another word. When the town tries to place the metal numbers on her door for the free postal delivery “she refuses them”(50). When her father died “she told them her father was not dead”(27), denying the fact that he was dead. Three days go by till the doctors are finally able to persuade her until “she broke down”(27) that her father was dead. She finally accepts the fact, continuing through a normal grieving process, “after her fathers death she went out very little”(15). She does not accept change and prefers to stay in her old ways, ways that have always been and to her, ways that will always stay.

The characters (townspeople) in the story show how Emily’s father’s strict ways influenced her behavior. Her father kept her isolated from society. “We remember all the young men her father had driven away…”(28). If Emily’s father had not driven all the men away, Emily may not have led such a sheltered life. However, the seclusion was not just the result of her father, Emily’s pride is another major factor in her seclusion. “None of the young men were quite good enough to Miss Emily and such” (25). Her pride kept her from socializing with many people in the community, causing her to remain in seclusion. The characters in the story often make you feel pity towards Emily, overly stating “Poor Emily”(32). The towns’ constant gossip about Emily led her to seek isolation even more. When Emily buys the arsenic, the town says, “she will kill herself”(43). Even though she may not directly hear the town talking about her, she knew they were, and was ultimately led to isolate herself even more from the community, instead of seeking their help when her father died. Emily then begins to show how readers may think she is a little demented.

The narrator of the story states Emily is a monument for the town, while also showing Emily’s demented side. The townspeople view Emily as “a sort of heredity obligation upon the town”(3). Emily is a tradition to the town, her family the Griersons lived off their own name, however, later in the story the towns people realize the Griersons were not as well off as they thought “…the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were”(25). The gossiping the town did led her to her seclusion and the horrific murder of Homer. Miss Emily may have wanted seclusion but her heart lingered for compassion. The arrival of Homer induced this feeling of compassion in Emily. She is determined not to lose Homer like she lost her father, finding out that Homer “…was not a marrying man”(43). She knew her intentions when she bought the arsenic. Murdering Homer was the only way to hold on to him. After Emily died the town went to her house, curious to see the upstairs room “…breaking down the door”(57). Finding the body of Homer lying in the bed, “then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indention of a head”(60). This is showing Emily’s deepest feelings and hidden longings.

Emily may have been a monument of the town, but the townspeople and her father led her to her seclusion. Everyone including herself induces Emily’s feelings and actions. Her Pride led her into madness. The townspeople could have prevented her from going mad if they would have not just acted like they cared, but showed it as well. The narrator is part of the townspeople, who he himself plays a part in her seclusion and madness. Faulkner wrote “A Rose for Emily” to ultimately warn against the sin of pride and gossip.