

## SYMBOLS IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S SHORT STORY "A ROSE FOR EMILY": A SEMIOTICS APPROACH

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### Abstract

*Semiotics, as a study about a sign as part of social life, leans on the rule or social code in a society. A rose for Emily is a short story tells about the detail of the story that has in Emily's life and an odd relationship with her father, her boyfriend, Jefferson City, and her terrible secret that she was hiding. The objective of the article was to describe symbols used in the short story. The data was analyzed by using semiotics approach. It was found that there are some symbols in the short story illustrated by the author. They are "The Rose, The Move of her Hair, Ticking of Watch, The House and Black Color". The Rose was symbolized as the relationship of Emily and her father. Emily grew up in luxurious. And The move of her hair was as a symbol of changing of her life. Moreover, ticking of watch was as a symbol to come to the new generation. Both of the House and Emily have changed after the death. Her house extinct as abandoned. Lastly, the black color was a symbol of death, depression, and darkness. The writer found that each symbols in A Rose for Emily illustrated the darkness and mysterious life of Miss Emily. Each of the symbols helps the author to create the story.*

**Keywords:** *Semiotics Approach, , Symbol, and Short Story*

### Abstrak

*Semiotika, sebagai studi tentang tanda sebagai bagian dari kehidupan sosial, bersandar pada aturan atau kode sosial dalam masyarakat. Sebuah mawar untuk Emily adalah cerita pendek menceritakan tentang detail dari cerita yang memiliki dalam kehidupan Emily dan hubungan yang aneh dengan ayahnya, pacarnya, Jefferson City, dan rahasia mengerikan bahwa dia bersembunyi. Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah untuk menggambarkan simbol yang digunakan dalam cerita pendek. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan pendekatan semiotika. Ditemukan bahwa ada beberapa simbol dalam cerita pendek diilustrasikan oleh penulis. Mereka adalah "The Rose, The Move dari rambut nya, berdetik Watch, The House dan Warna Hitam". The Rose dilambangkan sebagai hubungan Emily dan ayahnya. Emily dibesarkan di mewah. Dan Langkah rambutnya adalah sebagai simbol perubahan hidupnya. Selain itu, berdetak menonton adalah sebagai simbol untuk datang ke generasi baru. Kedua DPR dan Emily telah berubah setelah kematian. Rumahnya punah ditinggalkan. Terakhir, warna hitam adalah simbol kematian, depresi, dan penulis darkness. The menemukan bahwa setiap simbol A Rose untuk Emily digambarkan kegelapan dan kehidupan misterius Miss Emily. Setiap simbol membantu penulis untuk membuat cerita.*

**Kata kunci:** *Pendekatan, Semiotika, symbol, dan Cerpen*

## INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is a study that has developed to be a model or paradigm for others field of studies. It is a theory and an analysis to sign and signification and basically semiotics looks at

social and culture life as meaning. Semiotics can be defined as a study about sign as a part of social life. Implicitly, semiotics lean on the rule or social code in a society so that the sign can be comprehended the meaning collectively. Sign can be as a unit of two fields that can not be separated. It means that a sign has two aspects that can be captured by the five senses, the concept and the meaning.

William Faulkner is one of the best novelists in America in 20<sup>th</sup> century. His short story *A rose for Emily* was published on April 30, 1930. That is the first novel published in a famous magazine. *A Rose for Emily* is about a strange spinster named Emily Grierson. An unnamed narrator tells about the detail of the story that has in Emily's life and an odd relationship with her father, her boy friend, Jefferson City, and her terrible secret that she was hiding. The popularity of this story was at the tragic ending of Emily's life. Her father passed away. She killed her boyfriend and chose to exile from society until she also passed away. In this short story, the writer finds some symbols; therefore the writer used semiotics approach in analyzing this short story because symbols are parts of semiotics study.

## **Semiotics**

Semiotics is one of the literary criticisms that study about sign contain in the literature work. As Abrams (1981: 170) says:

Semiotic, is, the science of sign. Semiology proposes that a great diversity of our human action and productions- our bodily postures and gestures, the social rituals we perform, the clothes we wear, the meals we serve, the building we inhabit- all convey "shared" meaning to members of particular culture, and so can be analyzed as signs which function in diverse kinds of signifying system.

From the quotation above, it can be said that semiotics is a study about signs in the human culture, even though each culture has different point of view about one meaning to another. In literature, the writer sometimes reflects the idea through symbols or signs. Semiotics explains the symbols and signs to the readers so that they get the point of the symbols of the literature work and how the symbols help the writer to create the story. Literature criticism of semiotics, also said as literature semiotics, is an approach to the literature criticism explained by the sign theory or semiotics. Literature semiotics can be seen as a study of general study of sign that explain about a group of a text generally.

Moreover, Zoest (1993) in Christomy and Yuwono (2010) defined semiotics as a theory and analysis of various *signs* and *signification*. Basically, semioticians is seen from social and culture life as signification. Furthermore, according to Saussure in Sebeok (2001) semiotics defined as a form made of something physical like sounds, letters and gestures (*signifier*) and of the image or concept to which the signifier refers (*signified*). Eco (1976) said that semiotics is one of approaches to the textual analysis. Moreover *sign* is on the level of expression and has the physical form. While *signifier* is on the level of content of what is expressed through the level of expression.

*Sign* take the form of words, pictures, sounds, feeling, action or object. However they do not have intrinsic meaning and be the *sign* when someone uses its meaning. Pierce in Endaswara (2003) said, “Nothing is a *sign* unless it is interpreted as a sign”. Pierce is known as his theory of semiotics about sign classification. He saw the relationship between *sign* and logic, and he noticed the basic principle of *signs*. According to Pierce in Endaswara (2003) some classifications of sign are *symbols* (conventional), *Icon* (similarities) and *Index*. In this article, the writer discussed about symbols. Symbol is more than the real meaning. For example, a flower is usually defined as a sign of love; a skull and a crossing bone as a sign of poison. In a literary work, symbol is not simple; it is usually not in an idea. Even the symbol refers or describes to idea. They can interpret more than one symbol in a different way.

### **Short Story**

Short story is only apart of the writer’s story that happen to the main character. Characterization is a dominant part in a short story. Based on Singer (2000) “A short story is fiction that is more immediate and urgent than a novel.” By reading a short story, the reader will understand about the character in the story. Both of the plots and the characters are needed to be known by the reader. Supporting previous opinion, Hansen (2015) said that:

Short story is usually concerned with a single effect conveyed in only one or a few significant episodes or scenes. The form encourages economy of setting, concise narrative, and the omission of a complex plot; character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but is relatively limited scope, though, a short story is often judged by its ability to provide a “complete” or satisfying treatment of its characters and subject.

Moreover, Poe (1842) in Vorbehalten stated that short story is a short narrative text in prose designed to produce a single dominant effect. Based on the definition, Poe (1842) derived some principles of composition for short story, they are:

1. Selection: selection of an event or situation which is most fitting to present and illustrate the single aspect of human nature the author has in mind.
2. Concentration: concentration on one single situation, a limited number of characters and a limited selection of details
3. Brevity: conciseness of expression; every word has to be to the point.
4. Compression by suggestion and implication: use of suggestive language (symbols, meaningful repetition) instead of elaborates detail; information is not given directly; often elements of the situation are only hinted at and have to be read between the lines.

As stated in ELLSA, There are five important elements of a short story: Character, Setting, Plot, Conflict, and Theme. Based on Henry, Character is a person, or sometimes event, an animal, who takes part in the action of a short story or other literary work. While the setting of a short story is the time and place in which it happens. Authors often use description of landscape, scenery buildings, seasons or weather to provide a strong sense of setting (Henry). Furthermore, Crane said that a plot is a serious of events a character action that relate to the central conflict. Next, the conflict is struggling between two people or things a short story (London). The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict. Lastly, the theme is the central idea or belief in a short story (Henry).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research used descriptive qualitative research. According to Kothari (2004: 3) qualitative research was concerned with qualitative phenomenon relating to or involving quality. There are three steps of analyzing process. Sugiyono (2010: 15) also states that qualitative research was research methodology that use to take research for natural object, where the research as the key instrument, and concerned to the quality of the result of the data. In analyzing the data, it was used symbols as a semiotics approach in *A rose for Emily* Short Story.

## DISCUSSION

In the short story, “ A Rose for Emily”, the author William Faulkner, create a mysterious character, a dignitary who were in a small town named Emily Grierson. She made herself and her silence seen from her mysterious life. Throughout the story, Miss Emily Grierson experienced many changes because her father and her boyfriend passed away. She stayed away from her society and she became different, both physically and mentally.

In the story, there are many objects in which William Faulkner used for illustrating and symbolizing time and the changing of Emily Grierson. He used some objects like Emily’s hair, house, and watch ticking to help the reader change the picture and life of Emily.

### The Rose

In “*A Rose for Emily*”, the rose is an important symbol that has been discussed by people analyze the story in various ways. The writer chose to see it as a symbol of the relationship of Emily and her father. Emily grew up in luxurious. However it showed her loneliness, for her father who always refused a man to be his son in law. No one was kind for her daughter. In this case, Emily illustrated as a bunch of rose and her father as the leaves that ignored every people who wants to get the rose.

### The move of Emily’s Hair.

The move of Emily’s hair is seen as a symbol of the changing in Emily’s life. Before her boy friend, Homer Barron, passed away, Emily cut her hair shorter. It made her look like a girl, as if an angel in the window of church.

*As the story moves on her hair “grows grayer and grayer until it attains an even pepper-and-salt iron-gray”.*

At the beginning, her hair was described as an angel, and then it illustrate as a witch. At the beginning of the story, he did not have bad intention then she was afraid of loneliness made she moved like an evil. She gave the poison to her boy friend, Homer Barron. The move of her hair makes her life disappear. It was a symbol of Emily’s future life.

### **Ticking of Watch**

When a man visited to ask her buying tax, Miss Emily came with a thin gold chain.

*With a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt.*

When the man came into the Emily's room, he listened to the invisible watch ticking at the gold chain.

*...Could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.*

The ticking of the watch was a symbol to come to the new generation. Miss Emily has been in the town for long time.

*She passed from generation to generation-dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse.*

When she passed away, the man came to her funeral.

*Through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument".*

The ticking of the watch was a symbol of her days counted and felt so fast.

### **The House**

The house, where Miss Emily lived, was a symbol for Emily Grierson. The house changed to be worse.

*The house is "set on what had once been their most select street.*

It means that the House considered as one of the best house in the neighborhood.

*The house that "had once been whit, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies", is now "lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps- an eyesore among eyesores". Just as Miss Emily had once been thought of as "as a slender figure".*

After that Emily became fatter.

*as time goes on in the story "she has grown fat.*

Both of the House and Emily have changed after the death. The house changed after her father died and she had moved on her boy friend death. There used to be new furniture, but after her father passed away, she did not care at all.

*Leather is cracked" with just a "single sun ray.*

Miss Emily was a mysterious character in the house with a fragile heart because of the death of her lovely boy friend. Along her death, her house extinct as abandoned.

### Others Symbols

In this story, black color symbolized death, depression, and darkness; as we know that there were many deaths. It started from Emily's father, boy friend, and lastly the death of Emily.

The stench from the house was as a symbol of rottenness of the human soul. Father is symbol of domination, power, and an enormous influence in the personality of Emily. The domination of her father had made Emily being dependent. Emily loved her father very much; even though, the domination of egoistic had been done for her. She refused her father's death, so she saved her father's corpse in her house until she had to in cremate.

### CONCLUSION

*A Rose for Emily* is one of William Faulkner masterpiece that described the tragedy in Emily Grierson's life born out of fidelity to the social rules that forced. Based on Abrams theory, sign takes the form of words, picture, sounds, voice, feeling, action or object. In this story, the writer found some symbols reflected a sad life from Emily Grierson. They are: The rose, Emily's hair, watch ticking, black color, and her father. Based on the Abrams theory, semiotics explains about *sign* or symbol so that the reader understands about the symbols of the literary work. Each of the symbols helps the author to create the story. To find the *signification* of each symbols need semiotics approach.

By analyzing this short story, the writer found that each symbols in *A Rose for Emily* illustrated the darkness and mysterious life of Miss Emily. She looked luxurious outside; however she felt lonely and be pressed by her father inside. Inability to adapt with others after her father passed away, made seclusion from society and chose to live alone until she died.

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