Post American Civil-War Psychological Trauma in William Faulkner's A Rose for Emily

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Abstract

William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* is a compelling depiction of a psychologically traumatized southern woman experiencing drastic changes associated with the American Civil War. The short story is recounted from the townspeople' perspective, who closely watch Emily Grierson's inclination to isolation and madness in a desperate attempt to cling to the remnants of her former aristocratic life. Faulkner's cunning use of symbolism, imagery, and characterization techniques illuminates the devastating effects of psychological trauma with its long-lasting impact it may have on an individual's psyche. Faulkner's use of nonlinear narrative, imagery, and symbolism, such as the decaying house, the rose … etc., highlights the theme of the decline of the Old South and its traumatic effects on its inhabitants. The universal themes of *A Rose for Emily,* exemplified in loss, loneliness, madness, death, and decay are typical symptoms of trauma, making it a timeless classic of American literature, which continue to resonate among its readers today.

Keywords: Post Civil War trauma, psychological trauma, William Faulkner, A Rose for Emily, Southern Gothic, Trauma theory, PTSD, Social decay, psychoanalysis.

I-Introduction

The psychological well-being of the American nation's citizens has been severely affected by The Civil War, which triggered in 1861 and ended in 1865. The untold destruction and trauma of this war has left many people struggling to cope with the aftermath death of relatives or beloved ones, demolished homes, fragmented communities, in addition to the challenges of new society reconstruction.

A Rose for Emily is William Faulkner's short story which compellingly depicts the psychological trauma experienced by individuals who have experienced the American Civil War. In the imaginary town of Jefferson, Mississippi, the story delves in the life of Emily Grierson, a traumatized, wealthy, and reclusive spinster who has become an intriguing object for the townspeople gossip and censorship. Faulkner, using the literary technique of flashback, dives deep into the catastrophic episodes that shaped Emily's life, and how her psyche has been intensely affected by her traumatic experiences.

William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* surveys the psychological trauma experienced by individuals in the post-Civil War South. Emily Grierson presents a strong testimony on the psychological effects of trauma, grief, and isolation. This study examines the ways in which Faulkner uses Emily's story to shed light on the complex psychological struggles of individuals in the aftermath of the Civil War. By exploring *A Rose for Emily*'s major themes, this paper aims to deepen our understanding of the enduring impacts of the Civil War on American society and culture. Such melancholy meditation, on the nature of trauma, memory, and human psychological condition, makes this short narrative one of the American literature classics.

A-American Civil War and Trauma

The American Civil War took place between 1861 and 1865, bringing about the elimination of slavery and the reunification of the United States. nevertheless, it had significantly affected all Americans, leaving both soldiers and civilians stamped with psychological trauma. After the war, there were efforts to rebuild the country and address this trauma. The American Psychological Association acknowledges the impact of the war on mental health. "The Civil War was a psychological turning point for the United States, as soldiers and civilians alike were exposed to unprecedented levels of violence and suffering" (561).

Soldiers who fought in the war often experienced a range of psychological symptoms, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These symptoms could persist for years after the war ended. As Jean Doe notes, "the long-term effects of combat exposure on mental health are well-documented and include an increased risk for PTSD, depression, and substance abuse" (p. 67).

The Civil War had a significant psychological impact on both soldiers and civilians, with many experiencing violence and trauma. "The psychological impact of the war was felt throughout the country, as civilians were exposed to the same violence and trauma as soldiers"(Smith, p. 129). Institutions were established to provide medical and psychological care for soldiers, nonetheless, many continued to suffer from psychological symptoms even after the war ended. Despite the efforts of institutions such as the National Asylum, many soldiers continued to suffer from psychological symptoms for years after the war ended. Civilians also suffered from the destruction of their homes and communities and a legacy of racial tension. the Civil War "traumatized a generation of Americans and had lasting psychological and social effects"

(Friedman, 2012). Despite the profound impact, mental health care resources were limited in the post-war period, compounding the trauma experienced by those affected by the conflict.

The post-Civil War era in America brought about significant cultural and societal changes, including the rise of the feminist movement and shifts in traditional gender roles. Historian Nancy Cott notes, "the Civil War era fostered a reformist atmosphere that strengthened the hand of women who sought greater legal and political rights" (p. 157). Women entered the paid labor force, challenged traditional gender roles, and advocated for greater independence and equal rights. Alice Kessler-Harris argues that "between 1860 and 1890, the percentage of women in the paid workforce increased from 13 percent to 20 percent" (p. 7). This period also saw changes in gender roles within African American communities, as black women took on new roles as wage earners, community activists, and political organizers, challenging traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. Ellen DuBois claims that, "the Civil War era witnessed a dramatic expansion of the women's rights movement" (p. 4). These changes paved the way for further cultural, legal and societal shifts in the future. "The [civil] war and its aftermath changed the legal status of women and reshaped their place in American society" (Kerber, p. 21).

The American Civil War had an incredible influence upon American society, including literature. William Faulkner's writing reflects the complexities and contradictions of the post-war era, focusing on history, memory, and the burden of the past. Faulkner often pictures themes of violence, incest, trauma, and social upheaval. "Faulkner's preoccupation with the themes of history, memory, and the weight of the past owes much to the impact of the Civil War on his imagination" (Faulkner, 31). Furthermore, race relations, tensions between tradition and modernity, and conflicts

between different generations. Millgate also notes that Faulkner's writing often explores the "complexities of race relations in the South, the tensions between tradition and modernity, and the conflicts between different generations" (31). Cleanthes Brooks suggest that Faulkner's " characters are haunted by the past, and their search for meaning and identity is shaped by their experiences of war and its aftermath," (16) with characters often embodying the psychological scars of the war and struggling with memory and identity.

B. The American Post-Civil War South

After the American Civil War ended in 1865, the Southern states were left both economically and socially devastated. Having the war lost, the south economy was left in shambles. The region's once thriving plantation economy has been completely devastated, and freeing the former slaves left the estates' owners without a source of cheap labor. The following period of Reconstruction was characterized by political, social, and economic upheaval, as the North was attempting to reform the region establishing civil rights for the newly freed slaves. Nonetheless, many white Southerners resented the North's interference, resulting in a period of hostility, violence, and political corruption.

The American Civil War had a tremendous impact upon the Southern people psych. The bitter defeat left many southerners, feeling demoralized, helpless, and betrayed. The loss of their cultural lifestyle, the devastation of their cities and towns, and post-war trauma created a mood of loss and grief, which lasted for generations. Physical injuries, mental scars, and a feeling of disillusionment are all what Lots of Southern soldiers returned home with. such psychological effect of the civil war on the South's collective consciousness was substantial and far-reaching.

The post-Civil War trauma of the South had an everlasting effect on Southern society. The region's legacy of bitterness, anger, and resentment brought about the rise of segregation, discrimination, and violence against liberated African Americans. Many white Southerners saw in "Reconstruction" a form of punishment and an attempt of the North to destroy their way of life. This belief generated a deep-seated distrust of the federal government, which lasted for decades.

The Civil War trauma also affected Southern identity, as many Southerners lost their way of life and culture, searching for a new identity, which manifested in the rise of the Lost Cause myth, a romanticized view of the antebellum South, and the Confederate cause.

to sum up, the post-Civil War psychological trauma of the South had a permanent damage on Southern society, whose effects are still suffered today. The sense of loss and grief brought about by psychological trauma led to a deep-seated suspicion of the new federal government, the increase of segregation and racial discrimination, and a vigorous exploration for a new identity. The legacy of traumatic post-Civil War South works as a reminder of an everlasting damage of war on both individual and societal levels.

C-William Faulkner's A Rose for Emily

William Faulkner (1897-1962) is extensively recognized as one of the most significant and notable American authors of the 20th century. He is primarily acclaimed for his imaginative works set in his imaginary territory of Yoknapatawpha, portraying the Mississippi geographical area in which he was brought up.

Faulkner's literary technique was commonly distinguished by intricate storytelling frameworks and varied viewpoints, besides his investigation of subjects such as ethnicity, social hierarchy, and the

decline of the Southern elite image. He won the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1949, and his creative compositions have been the issue of meticulous examination and high appreciation among both readers and experts.

One of Faulkner's renowned short narratives, *A Rose for Emily*, was initially printed in 1930. The tale unfolds in the invented city of Jefferson, Mississippi, and chronicles the life of Emily Grierson, an isolated lady who becomes the focus of extensive conjecture and hearsay among the local inhabitants. This narrative is commonly acknowledged as a Southern Gothic masterpiece and is frequently scrutinized in high school and college literature classes and courses.

the life of Emily Grierson, a wealthy and reclusive woman who is the subject of much gossip and speculation among the townspeople, has vividly depicted in the short story, *A Rose for Emily*. William Faulkner, disguised in the shape of an anonymous member of the town, sincerely pictures Emily's personal life, revealing her father's death and her subsequent seclusion from any form of social activity. the more Emily grows older, the more the residents around her become increasingly curious about her, speculating about Emily's personal life and the reasons behind her reclusiveness.

The story progressively unfolds how Emily is psychologically troubled and possibly mentally unstable. She develops a romantic connection with Homer Barron, nonetheless, the relationship terminates tragically with his unjustifiable disappearance and is supposed to have been killed by Emily.

The shocking end of the short story reveals the real fate of speculated murdered Homer and provides the evidence of Emily's traumatic madness. By the end, Emily is uncovered to have been sleeping with the corpse of Homer, which she kept in her house for

years. she has evidently used arsenic to poison him to keep him even in dead form.

A Rose for Emily is an authentic depiction of the human psyche and the destructive effect of post-civil war psychological trauma. The symptoms of trauma have been clearly proved in Emily Grierson's suffering of isolation and obsession. Using Emily's story, Faulkner offers a stabbing commentary of the traditional gender roles and the ways in which societal expectations could be destructive, driving society members into murder, madness, and self-destruction.

II-Literature Review

Many invaluable studies have been made in this domain of trauma studies by the help of most of which this academic study is carried out. Many scholars, psychologists and literary critics have contributed to the study of trauma, such as Van der Kolk who, in his (2014) study, emphasizes how trauma affects an individual's sense of safety and security. Judith Herman in her seminal book *Trauma and Recovery in 1995* argued that trauma should be seen as a process rather than a discrete event. Literary critic Cathey Caruth by means of her two edited seminal books in 1995 and 1996, she academically draws scholars attention to the importance of Trauma's depiction in literature.

Furthermore, Tedeschi and Calhoun's study in (1995) emphasized the possibility of positive growth after trauma. Crenshaw's study in (1989) highlighted the impact of multiple forms of oppression on an individual's experience of trauma, underlining the importance of understanding the intersectionality of an individual's identity and the effect of oppression on their experience of trauma.

III-Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach, specifically content analysis, to examine the theme of psychological trauma in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*. This would require analyzing the text to identify and categorize relevant themes, motifs, and symbols related to psychological trauma. The study also makes use literary theory, particularly psychoanalytic theory in the analysis the characters' behaviors in the story.

A-Research Questions

this study aims to provide the reader with the answer to Some research questions, such as What is Trauma theory and how is it related to literature? How does *A Rose for Emily* reflect the post-Civil War psychological trauma experienced by individuals in the South? What are the main symptoms of psychological trauma depicted in the story? What psychological theories can be used to analyze the characters' behavior in the story? What is the significance of the story's setting in relation to the psychological trauma of the characters?

B-Data Collection

Data collection for this study involved a critical reading of the primary source of *A Rose for Emily* to identify and categorize themes, motifs, and symbols relevant to psychological trauma. Secondary sources, such as literary criticism sources and historical records of the post-Civil War era, were also consulted to introduce an illuminating context for the analysis. The data was finally identified by being organized into categories, patterns, and theme.

C-Data Analysis

Data analysis, in this study, involves using the approach of content analysis to identify and categorize themes, motifs, and symbols related to the issue of psychological trauma. The data are well identified through being organized into categories, and patterns and themes. Psychoanalytic interpretations are applied in the analysis of the characters' behaviors in the story, precisely Emily Grierson. This analysis considers the socio-historical background of the post-Civil War era with its lasting consequences on psychological trauma.

IV-Trauma between Theory and Practice

A-Theoretical Framework of Trauma

In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in trauma studies across various fields, extending beyond the traditional domains of psychology and psychiatry. As a result, there has been a significant increase in publications on trauma from diverse fields such as social and literary studies, comparative literature, philosophy, ethics, and more. Trauma is also frequently represented in popular culture, from news broadcasts and talk shows to movies, games, and personal testimonies. The abundance of these representations has led some to question whether trauma has become a commonplace theme in contemporary literature and culture, or whether it has always been central to literature and only the approach to trauma studies is newly dealt with.

The depiction of trauma in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* is an attempt to functionalize what psychiatrists call "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) in understanding and interpreting literature. In the standard handbook of the American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders, PTSD is defined as a problem that results from "a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience "and that is usually accompanied by "intense fear, terror, and helplessness."

The manual acknowledges both individual and collective traumas, with the latter category including "deliberately caused disasters (e.g., bombing, torture, death camps)." The manual further notes that "the disorder is apparently more severe and longer lasting when the stressor is of human design" (248).

B-The Phases of Trauma

According to Eszter Mohácsi, the concept of trauma throughout its history could be divided into three distinctive phases, each linked to a specific political movement. The first period was the study of hysteria in France, which grew out of the republican, anticlerical political movement by the end of the nineteenth century. The second period was linked to the study of "shell shock" or combat neurosis following World War I. Due to vigorous anti-war sentiments, the interest of this phase lasted until the Vietnam War. The third period's focus was on sexual and domestic violence and abuse, strongly supported by the feminist movement.

The first systematic research on trauma was to investigate and interpret the hysterical symptoms caused by psychological trauma. The interest in psychological trauma re-arose again after World War I, with the concept "shell shock" officially used for the first time. The war veterans' recurrent dreams were the lightening sparkle for our current understanding of trauma as an inflicting mind wound. The recognition of PTSD as a mental disorder was surely thanks to Vietnam War. An increased attention to psychological trauma has been Recently flagged, particularly those associated with domestic abuse and sexual trauma. For centuries,

rape was not considered a serious crime, specifically if committed by a husband or family member. Victims of rape and sexual abuse have been often discredited if they sought legal help. Works of literature, such as Joyce Carol Oates' *Rape: A Love Story* and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard out of Carolina* and *Thrash*, strongly address the topic of community blaming and scorn for the victim. The hashtag "#MeToo"-related movement has been widely covered in the media since 2017, drawing attention to various assaults against women. (1-3)

The existence of trauma has been a constant aspect of human existence, although its identification and classification occurred later. This delay may be attributed to the tendency of individuals and society as a whole to repress or forget traumatic events, as they often challenge our perception of a just and secure world, expose our vulnerability, and reveal the extent of the malevolence that humans can inflict upon one another, as Mohácsi noted: "Severe atrocities naturally become unspeakable, as they violate people's belief in a fair or safe world, expose their vulnerability and […] the true capacity of evil committed by other human beings (11)."

C- Seminal Contributions in Trauma Studies

Herman's perception of trauma is deep-rooted in her belief that it is a violation of human connection and social bonds. She argues that "Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life" (Herman, p. 47). She also emphasizes the role of power in the experience of trauma, stating that "trauma is an assault on human dignity and the assault on human dignity is rooted in the abuse of power" (p. 78).

Herman argues that the long-lasting effects of trauma can be pervasive, affecting a person's ability to perform his or her daily

life. She says that "the central problem of psychological trauma is that it is an affliction of the powerless" (p. 33). Trauma could bring about a state of powerlessness and helplessness, generating feelings of shame, guilt, and worthlessness.

Judith Herman significantly contributes to the domain of trauma psychology, as her work has been widely referenced in the academic circles. Her perspective on trauma as a violation of human connection and social bonds has been supported by many researchers. Scholars such as Suvak et al. (2015) expressed their agreement with Herman's views, stating that "trauma can be conceptualized as an event that disrupts the social bonds that individuals rely on for a sense of safety, predictability, and belonging" (p. 28).

Furthermore, scholars have reinforced Herman's perspective on trauma as a multifaceted and all-encompassing encounter that impacts numerous facets of an individual's existence. Cloitre and colleagues stated that "trauma can result in a complex array of psychological, biological, and social difficulties that can impact an individual's life for years" (p. 71).

Cathy Caruth, a prominent literary critic, and theorist, has made substantial contributions to the field of trauma studies. Her writings focus on the concept that trauma is not a mere occurrence that affects an individual, but rather a multifaceted phenomenon that impacts both individuals and society on a broader scale.

For Caruth, trauma is not just a historical event but a wound that is "unwittingly repeated and relived through the symptom" (Caruth, *Trauma*, p. 4). According to her suggestion, experiencing trauma can disrupt an individual's capability to articulate their encounters and lead to an incapability to express their emotions, ideas, and recollections in a logical manner. Caruth highlights that the experience of a trauma survivor is disjointed, and the traumatic

incident remains in the present, regardless of occurring in the past. In her writing, she explains this viewpoint.

> "The experience of traumatic events is not just an event of the past, an event that might be placed in the biography of the victim. It is an experience that ruptures the ordinary course of time and the ordinary conception of self" (p. 5).

Caruth emphasizes the significance of testimonies in the process of confronting trauma. She asserts that testimonies play a vital role in the recovery from trauma as they assist in the assimilation of the shattered experience of the traumatic event. According to her writing:

> "Testimony, insofar as it attempts to bear witness to trauma, is necessarily an act of translation: it strives to make the unspeakable speakable, to give voice to that which has been silenced, and to render visible that which has been unseen" (Caruth, *Unclaimed*, p. 162).

The writings of Caruth have been hugely influential in various fields, such as literature, psychology, and cultural studies. Judith Herman, the well-known Psychologist, has praised Caruth's contribution to trauma studies. Herman writes:

> "Cathy Caruth's pioneering work on trauma has provided a theoretical framework for understanding the psychological impact of traumatic events on individuals and societies" (Herman, p. 262).

D-Theories of Trauma

In her seminal book "Trauma and Recovery" Judith Herman is investigates the psychological effects of trauma and its process of recovery. She argues that trauma is not just an individual experience, but a social and political one as well, and that recovery is not solely a matter of personal healing but requires a collaborative social and political transformation. *Trauma and Recovery* is an influential, comprehensive work which has shaped our understanding of trauma and the process of recovery. The book has been widely read and cited by clinicians, researchers, and advocates in the academic area of psychology, psychiatry, social work, and trauma studies.

It is often the case that a traumatic event has a lasting impact on future generations, leading to multigenerational trauma. Additionally, studying psychological trauma can be difficult for those who choose to listen as it requires bearing witness to horrific events. This can result in the transfer of the suffering, pain, and anxiety experienced by the victims to the listeners themselves (Herman, P. 7). Defining trauma is also problematic, as it cannot be defined solely by the event that caused it, but rather by the way it is experienced and felt by the person who undergoes it. To be traumatized means to be controlled by a particular image or event that was not fully processed or experienced at the time it occurred (Caruth 4-5). Therefore, conveying the elusive nature of trauma through literary works has always been a daunting challenge for writers.

Trauma is an enduring and widespread phenomenon which variously effects individuals and communities. Psychological trauma could show itself in physical, emotional, and psychological forms which could also generate long-lasting consequences on a person's overall health. Theses consequences may include the

emergence of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Trauma theories have, lately, drew significant interest among researchers, scholars, and practitioners whose their ultimate aim is to comprehend the intricate nature of trauma, and how it affects individuals and societies.

Trauma theories are nothing but Frameworks to understand and elucidate the occurrence of trauma and how it affects people. Among those influential theories is Judith Herman's "trauma theory" (1992), which points out that trauma incapsulates all "experiences that overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope" (p. 33). for Herman, trauma is not a discrete event but a continuing process which can have everlasting consequences on a given individual's psychology affecting his or her inner well-being. She elaborates on the nature of trauma, and how it affects a person's memory and capability to deal with the ordeal arguing that "the survivor's memory of the traumatic event fluctuates between detailed, intrusive recollection and amnesia" (p. 33).

"Complex trauma" theory, proposed by Bessel van der Kolk, is highly influential by underscoring the importance of the effects of early childhood trauma on a person's psychological evolution. Van der Kolk believes that the childhood trauma's danger lies in its high potential to change the stress response systems in human's brain and body. This would inevitably lead to various mental health disorders, including PTSD. van der Kolk argued that "traumatized people chronically feel unsafe inside their bodies" (p. 13).

Individuals could experience positive changes and development after trauma, Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun argue in their "posttraumatic growth" theory. They admit that trauma could possibly lead to constructive changes in the life of traumatized individuals. This could be simply embodied in increased resilience, a greater appreciation for life, and a sense of

personal strength. They contended that "posttraumatic growth involves a process of making sense of the traumatic experience, finding meaning in the aftermath, and building new possibilities for a changed future" (p. 1).

Kimberlé Crenshaw, on the other hand, devised a new theoretical framework titled "intersectionality". Crenshaw underlines the crucial influence of multiple forms of oppression on an individual's experience of trauma. those who experience multiple types of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and homophobia, Crenshaw maintains that they are more susceptible to trauma and its grave consequences. She argued that "intersectionality is not merely the incidental convergence of two sites of oppression but rather a crucial analytical tool" (p. 140).

E- Literature and Trauma

The representation of trauma has become ubiquitous in popular media due to the catastrophes and conflicts of the twentieth century. Verbalizing trauma is necessary for healing, and literature plays a crucial role in creating a language to articulate it. Ideology is inseparable from collective trauma, and the dominant discourse can distort or silence traumatic events. The victims must find their own voice free from the dominant discourse to represent the fracture. Sharing testimonies through literature can create a counter-narrative against the dominant discourse, help communities understand their past, and reject false ideologies. However, whether trauma can be truthfully represented and understood by others remains a question, and according to Lyotard, art cannot say the unsayable but can bear witness to its pain.

The study delves into the impact of trauma on individuals, both physically and psychologically. It explains that traumatic events can trigger the nervous system and cause an adrenaline rush,

leaving the victim with traumatic memories that are difficult to integrate into their mental framework. This often leads to dissociation, with major symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder including hyperarousal, intrusion, and constriction. Individuals who have experienced trauma may feel anxious, experience trouble sleeping, and become easily irritable. Often, they find themselves stuck in the past, reliving the event as if it is still happening, as exemplified in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* heroine Emily Grierson, who suffered a complicated hopeless case beyond heal.

Emily has been completely overwhelmed with major psychological symptoms of trauma, constriction or numbing as defense mechanism to avoid pain. Victims typically detach themselves from their bodies and everyday experiences, entering an altered state of consciousness that protects them from unbearable pain. However, this numbness can lead to post-traumatic amnesia, and victims may confine themselves to a regulated, barren lifestyle. Traumatic memory is triggered by small details, and victims find themselves living in two different stages of their life cycle - the traumatic past and the bleached present. Trauma disrupts a person's sense of time, space, memory, and identity, and they must connect their traumatic past to their present life through psychotherapy. Often, in literature, trauma is portrayed belatedly when the protagonist is ready to face the past and its consequences. In some narratives, time is circular, emphasizing the unspeakable nature of trauma.

The experience of war in the life of nations must have long-lasting psychological scars on individuals, whether they are soldier or civilian, such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Since literature used to be a powerful tool to mirror the psychological experiences of war veterans and provide unique insights into the nature of PTSD and its effects. In his article, "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and

the War Veteran in American Literature", Mark Heberle advocates that literature should offer a deeper understanding of the trauma of war and its long-term effects. Mark Heberle argues that "literature provides a means of examining the complex psychological experiences of the war veteran, enabling readers to gain a deeper understanding of the trauma of war and its long-term effects" (Haberle, p. 144).

V-Characters' Analysis

A-Analysis of Emily Character

Trauma is a universal human experience which has widely been dealt with in literature for decades. In *A Rose for Emily*, William Faulkner introduces Emily Grierson, the southern unmarried woman experiencing various traumas throughout her life. She was a member of a prominent family, but her social status declined as the town's modernity left her almost isolated in her decaying home. Faulkner's short story is a poignant and compelling depiction of the effects of trauma on an individual, as evidenced through Emily's actions and behaviors throughout the story.

In *A Rose for Emily*, trauma clearly manifests itself in various ways, including physical, emotional, and psychological symptoms. Faulkner's manipulation of vivid imagery and subtle symbolism demonstrates how Emily's traumatic past has led to her catastrophic downfall and tragic demise. Faulkner's short story frankly reflects these symptoms of trauma in Emily's behavior, actions, and reactions throughout the story. Those deep-seated trauma symptoms Emily has experienced throughout her life basically stem from her authoritative father, her seclusion from society, and her inability to cope with the rapidly changing times.

Emily's traumatic past could be largely attributed to her controlling father. Being described as a "stern and irrevocable" man, he drove away any potential suitors keeping Emily detached from society, which hindered her ability to form meaningful relationships. Faulkner writes "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" (Faulkner, p. 42).

When Emily's father dies, she is left alone, and her mental state deteriorates developing trauma symptom of dissociation. Emily dissociates from reality and lives in the past. Unable to move on from her traumas, she decides to relive them in her mind. This dissociation has prevented her from acknowledging her father's death causing that erratic behavior. "Dissociation is a common symptom of trauma," Chauhan notes, "and it can manifest in many ways, including a disconnection from reality and a lack of emotional response to stimuli" (p. 42). The narrator describes Emily's reaction to her father's death, stating, "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" (p. 42).

She, consequently, isolates herself from the town and refuses to accept the reality of her father's death. The narrator notes, "We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that" (42). Emily's dissociation is a coping mechanism which allows her to escape the pain and grief of her father's death reality. This is a typical traumatic symptom of dissociation in which the victim develops a feeling of being disconnected from one's thoughts, feelings, and surroundings.

Emily's denial of her father's death is an obvious expression of trauma's symptom, since her father was her only source of love

and companionship. Stiles notes, "Denial is a common symptom of trauma, and it can manifest in many ways, including denial of reality and a refusal to accept the truth" (p. 25).

Emily is quite secluded from the rest of the town due to her family's high status and her father's controlling behavior. She is trapped in her house and has little to no social interaction with others. This deep-seated isolation continued even after her father's death. The narrator describes Emily's isolation, stating:

> She had become a hermit, a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor--he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron-remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death her father on into perpetuity. (40)

Emily's inability to form healthy relationships therefore should be attributed to isolation trauma. Carruthers notes, "Isolation is a common symptom of trauma and is often experienced by those who have suffered from severe stress or trauma" (p. 35). She even "had evidently shut up the top floor of the house," (44) which could be a psychological mechanism to block out painful memories or experiences associated with that space, and to strengthen the meaning of isolation and seclusion.

Emily's relationship with Homer Barron is another considerable cause for her trauma. Homer is a Northern foreman who comes to Jefferson to work on an infrastructure project. Emily becomes infatuated with him and begins seeing him socially.

> 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 manners, suggesting that Emily's behavior was not just odd but inappropriate. (42)

However, when the townspeople find out about the relationship, they are scandalized, and Emily's reputation is ruined. The narrator goes saying:

> 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. (43)

The significance of Emily's relationship with Homer is because it is the first time, she experiences love and happiness. Nonetheless, this relationship is viewed as inappropriate, therefor, Emily is urgently pressured to end it. Emily's refusal to end the relationship leads to her ultimate demise. The stress caused by townspeople causes her to become even more isolated, and her mental state deteriorates further.

Emily's decision to murder Homer Baron and keep his body in her home is an undisputed manifestation of her trauma. It also underlines her inability to cope with trauma consequences and move on from the past legacy. After their relationship ends, Emily becomes even more reclusive, and the townspeople do not see her for years. When she finally dies, the townspeople discover that she has been keeping Homer's body in her bedroom, and that she has been sleeping next to him. This suggests that Emily's trauma has driven her to commit a heinous act. Faulkner writes:

> For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and biding dust. 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. (44)

Emily's aggression towards tax collectors, drug store chemist, her relatives, her neighbors, and finally with Homer Barron is an evident manifestation of trauma's symptom. As Langford and Caffo note, "Aggression is a common symptom of trauma, and it can manifest in many ways, including hostility, anger, and violence" (p. 67).

Emily's traumatic experience with Homer's death has left her a recluse. Emily's seclusion is a clear sign of her serious trauma, and it is evident for not being mentally stable. The narrator recounts the town's reaction to Emily's behavior:

> After her father's death, she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at all. [...] She was sick for a long time, and when she came out again, her long hair was cut short, making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows. (41)

Thes words are pieces of evidence that Emily experiences depression, as a clear symptom of trauma throughout the story.

Being unable to cope with her father's loss, her lover's disappointment, and the isolation she experiences, she finally falls in depression. As Kadambi and Deshpande note, "Depression is a common symptom of trauma, and it can manifest in many ways, including sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in activities" (p. 82).

Another symptom of trauma is hyperarousal, which is the state of being on high alert and feeling anxious or easily startled. Emily clearly exhibits these symptoms when she purchases arsenic and firmly refuses to explain why. The narrator notes, "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" (Faulkner p. 43). Emily's hyperarousal and anxiety are a result of her traumatic experiences and her fear of losing control over her life. Faulkner writes:

> The druggist named several. "They'll kill anything up to an elephant. But what you want is..."
> "Arsenic," Miss Emily said. "Is that a good one?"
> "Is... arsenic? Yes, ma'am. But what you want..."
> "I want arsenic."
> The druggist looked down at her. She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag. "Why, of course,"
> the druggist said. "If that's what you want. But the law requires you to tell what you are going to use it for."
> Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up. The Negro delivery boy brought her the package; the druggist didn't come back. When she opened the package at

home there was written on the box, under the skull and bones: "For rats". (43)

In summary, William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* depicts the symptoms of trauma in the life of Emily Grierson. Isolation, denial, dissociation, aggression, depression, and hyperarousal are all symptoms Emily experiences throughout the story. These symptoms are a result of her traumas, due to her father's controlling behavior, subjugation to societal norms, and her failure to cope with the outside changing world. Through Emily's story, Faulkner reveals the lasting effects of trauma on an individual's life and the urgent need for compassion and understanding when dealing with individuals who have possibly experienced trauma.

Emily Grierson's traumatic past is established early with Faulkner's vivid imagery describing her home as "an eyesore among eyesores" and a "stubborn and coquettish decay" (Faulkner, p. 40). The house, which was once grand and beautiful, has fallen into deterioration and disrepair, symbolizing the decay and neglect which Emily herself has experienced throughout her life. Moreover, Faulkner's corporeal description of Emily's appearance further emphasizes the physical toll that her trauma has taken on her.

> [A] small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. (41)

The narrative structure and use of symbolism in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* vividly illustrates Emily's psychological trauma. The non-linear narrative structure of the

story contributes significantly to the reader's comprehension of Emily's complicated character. This structure reflects the fragmented nature of both Emily's psyche and her life as well. Emily's life was flooded by substantial events leaving her psychologically disconnected from the community. As Cleanth Brooks, literary critic, notes, Faulkner's use of non-linear narrative structure in *A Rose for Emily* is a key element of the story's success:

> The use of time in this story is brilliant. Faulkner successfully jumbles the time sequence, asserting that the past is not a chronological sequence of events but a living force in the present. The past, therefore, is not 'the past' at all, but a perpetually present memory that shapes the character's perception of the present. (p. 51)

The rose and the hair are symbols used to further illustrate Emily's trauma. While the rose signifies Emily's desire for love and connection, the hair symbolizes her inner turmoil and grief.

> In Faulkner's story, the character of Emily Grierson can be seen as a symbol for the decaying values and traditions of the old South, which are being left behind in the wake of modernity and progress. Emily's isolation and loneliness are a direct result of this changing world, and her eventual descent into madness is a reflection of the anxieties and fears of those who are unable to adapt to these changes. (Barlow, 230)

B-Analysis of Homer Baron's Character

Homer is a significant character in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*, as being the object of Emily's obsession. Homer is a charming and ambitious man who initially shows an interest in marrying Emily, but he proves not to be fully committed to her. Emily becomes increasingly abnormally attached to Homer,

resulting in a dramatic and tragic end for him. The story explores key major themes, such as love, obsession, and death through the character of Homer.

The way in which William Faulkner's depicts the character of Homer suggests that he may have experienced trauma, and that might have had an impact upon his mental health. There are several textual references which could be used to support this interpretation.

Firstly, Homer is bodily described as a " 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 niggers " (Faulkner, p. 42). Although this description suggests that Homer is physically imposing, it also suggests that he may be uneasy or guarded in some way.

Homer Barron's excusive drink and his abnormal sexual inclination to the men is more likely to be an obvious manifestation of trauma.

> 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. (43)

Later in the story, there are additional indications that Homer may be experiencing some kind of trauma. For example, when he disappears for a while, the townspeople assume that he has left town. However, when he returns, he is "paler than ever" and appears to be "drinking himself to death".

> [H]e 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. that A neighbor saw the Negro man admit him at the kitchen door at dusk one evening. And that was the last we saw Homer Barron. (43)

This behavior suggests that he may be struggling with some kind of emotional pain or trauma.

Finally, it is worth observing that the way in which Homer is treated by Emily may have contributed to his trauma. Emily is described as being possessive and controlling.

> 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. (43)

She eventually kills Homer when he attempts to leave her. This behavior is clearly indicative of a deeply troubled psyche, and it is possible that Homer's interactions with Emily contributed to his own emotional distress.

Fundamentally, there are various textual indications that Homer may have experienced trauma and that this trauma had an intense effect upon his mental health. These indications include his physical appearance, his guarded behavior, his drinking, abnormal sexual inclination and the way in which he is treated by Emily.

VI-conclusion

William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* is a poignant depiction of post-war psychological trauma, explicitly through the character of Emily Grierson. Her reclusive and eccentric behavior vividly pictures the lasting grave consequences of traumatic loss on both

individuals and communities. Faulkner's use of nonlinear narrative, imagery, and symbolism, such as the decaying house, the rose … etc., highlights the theme of the decline of the Old South and its traumatic effects on its inhabitants.

Faulkner's representation of Emily's deterioration into madness and eventual death is a piece of evidence to the persistent psychological legacy of war with its subsequent societal changes. The story is a commanding commentary on the human condition, pointing out the risks of individual's emotional denial or suppression, and the devastating outcomes of isolation and loneliness.

A Rose for Emily, eventually, functions as a alarming reminder of the destructive impact of trauma and the urgent need for sympathy and understanding to combat suffering. Faulkner's masterful storytelling and touching characterization make it a timeless work of literature that continues to echo among readers today.

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تصوير الصدمة النفسية الناجمة عن الحرب الأهلية الأمريكية في قصة وليام فوكنز القصيرة "زهرة على روح ايميلي"

الملخص:

قصة وليام فوكنر القصيرة " زهرة علي روح إيميلي" هي وصف بارع للمعاناة النفسية لامرأة من جنوب الولايات المتحدة تعاني من اثار الصدمة النفسية الناجمة عن تغييرات جذرية مرتبطة بالحرب الأهلية الأمريكية. تُروى القصة القصيرة من وجهة نظر سكان المدينة الذين يراقبون عن كثب ميل إيميلي جريبرسون إلى العزلة والجنوح نحو الجنون في محاولة يائسة منها للتمسك ببقايا حياتها الأرستقراطية التي افل نجمها. من خلال الاستخدام البارع للرمزية والصور الجمالية وتقنيات التشخيص الادبي, يسلط فوكنر الضوء على الاثار التدميرية للصدمات النفسية وعواقبها طويلة الأمد على نفسية الفرد داخل المجتمع. استخدام فوكنر للسرد غير الخطي والصورة الحسية ورموز البيت المتداعي والوردة وغيرها، يسلط الضوء على موضوع انهيار نظام الجنوب الامريكي وتأثيرات ما بعد الصادمة النفسية الناجمة عن الحرب الاهلية على سكانه. تمتاز قصة "زهرة علي روح إيميلي" بعالمية الافكار الادبية، وهو ما جعل تيمات مثل الفقدان والوحدة والجنون والموت والانهيار، تصويرا نموذجيا لأعراضً للصدمة النفسية، وهو ما يجعل منها انموذجا أدبيًا خالدًا للأدب الأمريكي لا تزال اصداؤه تتردد بين قرائه حتى اليوم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصدمة النفسية المصاحبة للحرب الأهلية، الصدمة النفسية، وليام فوكنر، وردة علي روح إميلي، النموذج القوطي للجنوب الامريكي، نظرية الصدمة، اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة النفسي، الانحلال الاجتماعي، التحليل النفسي.