

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIAL PROPERTIES OF THE SOUTHERN GOTHIC  
IN THE WORKS OF WILLIAM FAULKNER**

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**Abstract**

The Southern Renaissance plays an important role in American literature. It was during this period that southern Gothic arose, typical of the traditions of the peoples of the southern lands. This article provides an artistic analysis of the Southern Gothic elements in William Faulkner's story "A Rose for Emily".

**Keywords:** literary genre, gothic novel, plot, character, classical gothic literature.

**ОПИСАНИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ЮЖНОЙ ГОТИКИ В ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯХ  
УИЛЬЯМА ФОЛКНЕРА**

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**Аннотация:** Южное Возрождение играет важную роль в Американской литературе. Именно в этот период возникает южная готика, типичная для традиций народов южных земель. В данной статье проводится художественный анализ элементов южной готики в рассказе Уильяма Фолкнера «Роза для Эмили».

**Ключевые слова:** литературный жанр, готический роман, сюжет, персонаж, классическая готическая литература.

It is generally acknowledged that Gothic literature emerged in England in the second half of the eighteenth century as a literary genre. Gothic novel is a style of writing that creates a slight fear in the reader, and it's main themes include mysterious adventures, supernatural forces, restless spirits, the return of spirits from the afterlife, living corpses, the fulfillment of oaths, and strange destinies.

The gothic novel genre, which entered European literature from England, began to appear in certain forms in American literature by the twentieth century. Moreover, the period in which novel writing took shape in American literature coincided with the development of the Gothic novel genre in Europe and had a direct impact on the work of writers such as Charles Brockden Brown, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, and Henry James. The Southern Gothic that emerged as a result of such processes is also a literary tradition that emerged under the influence of Gothic literature in the early twentieth century against the backdrop of the

Southern Renaissance in United States literature. Attempts by Southerners to understand their own history have led to the emergence of new traditions in Southern literature. Although it originated in southern states such as Georgia and Alabama, the Southern Gothic had retained the Gothic traditions of European literature. However, unlike European Gothic literature, Southern Gothic had its own peculiarities. Indeed, in the Southern Gothic there were details such as old estates of old planters instead of terrible old castles, and living people instead of ghosts.

Although it has been referred to as the gothic genre in scientific literature, we believe that the term is currently being misused. This is mainly because, once unique to the novel genre, the Gothic tradition later influenced other genres of literature, resulting in it going beyond the genre and becoming a literary tradition.

**Gothic novels have the following features:**

1. The plot revolves around some mysterious event - for example, someone can disappear, someone of unknown origin, an unsolved crime and the loss of an inheritance. It is often possible to use a combination of multiple themes rather than a single theme. The revelation of the secret occurs only at the end of the novel. Adjacent secrets can be added to the central secret, and they are also revealed in the final part of the work.
2. In the process of narration, a feeling of panic and fear is always felt and threatens the lives and honor of the protagonists.
3. Horror, ominous episodes of events create a general atmosphere of mystery. In many Gothic works, events take place in abandoned, dilapidated, ancient castles.
4. In the first gothic novels there was an image of the main character – a beautiful girl. She is noble and modest, and at the end of the work she finds the prince of her dreams and lives a blissful life.
5. The image of a criminal, murderer, villain. He is presented as an arrogant, immoral, selfish character of love and vengeance for dominance.

Obviously, these features have been observed in prose works before, but it is in Gothic novels that they are combined brightly and vividly.

In modern literature, William Faulkner is recognized as the founder of Southern Gothic literature [3, p. 359]. The reason is that his works contain motifs and themes of Southern Gothic. Literary critic Henry Carrigan also pointed out that the Gothic tradition provides the reader with a powerful psychological exploration of temptation and fear, including the struggle between good and evil against a backdrop of many images, and Faulkner's writings embody many of these literary elements [2, pp. 96-97].

Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" is a prime example of the Southern Gothic. Literary scholar Christopher Walsh also cites Faulkner's story as a shining example of Southern Gothic literature [4, p. 26].

The story "A Rose for Emily" depicts Emily's mysterious house, whose doors never open and no one dares to enter. Even in the description of the house, one can feel the style of the image as in Gothic works:

"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..." [1, p. 119].

The main plot that grabs the reader's attention is shown in a conversation between Ms. Emily and Jefferson City officials: Her voice was dry and cold. "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves."

"But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn't you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?"

"I received a paper, yes," Miss Emily said. "Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff... I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see  
We must go by the —"

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But, Miss Emily —"

"See Colonel Sartoris." (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobe!" The Negro appeared. "Show these gentlemen out." [1, p. 121].

The invitation to consult with a man who has been dead for ten years is reminiscent of the peculiarities of Gothic literature and, of course, also attracts the reader's attention. In the following places, the reader waits for a solution to the events in this mysterious house, the events that take place in the spirit of its owner, Colonel Sartoris.

It is well known that in Faulkner's works one can trace the trees of complex, interconnected generations.

This feature is observed in almost all of his works. It follows that when studying the peculiarities of the Southern Gothic traditions in Faulkner's work, it is necessary to pay serious attention to these features. This is because the center of Faulkner's work reflects the history of a particular family and its decline.

If the story is read carefully, one can understand that Emily's behavior towards her home goes back to family history. Emily lags behind those around her in embracing community renewal because she is bound to old traditions like her old home. It is also clear from the description

given to Emily's house by the author that she has inherited from ancient traditions and does not want to succumb to the changes of the new era:

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 [1, p. 119].

Miss Emily's house had been preserved intact in accordance with the old laws laid down by Colonel Sartoris, laws that only a man of Colonel Sartoris' lineage could invent. So, Miss Emily's house conjures up an image of a time that is passing into the past, because the laws that exempted her from taxes were established by people of the past. Such relics of antiquity create a number of problems for the people around them. For example, consider the following passage:

A neighbor, a woman, complained to the mayor, Judge Stevens, eighty years old.

—“But what will you have me do about it, madam?” he said.

—“Why, send her word to stop it,” the woman said. “Isn’t there a law?”

—“I’m sure that won’t be necessary,” Judge Stevens said. “It’s probably just a snake or a rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I’ll speak to him about it.”

The next day he received two more complaints, one from a man who came in diffident deprecation. "We really must do something about it, Judge. I'd be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we've got to do something." That night the Board of Aldermen met three graybeards and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

—“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?” [1, p. 122].

This situation shows the inaction of the entire city, as the older generation is unable to overcome the respect for the name of the Grierson family. The younger generation is not used to this. It is unlikely that there will be development due to such a conflict between ancestors and generations. In his story, Faulkner embodies this conflict in the form of Mrs. Emily and her home, as well as an emerging new city. Indeed, through the image of Emily, the author depicts representatives of the southern past, proud, but not willing to obey even those doomed to death, standing in front of the labyrinth. No matter how hard the new generation tries, getting rid of Emily and her house is impossible until she dies.

In conversations with city officials, the smell of the dead coming from her mysterious home after the events of Mrs. Emily's memoirs of Colonel Sartoris as a living person will undoubtedly call the reader to vigilance. Just as in gothic novels the reader pays attention to the mysterious events of the ancient castle, so in this episode.

Mystery reigns in almost every part of the story. It is this mystery that keeps the reader a little frightened. Just as in the Gothic novels mystery is hidden in ancient castles, in “A Rose for Emily” Emily’s house is described as the source of all mysteries. The doors of this house, on the other hand, were closed to all:

After her father’s death she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at all. A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received, and the only sign of life about the place was the Negro man — a young man then — going in and out with a market basket [1, p. 122].

Not only Emily’s home, but from the description given to her, one can observe the process of struggle between old traditions and renewals:

—“Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town ...” [1, p. 119].

Just like the appearance of her home, Ms. Emily is an image that symbolizes decline. It is not difficult to see this in the author’s drawings of Emily:

She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough... [1, p. 121].

At first glance, this image corresponds to the spirit of the Southern Gothic traditions. Emily’s appearance is a symbol of stagnation, reminiscent of a body that has long been submerged in water, swollen and beginning to rot. She does not leave her house for long, literally starting to rot. News, development and social life happening outside are of no importance to her. She has own views and beliefs.

The abnormal behavior of the protagonist draws the reader into a maelstrom of mysteries in every part of the story. The question of why encourage readers to follow the events. The reader tries to get to the bottom of the mystery of what the story ends with. After Miss Emily’s conversation with the pharmacist, the reader becomes even more alert:

—“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 eye-sockets 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. 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.” [1, pp. 125-126].

The reader is a little frightened, like the pharmacist, wondering why Miss Emily is taking arsenic, who or what the idea of killing is. Most people in Jefferson, on the other hand, thought that Mrs. Emily would now commit suicide, because, there were no loved ones left in the world for the lady, her father had died, and her lover had abandoned her and fled.

But the mystery remains a mystery again. The old house did not reveal to the townspeople the supernatural events hidden inside the house. Only years later, when Mrs. Emily died at the age of seventy-four, did the people of Jefferson finally witness the revelation of an ominous mystery. When Mrs. Emily is buried, the mystery is revealed when people open a large locked room on the second floor of her house. People find the remains of body that have been lying there for years:

The man himself lay in the bed.

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 [1, p. 139].

As you can see, at first glance, the story "A Rose for Emily" was created in the Gothic style and is a mysterious and terrifying work about a woman who, fearing the rejection of her lover poisoned her and kept her in her house for years. But as you read the work, you will become a witness to the struggle between the old and the new, stagnation and development.

In conclusion, through Emily’s house, Faulkner portrays the South, while through Emily; he depicts people of the old age who cling to the old traditions of the South, unwilling to see development. The image of Emily embodies a maze that has no meaning or purpose, and it is a symbol of people who cannot learn from the past, who cling to their already dead ideals.

Naturally, it would be wrong to say that Southern Gothic literature is a direct continuation of Classical Gothic literature. Indeed, as we have seen, there are enough differences between these two literary traditions to allow us to observe the specific features of Southern Gothic literature, such as the psychologisation and reality of the characters. However, both literary traditions have common features.

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