

Why emily grierson is a fallen monument

[Literature](#)



Emily Grierson: A Fallen Monument Today William Faulkner is recognized as one of the foremost of the 20th century. His novels and short fiction were both innovative and highly engaging in their impressionistic account of southern culture. His short story 'A Rose for Emily' has particularly gained attention for its macabre ending. This story follows the existence of Emily Grierson as she ages and increasingly becomes reclusive in a single southern town. Upon Emily's death the story reveals that she has kept the corpse of Homer Barron in her upstairs bedroom for over a decade. This essay examines how Emily Grierson can be viewed as a fallen monument.

From an overarching perspective there is the recognition that Emily Grierson is viewed as a fallen monument because of the extensive period of time that she lived in a single town. In this way Faulkner himself writes, "When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument" (Faulkner). In this way Grierson is viewed as a monument as she existed as a testament to a past time, just like an actual monument stands in effigy of history.

There are multitudes of other ways that Grierson's characterization further contributes to her representation as a monument. In this way Faulkner oftentimes writes of Grierson as if she were an inanimate object that must be cared for just in the same way that a physical monument might need be taken care of. Faulkner indicates, "Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town" (Faulkner).

Faulkner here is referring to the recognition that Emily Grierson had been allowed tax remittance. To this extent Grierson being allowed to not have to pay taxes underlines her position as a sort of monument to the town's history, rather than a functional part of the community.

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A final consideration of the way that Grierson's characterization contributes to her representation as a monument is through her depiction as lifeless. Grierson's characterization as lifeless is thematic throughout the text. After Grierson's father death Faulkner indicates that she rarely left and the house. In this way Grierson began to crystallize as a sort of monument in the town's eyes. Rather than interacting with Emily like a normal individual the town looks at her like an entity that must be maintained, just like a monument. For instance, when a smell surfaces around Grierson's home the town takes it upon themselves to sprinkle lime near it. Ultimately these elements contribute to Grierson's characterization as a fallen monument.

In conclusion, this essay examines how Emily Grierson can be viewed as a fallen monument. In this spectrum of understanding the essay argues that Grierson's considerable age and time spent in the town contributes to this perspective. Additionally, Grierson is viewed as an inanimate object that is also lifeless. Faulkner combines these elements of characterization to situate Grierson as a fallen monument.