

Sharad Acharya Scientific Research and Academic Writing

The Impact of Emily's Relationship with Her Father in 'A Rose for Emily'
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Abstract

This article explores the impact of patriarchy on the psychological and social life of Emily Grierson in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*. This article explores the relationship between Emily and her father, Mr. Grierson. Grierson is a microcosm of the pervasiveness of patriarchy in the South. She believes that Grierson's controlling behavior not only dehumanized Emily, but also made her mentally ill and eventually killed her. This study examines the ways in which Faulkner uses the father-daughter connection to critique patriarchal tyranny in the South, offering a more profound comprehension and social theory of gender, power, and tradition in Faulkner's writings.

Keywords: William Faulkner, *A Rose for Emily*, Patriarchy, Southern Gothic, Psychological Development, Gender and Power, Family Relationships, Tradition vs. Modernity.

INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* is a very intricate piece when it comes to pure psychology of the human mind, and shows the effects that were imparted in contexts of family on character and personality in the post-war setting. Its main focus is on Emily Grierson – a highly ambiguous character, who, being a descendant of a wealthy family, tries to remain a member of the careless class resisting the New World's advances. Emily's father, Mr. Gleason, has an impact on Emily's life, affecting her relationships and sense of self (Dilworth, 1999). Because under Mr. Grierson's rule, Emily is seen as socially awkward, especially unable to form relationships with men. Emily's behavior when she falls into her father's shadow after his death shows that this and her health depend on him (Scherting, 2023). Drawing on this change, Faulkner criticized the

belief in freedom in southern culture and argued that these oppressive patterns prevented social, developmental mental illness and, ultimately, the tragic outcomes of individuals like Emily Grierson. The purpose of this study is to understand Faulkner's critique more deeply by investigating the impact of Emily's relationship with her father on her personal development, social status, and ultimate disillusionment.

Dominance and Controlling Behavior Emily Grierson's relationship with her father had a lasting impact on her behavior and mental health. Although this relationship was important in determining Emily's life and actions, scholars have paid little attention to how Emily's father's influence directly affected her from continuing death. In this regard, to fill the existing gap, this study aims at examining the dynamics of Emily's identity, love feelings, and transformation resulting from Mr. Grierson's influence, which resulted in her mental illness and loneliness. Although being one of the primary components, the role of Emily Grierson and her father in William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" narrates the main character's psychological and social deterioration.

The power of control over the situation by Mr. Grierson in combination with Emily's life turned her into a sick woman with numerous psychological problems till the Post-traumatic stress disorder that became the cause of her death. In an attempt to analyze the Patriarchal oppression of the South's women and denounce the injustice of the oppressive system in the region, this essay intends to understand how Faulkner applies this dynamic between fathers and daughters. Hence, this study is valuable because it enhances Faulkner's contextual analysis of gender, power, and change in the American South. While reading A Rose for Emily, the reader encounters topics of death, decay, and difference despite the fact that A Rose for Emily raises issues of mortality, degeneration, and variety, this paper discerns the father-daughter relationship as a key element of Emily's story. Therefore, this example of exploring the psychological and the emotional experience of Mr. Faulkner contributes to the humanist understanding of the oppression of patriarchy and the suffering of women. This work also helps us to gain the richer understanding of the role of Emily within the framework of the post-modern progressive developing aesthetics of William Faulkner and reveals the author's critical perspective on the modern civilization at the intersection of the modernity and tradition. Emily's plight viewed as

her fight for her survival in the progressive environment around her can be seen as a reflection of the attempt of the South to preserve its image that is so dear to its representatives, while meeting the demands of the modern world. Thus, for this research Emily's outcome can tell a story of the risk involved in retaining high persistence and following the costs of the psychological processes of failing to meet the expectations of the family. This paper also employed Faulkner's view which looks at the hardships that women encounter in the hands of male characters thus adding to the study of feminist criticism. The findings of this research indicate how Faulkner uses Emily Grierson's role as a daughter to explore the impact of gender and power within the framework of a patriarchal society.

Finally, this study advances our understanding of Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* by providing insight into the relationships between family, identity, and social change that Faulkner identifies with.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many analyses have focused on the relationship between Emily Grierson and her father in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*, particularly how this relationship affected Emily's social and psychological development. Scholars argue that Mr. Grierson's control over Emily's life made his death tragic and a microcosm of broader entitlement in Southern society. In his narrative commentary, Thomas Dilworth cites Mr. Trump's mental illness. Grierson's control of Emily. He believes that Emily's father is a classic example of a boss who controls her ability to develop herself and her relationships. Dilworth argues that Emily's father's controlling behavior not only isolated her from deserving people, but also emotionally drained her after his death, which ultimately contributed to her loneliness and depression. Dilworth points out that Emily's struggle to regain her sense of self-determination—albeit dangerously—is a result of this control, as seen in her choice to hold onto Homer Barron's body (Dilworth, 1999). Jack Scherting, who examines the oedipal dynamics in Emily's relationship with her father, offers a different perspective. Scherting believed Emily's mental illness was covered up by Mr. Trump. Grierson's emotions and protectiveness are overwhelming, making it impossible to be separated from him even after his death. Emily's murder of Homer Barron, Shelting (1980) also opines that murder

of Homer Barron by Emily exhibited an oedipal conflict that her father never underwent through the process of law. From this perspective, Emily's actions and her failure to alter the state of affairs were influenced by her interaction with her father

David Minter also explores the social implications of Emily's relationship with her father and places this in the context of the decline of the aristocracy in the South. Minter believed that the social structure of the South was rigid and that the patriarchal culture was influenced by Mr. Minter. Minter often restricted women's participation in these activities. Gleason's advice to Emily. Minter believes that Emily will not be able to adapt to the changing culture because she was raised in an environment that had old ideas and resisted change. According to Minter (2001), Faulkner used Grierson's family to represent Korea and Emily's death from stress caused by the disaster. Some scholars have linked Emily's relationship with her father to the themes of death and decay in *A Rose for Emily*. Kirk noted that Mr. Grierson's influence continues to permeate Emily's life, thus "killing" any chance of development or progress. The image of Emily clinging to her father represents her inability to let go and enjoy life, both literally and figuratively.

On the other hand, critics such as John Skinner have cast many doubts on Emily's relationship with her father, arguing that Mr. Grierson's control is dangerous but also gives Emily a sense of purpose and identity in a contradictory and unpredictable environment.

According to Skinner, Emily's desire for stability and her insistence on her father's behalf is reflected in her inability to accept his death and her subsequent behavior towards Homer Barron. According to Skinner, Faulkner explores the complexities of human dependency and fear of change in his portrayal of Emily, in addition to criticizing political parties (Skinner, 1985). Many of the articles on *Roses for Emily* emphasize how important Emily's relationship with her father is in determining her relationships and emotions. Scholars agree that Emily's isolation, mental decline, and ultimate terror are directly related to the impact Mr. Grierson has on her. This study demonstrates the complexity of this relationship from a variety of perspectives: emotional, social, and interpretive. All of these considerations support our understanding of Faulkner's indictment of southern culture and the patriarchal systems that limit women's lives.

RESEACH METHODS

This excellent study compares the psychology of patriarchy described in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* to the larger impact of this change in the American South. The purpose of this study was to determine how Emily Grierson's relationship with her father influenced her behavior, mental development, and ultimately her death. A qualitative literature review of *A Rose for Emily* textbooks, articles, and reviews was conducted to collect data for this study. Special attention will be given to studies that focus on topics such as patriarchy, developmental psychology, and southern societies. In order to provide a socio-historical context for the study, the case studies also contribute to the historical and cultural analysis of the American South in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This work also provides detailed information about Faulkner's story, emphasizing the importance of Emily's relationship with her father and the impact of this relationship on her community and public health. Analysis of the text also reveals recurring themes and symbols that Faulkner uses to describe the conflict between culture and modernity and the psychological need to follow rigid family expectations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through my research for *A Rose for Emily*, I learned how much Emily Grierson's relationship with her father affected her brain. My research revealed that Emily was emotionally disturbed and isolated by Mr. Grierson's patience and control of character. Emily's strong attachment to patriarchal control prevented her from developing relationships and ultimately led to her intellectual decline. I found Emily's attachment to her father and her refusal to change, a key theme in Faulkner's story, significant. Even after his death, she refused to give up his control, showing how powerful freedom was within her. This study also makes clear that this process had a greater impact in the post-Civil War era, when tradition and modernity often collided and people like Emily emerged. Based on my research, I concluded that Emily's tragic fate reflected not only her death but also the abuse of her medical condition that controlled her life. Faulkner portrays Emily as a critic of this system, emphasizing the horrific consequences of gender-based violence. Through this study, I now have a better understanding of how family, identity, and

social change are intertwined in Faulkner's writings and how these themes continue beyond explanation.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Based on my analysis of *A Rose for Emily*, I conclude that Emily Gleason's horror emerges as a powerful commentary on the destruction of patriarchy. Emily's personality and character are determined by Mr. Grierson's control over her also left her isolated and mentally ill. Through Emily's relationship with her father, Faulkner masterfully portrays the problems inherent in southern society, where gender and social norms often interfered with individuality and freedom. This research has given me a deeper understanding of the profound and destructive effects that family relationships, especially controlling and controlled relationships, can have on human life. The results of this study have important implications for our understanding of how freedom affects society as a whole. By examining Emily's life through the lens of her relationship with her father, I have learned that family expectations and gender norms can hinder personal growth and lead to mental illness. From this perspective, Faulkner's writings remain relevant today because they illustrate the persistent problems many people face in balancing tradition and modernity. More research shows how important it is to consider the psychological aspects of articles because these topics often reflect real-world concerns. Apart from the field of literature, the implications of this study are important because it offers a long-term perspective on patriarchy and highlights the need to raise awareness of its impact on people, especially women, regarding the importance of knowledge.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

One limitation of this study is that it focuses only on Emily Grierson's relationship with her father, ignoring other important aspects such as her interactions with other people or her surroundings. Although Mr. Grierson has a great influence, it is a better idea to use these events to further clarify Emily's emotional state. In addition, the study often discounts the process of patriarchy and psychology, thus ignoring other important perspectives that could provide more detail such as history or statistical analysis. In order to understand Emily's loneliness and

psychological breakdown, future research should benefit from a better behavioral analysis that includes her good relationships with other people in the story. Studies comparing female characters in other Southern literature to this study could address the recurring theme of patriarchal oppression and its consequences. The cultural aspects of Emily's face can also be better understood by examining the history and culture of southern life depicted in the narrative. Faulkner's critique of gender and power can also be better understood by drawing from various disciplines such as women's studies or cultural studies, and by applying modern psychology to the character of Emily.

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