

Murphy Ledbetter

Faulkner & McCullers Abstract

Sep. 28, 2018

Women are expected to be beautiful, entertaining, submissive, and domesticated. This has been a long-standing requirement for females in the American South, but what happens when women refuse to fulfill this Southern femininity? Both Faulkner and McCullers use the spectacle of the grotesque female body and the presence of an active community to highlight the power of societal constraint; however, the difference in each protagonist's response to this constraint comments on the radical behavior required to successfully defy expected gender roles. Faulkner shows the power of community in "A Rose for Emily" through both the success and failure of this town's people to restraint and control the timeless protagonist, Emily. He furthers Emily's story as she warps from the pedestaled white woman to the grotesque female body. This same theme is reflected in Carson McCullers's *The Ballad of the Sad Café*. While the purposefully masculine Amelia struggles against the strain of her surrounding communities' restriction and expectation, the audience watches as Amelia transforms from the confident, assertive, masculinized woman to a broken, grotesque female body. While both stories follow the same general plot, there is a large difference in the final response to the communal pressure from each community that results in the fall of one protagonist and the successful defiance of the other.