

Katherine anne porter's the jilting of granny weatherall essay

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Katherine Anne Porter's *The Jilting of Granny Weatherall* "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" was written by Katherine Anne Porter and first published in 1930. The story is of a woman named Granny Weatherall who is on her deathbed. As she is surrounded by friends and family she remembers the life she has lived. She describes being jilted many times in her life, first by her husband-to-be and finally by death. The story was eventually made into a movie directed by Randa Haines.

A major theme in the story is that of self-pity. As a result of Granny's wedding day jilting she feels sorry for herself throughout the rest of her life. She also has become suspicious of everyone.

This is shown when the doctor is speaking to Cornelia in the beginning of the story, outside of Granny's room. Granny exclaims, "First off go away and don't whisper!" Granny was apparently under the impression that the two of them were speaking ill of her behind her back. Another common theme in many of Katherine Anne Porter's stories, including "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall", is that of death. Porter was captivated by death and dreamed of having a custom made wooden coffin after she saw a photograph taken at the funeral of one of her friends. After Porter and her nephew searched New York City; Katherine found an ad for a coffin maker in Montana and placed her order. The coffin arrived but was obviously too large for her and the large colorful flowers were not at all what she expected but regardless Katherine had her wooden coffin.

Even after receiving her coffin she and her nephew discussed arrangements on several occasions. First she wanted to be buried in the wooden coffin

wrapped in a linen bed sheet. Later she decided that she wanted to be cremated and have her ashes scattered in running water. Then she wanted her ashes buried next to her mother and by this time it seemed that the coffin was just a prop to amuse friends and reporters. These obsessions with her own death may be the reason why many of her writings have themes of death including "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall". The main character Granny Weatherall is forced to evaluate how she feels about what her life has been as she lives her last day. Granny Weatherall seems to thrive on disillusionment and despair.

At first Granny couldn't accept the fact that her days were numbered. This is shown when the doctor is summoned and she says, "I won't see that boy again. He just left five minutes ago.

"She continues her denial later on when Cornelia calls on a priest to offer Granny her last rights. She refused to speak to the priest once he arrived. Katherine Anne Porter was also in denial about death and therefore took it fairly light heartedly and constantly changed the plans for her funeral. During the story Granny asks some of her grandchildren to pick fruit from a nearby orchard. She insisted that none of the fruit be wasted.

Granny said, "Don't let good things rot for want of using. You waste life when you waste good food. It's bitter to lose things.

"This symbolized how Granny had weathered all and knows what it is like to lose something and attempted to never waste or be wasted again. Katherine Anne Porter was raised Catholic and her religious views as well as those

specifically of the Catholic Church greatly affected her writing. Katherine Porter said herself " I have a great deal of religious symbolism in my stories because I have a very deep sense of religion. Many, such as William Lance, say that Granny represented Porter's puritanical fear of intimacy. Even though Granny went to Holy Communion every week she really had no faith. She felt that God had deceived her. However, she had really deceived herself by attempting to live the perfect catholic life without faith.

After being left at the altar by the love of her life Granny felt that she could no longer trust God. This distrust paralleled the life of Porter's own Grandmother who died just shortly before the story was written. As Granny is dying she sees a cart that is being pushed by God. God does not extend his hand to her because she does not extend her hand to him. So in reality she is once again being jilted, this time by herself and at the same time by God and her religion. " There is a priest in the house, but no bridegroom" in this second jilting the bridegroom is thought to represent Jesus of Matthew 25: 1-13.

In Matthew 25, 10 women were waiting for Jesus but 5 were not ready and therefore missed him. The story is written with the rhetorical technique stream of consciousness . stream of consciousness is the writing style most similar to the pattern of human thought. Porter understands this relationship and uses the technique to tell the reader the story of Granny Weatherall's life. By using this technique Porter is able to inform the reader of Granny's background as well as allow the reader to form their own conclusions about the references of the deaths of her husband John, and her daughter Hapsy.

stream of consciousness also keeps the reader interested and seems to move from one line to the next effortlessly, eliminating the transitions used in ordinary prose.

Another technique, which can be noted throughout the story, that contributes to these things is flashback. The sentence structure and diction support the stream of consciousness writing. The sentences in are long and continuous with few pauses and little punctuation. The diction is colloquial. When Granny is conversing with people the language is informal. For example, Granny says to the doctor, " Leave a well woman alone I'll call you when I want you..

.. " As Granny gets deeper and deeper into thought she starts to speak childishly. Katherine Anne Porter includes images of light and dark in the story.

Thoughts from Granny's past are light: " But he had not come... what does a woman do when she has put on the white veil and set out the white cake for a man and he doesn't come? " Her thoughts of the present are dark: " For 60 years she prayed against remembering him and against loosing her soul in the deep pit of hell, and now the two things were mingled in one and the thought of him was a smoky could from hell" The light which she blew out at the end of the story represents her life and she will now descend into the blackness of death.

Porter also uses physical things such as fog to represent non-material things such as betrayal. The tone is solemn and bitter. The tone aids the reader in

feeling pity for Granny. The following is an example of her bitterness; " Wait wait Cornelia till your own children whisper behind your back! " One of the messages that the story gives the reader is " carpe diem" or seize the day. This is common in many of Porter's writings which all encompasses her personal ideas regarding death and dying, mourning, loss and loneliness, injustice and rejection.

In the story Porter uses simile and metaphor: " The pillow rose and floated under her, pleasant as a hammock in a light wind" Katherine Porter explores the lives of her characters and gives the reader a strong sense of the characters' personal guilt, isolation, and sadness. This story allows the reader to reflect on the positive things in their own life, by showing Granny's regret for not taking advantage of the life she lived.