Imagine life as a grandfather clock. Clocks are often overlooked until they are needed. The grandfather clock’s pendulum swings back and forth as the second-hand continues to tick. The clock will continue to tick until one day the pendulum will not swing anymore and the second-hand will stop. This clock represents a human’s life. Often times people take life for granted until it is gone. This theme can be seen within the literature piece “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” by Katherine Anne Porter. The story tells a tale of a discontent, elderly woman named Granny Weatherall who is approaching her death. She begins to remember events of her life as she creeps closer to her judgement day. Granny Weatherall does not appreciate everything that is around her in the story much like how most people are today. The story uses events, thoughts, attitudes, and appearances that occur with the main character to support the theme that individuals do not appreciate their life until their time is up.

Throughout the story, there are many events that occur that support the idea of the underlying theme. One particular event is when Granny Weatherall’s daughter, Cornelia, is discussing with the doctor about Granny Weatherall’s condition (Porter para. 11). They are talking as if her condition is worsening and can not be helped. The grandmother takes this as an insult, and she is upset at them discussing her while she is within ear shot. She takes her daughter’s concern for her health for granted. Granny Weatherall is also constantly ragging on
her daughter for talking to loud even when she was a child and for talking about her condition with the doctor. People rarely notice the love others have for them. They seem to forget or misunderstand that people may do things for them to try and help them. In this case, Granny Weatherall does not see that her daughter has called the doctor to try and help with her illness. Granny Weatherall also has moments where she wanders off into her own thoughts. She has these last few ideas occur and she recalls moments from her life (Porter para. 19). For example, she reminisces on her ex-fiance George and thinks of several other events in her life. This acts almost as if she is seeing her life flash before her eyes. She does not realize that these events that take place are happening because she is about to lose her life. She does not realize that she is in the last few moments of life. Scientists have proven that there is an increase in brain activity moments before death (Lake 119). The brain knows that it is about to shut down and has a power surge of electricity run through it. This surge is filled with a person’s memories, even some they could not recall beforehand. Eventually this brain activity is followed up by a cardiac malfunction. Then all brain activity is gone and lost forever. People may see their entire life flash before their eyes, and they will never be able to act on what they see in those moments. People should appreciate their lives before their final thoughts hit them.

While there are many events that occur, there is also several thoughts that the main character has in the story. The first example is that Granny Weatherall had thoughts of spanking her own daughter (Porter para. 13). This showed that she did not appreciate the love that her daughter had for her. Granny Weatherall chose to be blinded by her own stubbornness instead of looking at the truth that was being thrown in her face. “While she was rummaging around she found death in her mind and it felt clammy and unfamiliar” (Porter para. 20), was one thought
that was said in the story about Granny Weatherall. This thought passed over Granny Weatherall and she pushed it off as it was nothing. She did not notice that these were the end of the times for her. She blinded herself with many thoughts and worried about other things. A study found that individuals will repress memories or thoughts if they do not find them admirable (Karen 162). Their minds choose not to believe what is the truth. The undesirable ideas are repressed into their untouchable memory. These ideas will not show back up until later when the truth can not be overlooked. The denial allows these people to not appreciate their life until their time has come and it is too late.

The thoughts were followed by multiple attitudes from Granny. Granny was rude to the doctor who was caring for her. She pushed him away which can be seen in the quote “Get along and doctor your sick” (Porter para. 8). She did not realize that she was sick. Worth T. Harder wrote “Porter, on the other hand, creates throughout her story a disjunction between Granny's mind and the reader's, for her reader must perceive finally what Granny cannot perceive” (Harder 152). Granny did not see her condition. Her bad attitudes were a fault for her. She spent time being bitter and sour when she could have loved. She lost time that she could have loved her children. However, near the end of the story Granny Weatherall’s attitude would change. She realized she was dying and that she could not go back. Before she even knew it, she was gone.

Combined with events, thoughts, and attitudes of Granny Weatherall, her appearance also supports the main theme. Granny Weatherall is portrayed as an elderly woman in her last moments of life. She stays in bed for the entirety of the story. This appearance that is given to the reader shows that she is weak. “She lay and drowsed, hoping in her sleep that the children would keep out and let her rest a minute” (Porter para. 17) was one quote in the story that supports this
point. The reader can also assume that she has a sour look on her face because of her attitude. This appearance shows the reader that she is unappreciative and close to her death.

Through the entire story of Granny Weatherall, there were many events, thoughts, attitudes, and appearances. Each of them supported the idea that people do not appreciate their life til it is gone. They do not see what they have until they are not able to see anymore. Individuals often take life for granted, and they do not live life to the fullest. Author David C. Estes wrote in his analysis of the story that,”In her grief, life has become unimaginable; the ultimate vanity of all hopes and actions, underable” (Estes 442). They forget about the different blessings and gifts that life has placed in their laps. Instead, people make the decision to be bitter like the taste of vinegar until their demise. They choose to forget to live life and be sweet like the taste of honey. People need to make the decision if they are going to be honey or vinegar. They need to realize that their grandfather clock can stop at any moment. The second hand will one day stop, and they have to be prepared for that day to come.
Works Cited


Porter, Katherine Anne. The Jilting of Granny Weatherall. people.morrisville.edu/~whitnemr/html/The%20Jilting%20of%20Granny%20Weatherall.htm.