

# Alienation and emancipation



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A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings and My Singular Irene depicted in metaphorical detail contemporary expressions of alienation, repression in society today. Both short stories showed the utter excesses the subjugation of an individual to the whims and caprices of persons around them.

More so, the examples of repression and subjugation was given in expressed and tacit terms in the two short stories as A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings showed how a community could punish and persecute an entity which they knew nothing about and My Singular Irene ironically expressed how a woman, despite her marriage, exists in a relationship of unequal footing with her husband.

This paper explores concrete examples of alienation and repression vis-à-vis the fundamental need for personal freedom and the luxury of human community.

In Gabriel Garcia Marquez' A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings, the angel that descended on the house of Pelayo was treated with utter disrespect, ridicule and even suspicion, primarily based on the community lack of utter knowledge about his entity.

Not only did they send him to the chicken coop despite his injuries, he was subject of a devious money-making scheme by Pelayo, likening the Angel to freak shows of traveling carnivals. Such a treatment, like the spider woman, took away much of the (human) dignity of the angel.

On the other hand, the priest of the community, instead of being awed by the sight of the old angel, prejudiced the old angel and even insinuated that his presence in the community is a work of the devil, out to fool and deceive

the faithful who seek him in awe. In a sense, the angel was utterly objectified by the community and all the visitors who came to see him, as his presence seemed to reflect the community's ambivalence towards the angel.

Because aside from the physical and verbal tirades by many, he was also seen as a sort of a miracle worker that did not exactly cure the illnesses of the leper and the blind as the effect of his miracles were clearly not intended cure. Nonetheless, for all of these and his comedy of errors in curing the ill, he was still treated with ridicule and utter disrespect – an outcast in the community.

Worst of all, despite cashing in on the old man to build a mansion and treating him like chattel, the Pelayos never had a single ounce of gratitude for all the forced help the angel gave to their family as Pelayo's wife Elisenda simply gave a sigh of relief when the old angel finally set out to fly. In the end, the angel left the community the same way he came – silently, without fanfare but still met with ridicule by the people.

The story of the angel says much of the contemporary alienation people experience in different societies of the world. The disdain by the community for the angel simply on the basis of their lack of knowledge about his entity is a concrete metaphor of the ethnocentrism that permeates in the world today where some races and countries see themselves above all other races and countries simply because they lack sufficient knowledge of a different race's history, culture and struggle.

More so, it also shows how people treat classes of people who are generally less educated, less financially-stable than themselves because instead of helping these people be better than their wretched state, usually it has been <https://assignbuster.com/alienation-and-emancipation/>

the privileged upper class which even sets the trap for the exploitation, oppression and alienation of a society's underclass.

On the other hand, the short story is s tacit message to all of the utter necessity of the building and consolidation of human communities that would stand against alienation, repression, silence and even oppression because it is never enough for a single individual such as the old angel to stand up against these evils because the community who committed such atrocities were never enlightened about what they have done and simply continue on with their lives.

In order to defeat these social ills, it should be a community, even a societal effort to repudiate these evils and ensure that personal and collective freedom is ensured by all.