

”a very old man with
enormous wings” by
gabriel garcia
marquez essay
sample



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This short story, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, is an example of magic-realism. Through this story, Marquez introduces four concepts with regard to how we might react to certain things like the presence of an angel or a miracle. These kinds of divine events are very common in Hispanic culture; most of them are just folklorism. Marquez creates a story that is very detailed but is opposite to the reality of angels that we're familiar with, specially the Catholic Church's depiction of an angel as a prominent creature, not the person described in the story.

The appearance: Most people of this fishing village believe the old man is an angel, but according to the description given for an angel his appearance is quite contrary: "...When Father Gonzaga went into the chicken coop and said good morning to him in Latin. The parish priest had his first suspicion of an imposter when he saw that he did not understand the language of God or know how to greet his ministers. Then he noticed that seen close up he was much too human: he had an unbearable smell of the outdoors, the back side of his wings was strewn with parasites and his main feathers had been mistreated by terrestrial winds, and nothing about him measured up to the proud dignity of angels." At this point they were judging the angel for how he looked based on the Catholic descriptions, where angels are beautiful and prominent creatures with wings, and merely having the appearance it had caused some people's mistrust.

Faith: People believe that the man is an angel, and they arrived from everywhere looking for help and miracles: "... the most unfortunate invalids on earth came in search of health: a poor woman who since childhood has been counting her heartbeats and had run out of numbers; a Portuguese

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man who couldn't sleep because the noise of the stars disturbed him; a sleepwalker who got up at night to undo the things he had done while awake; and many others with less serious ailments." But this faith in miracles starts to miss when the miracles done by the angel are not as expected: "...Besides, the few miracles attributed to the angel showed a certain mental disorder, like the blind man who didn't recover his sight but grew three new teeth, or the paralytic who didn't get to walk but almost won the lottery, and the leper whose sores sprouted sunflowers." Faith that people have in the angel disappears once they see that their demands are not met. Also, in the case of Pelayo and Elisenda, they don't see their miracles, their baby recovers as soon as the angel shows up and they get rich.

Disbelief: This is represented particularly by the priest, Gonzaga, who upon seeing the appearance of the angel seriously wonders whether to believe or not. By the way, the disbelief of the Holy Church is also other evidence: " But the mail from Rome showed no sense of urgency. They spent their time finding out in the prisoner had a navel, if his dialect had any connection with Aramaic, how many times he could fit on the head of a pin, or whether he wasn't just a Norwegian with wings." Simply, if the man does not meet the prerequisites to be considered an angel like flying or superpowers, he must be an ordinary human being.

Ignorance: People believe that anything unusual like an angel is considered as a sign from heaven, and stick to their beliefs of how things should be: " At first they tried to make him eat some mothballs, which, according to the wisdom of the wise neighbor woman, were the food prescribed for angels." <https://assignbuster.com/a-very-old-man-with-enormous-wings-by-gabriel-garcia-marquez-essay-sample/>

This ignorance was later the reason for their disappointment because they believed that the angel would fulfill their demands, and it wasn't like that.

In this story, there are four concepts that Marquez wants to bring up when there is an unusual situation like the presence of an angel. Appearance, faith, disbelief and ignorance are just some perceptions that a person could have in these circumstances where there is not a real example of what something is.