Student’s Name

Professor’s Name

Subject Name

Date

Critical Thinking Exercise

1. *In what ways does this story resemble a fairy tale, myth, or an allegory... and in what ways does it differ? How does the old man differ from our usual conception of angels? How does the story conform to and/or defy expectations?*

*A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* is a short story by Gabriel García Márquez. It is a tale of a pitiful frail-looking dirty old man with wings who is found stuck in the mud outside Elisenda and Pelayo's home. This tale has various attributes that resemble a fairy tale. According to Snodgrass (par, 1-5 ), the significant attributes of a fairy tale include a happy ending, fantastical creatures, a clear theme of good triumphs evil, an explicit predicament that gets better and magical object or features that have no existing scientific basis but a reputable basis verifies the evidence. Some of these attributes are present in the short story. For one, the old man has wings (Márquez 1). Secondly, the doctor, a reputable individual, was puzzled 'by the logic of his wings as they seemed so natural on that completely human organism that he couldn't understand why other men didn't have them too' (3). Another thing is that even though it seemed impossible that the angel would survive death, he was able to grow back his wings, got healthy and eventually flew off. Also, like fairy tales, it has a happy ending where the old man gets better and flies off (4). However, unlike other fairy tales, in the story, the characters are not involved in a conflict, and there is no central theme of good trumps evil.

In addition to the above, the angel was dirty, had entangled muddy plucked wings full of parasites, and did not perform any apparent miracles. He was also dressed like a ragpicker, which was far different from the usual conception of angels as mighty, sparkly, powerful beings who perform many miracles (1). Also, the story conforms to my expectation of how people behave when faced with an unknown. To be precise, they view the unknown from a negative perspective as they are not always sure what to expect.

*4) As you take in the whole story and think about the problem these villagers have on their hands, imagine what any people would do today (for example, in a random small town somewhere in rural America). Would this be considered a pestilence, a miracle, or both? What would people, in your opinion, be most likely to do: help it... kill it.... or charge admission? Explain your answer.*

If the old man was found in one of the rural villages in America, I believe the following would have happened. For one, people would flock to the site to see for themselves. Also, there would be mixed reactions about the being. The first group, made up of mostly Christians, have heard fantasy stories of how an angel is supposed to be. To more specific, they expect an angel to be sparkly clean, powerful and to perform miracles. Since the old man would be an exact opposite of their fantasy, they would be afraid of the winged being. There is another group that has a deep fear for the unknown. They would have considered it as an alien representative of a colony seeking to establish a colony on earth. They would report sit to the government, who would use the old man as a laboratory specimen to better understand it.

**Works Cited**

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings." <http://gmc.mrooms3.net/pluginfile.php/5666811/mod_resource/content/1/Marquez%20Old%20Man.pdf>

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. “Fairy Tale.” *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature, Second Edition*, Facts on File, 2014. *Bloom's Literature*, online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=100535&itemid=WE54&articleId=43594. Accessed 6 May 2021.