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Marquez’s *Big Mama Funeral*

Gabriel Garcia Marquez incorporates the elements of reality and fantasy in his fiction and this unification places his narratives in the genre of Magical Realism. His storylines are persuasive to the extent where reality cannot be distinguished from magic and vice versa (Clark 4). Through this narrative technique, he focuses on the societal flaws in a postmodern world. In his short story *Big Mama’s Funeral*, Marquez has used the technique of magic realism to critique at the corrupt political and administrative classes present in the magical “kingdom” of Columbia.

This story revolves around the life of the Queen and tells the reader about her obsession with wealth and power. Similarly, when she knows that she is about to die, it takes her three hours to dictate her possessions. She fails to complete the list and dies in the middle, and her list contains many unrealistic elements, “The wealth of the subsoil, the territorial waters, the colors of the flag” (Marquez 161). Marquez has used humor and exaggeration in this very instance to symbolize the ruling class that instead of serving the people, they become rulers. Moreover, on her funeral, representatives from all of the states come and they show off their wealth. In-animate objects such as eggs also attend the funeral services, “255-mile-long-string-of-iguana-eggs-queen” and the “Pope himself” (Marquez 169). She does not get any burial for many days while the ministers’ debate on the political issues and the body lies out in the sun. These comic or humorous details, serve as a parody of deliberation pointed at the government’s law and administrative system that they can never be on the same page in the middle of a crisis (Clark 12). These instances, are based on exaggeration but they do not seem unreal to the reader. In reality, masses suffer through the aloofness of law and administrative systems to their issues.

In Big Mama’s Funeral, the mockery at the legislative and the ruling class depicts the corrupt and non-exigency of the Colombian ruling classes. The use of magic realism creates fluidity between the real and the magical that presents an ordinary funeral of a dead woman or a monarch in an extraordinary way.

**Works Cited:**

García Márquez, Gabriel. "Big Mama’s Funeral." *Collected Stories* (1999): 184-200.

Clark, Gloria Jeanne Bodtorf. “Big Mama in postmodern society: tracing magical realism in popular culture”.  *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 8.2 (2007): 75-91.