

Chronicle of a death foretold analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by, Gabriel Marquez, the characters lack individualization and the communal values determine the events of the town. The characters in this novel only watch what happens but never try to stop it. The characters thought that nothing evil could happen when the bishop was coming to their town. Therefore they never believed all the threats that were made toward the main character, Nasr Santiago. The communal values evolve around religious events, having family honor and virginity.

“ Although the Church's betrayal is multifaceted, the bishop's arrival symbolizes its failure most clearly.” (pg 195, Arnold Penuel). Everyone was concerned with his/her own forgiveness and being blessed by the bishop. Even the priest did not prevent the murder because of the distractions from the bishop. It seems that they did a lot of preparations, trying to please the bishop, to free themselves from the sin that was about to happen later that day.

The perfunctoriness of the people's faith matches that of the bishop's blessing as he passes by without stopping: “ It was a fleeting illusion: the bishop began to make the sign of the cross in the air opposite the crowd on the pier, and he kept doing it mechanically, without malice or inspiration, until the boat was out of sight” There is no explanation of why the bishop hates the town, but if he does- and passing by reveals at least indifference- such an attitude is at odds with the Christian doctrine of love and forgiveness. (pg 27, Gabriel Marquez; pg 195, Arnold Penuel)

Religion is suppose to be a positive center, but instead is something they are hypocritical about. The bishop destroys all their hope of happiness. The bishop does not follow his religion, which requires to love and forgive, instead he shows that he hates the town. Therefore by fate the town becomes evil with one murder.

Santiago's murder resembles the crucifixion of Christ." It looks like a stigma of the crucified Christ." This detail fits with the impression the thers create momentarily during their attack that they are nailing Santiago to the wooden door. (pg 99, Gabreil Marguez; pg. 197, Arnold Penuel).

The circumstances that Santiago was murdered relate closely to Christ's story. Santiago was murdered for someone else's evil act, in other words, he was a sacrifice for the town's sins. Despite the widespread knowledge of their intention, for a variety of reasons, not only does no one prevent the murder

but virtually the whole town witnesses the gory, hair-raisingevent in the town square. (pg 189, Arnold Penuel). Both murders were thought to be just at that time, but later on some of the truth came out about whether they actually committed any crimes. Also the way Santiago was stabbed seven times shows the hostility of the body and his life. For the autopsy, they didn't even have a doctor look at the body but instead had Father Carmen, who did not know anything about what to do. Father Carmen had mutilated the body even more than before and after he was done, they couldn't even tell that it was Santiago. This shows the amount of respect the Church has upon a body and its soul. As weak as their traditional values are they do provide

standards to live by, but forces for change and renewal are even weaker. Their conduct revolves around negative axes; it is based on taboo morality. They have no positive center; nor is there positive leadership in the town. Unable to act, they can only react to events.(David Riesman: Arnold Penuel).

The town follows it's old values set by the past and a hypocritical Church. They don't know how to change nor do they want to. They have no true leader to guide them in a positive direction. This town does not prevent evil, but rather waits for evil to occur and only reacts to it. They also do not learn from their mistakes from the past.

“ Showing no remorse or repentance, the twins tell Father Amador that they killed Santiago deliberately, but claim innocence because it was a matter of honor. ” (pg. 199, Gabreil Marguez). The code of honor is a very important principal that the town lives by. This code of honor is the basis of this murder. The twins only committed a crime to restore their family honor. They felt that they had not done anything wrong because they were just trying to keep their family honor.

Bayordos code of honor was very strict. He had made sure that he would be respected in the town, therefore he bought a big house and had a spectacular wedding. On his wedding night, when he discovered that his wife had betrayed and had lost her virginity before marriage, he took her home that very night. It was a disgrace for him to have a wife like that and also a dishonor to his family. The town believed that if you violated the code of honor than you must be punished, no matter whom you are. Santiago had to die, Angela had to suffer with her mother and without the one husband she

could get, for all this dishonor. The family did not know how to deal with such a problem, so they did whatever they thought was right. ” The decline of the Church's hold on the townspeople's imagination underlies their ambivalence, with regard to the cult of virginity and the code of honor.”(pg. 195, Arnold Penuel)

” The juxtaposition of a marriage without love and the love of virginity reveals yet another facet of the decadence of the ideal of virginity.”(pg 191, Arnold Penuel). Bayardo was looking for a wife that he thought would be pure, that is the only reason why he wanted to marry Angela. There was never any love between them and it was easily seen. They had never spoken to each other about any of their interests, they just got married upon a attraction. He tried to substitute the love by his wealth; he bought the biggest home in town and he had the biggest wedding. That was the tragedy for Bayardo, because he was going to each town to find a pure wife and when he finally finds one, she is not pure at all. After this mistake of judging women to be pure, he never marries again, afraid that his wife will not be pure. Later on Angela becomes a virgin all over again, she begins to deeply love Bayardo, and only lives for him to return to her. Virginity is a big cult in the code of honor and whomever that goes against this cult must suffer, unfortunately the sinner was not Santiago but was Angela. In a way Angela also died, but was reborn later on for the love of Bayardo.

This novel shows the lack of Church and love can destroy a town, and someone has to die for it. One character gives that love and nourishment that was needed, Maria Cervantes, she comforted the town, not just sexually but as a mother. She made sure everyone was okay and listened to their

problems and gave them advice. This town can never grow into something positive because they need a strong Church and one that is not hypocritical. The people need to change their old stubborn ways and survive. This town only lives by two main things, Code of honor and Virginity. This town will never survive. They lack the strength to make their own minds and they will suffer from the communal values set hundreds and hundreds of years ago.