

Chronicle of a death foretold

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Animals: Humor, Symbolism, and other Literary Devices in Chronicle of a Death Foretold In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, the author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, utilizes the motif of animals as symbols: pigs for ironic humor, rabbits as foreshadowing, and many other animals to aid in description, characterization, and establishment of theme. Marquez uses pigs as motifs the novel. He makes a big deal out of the knives that Pablo and Pedro use while describing the murder. The Vicario twins went to the bin in the pigsty where they kept their sacrificial tools and picked out the two best knives: one for quartering, ten inches long and two and a half inches wide, and the other for trimming, seven inches long and one and a half inches wide. They wrapped them in a rag and went to sharpen them at the meat market. " Marquez then goes into great detail about how they are pig knives used for killing pigs. This adds insult to injury for Santiago, being an Arab, thus being part of a culture that considers pigs to be filthy.

This is an example of the author's ironic style of humor. Marquez provides an additional bit of ironic humor while Nasar is being slaughtered during the murder scene. " Trying to finish it once and for all, Pedro Vicario sought his heart, but he looked for it almost in the armpit, where pigs have it. " This further develops the cruel, ironic humor established by killing Nasar with pig knives, and is now being killed like a pig as well. Another use of pigs in the novel occurs when the Vicarios insist on having the wedding at their home, and in doing so are forced to have the ceremony in the pigpen. "[The] daughters would be married in the pigpen or they wouldn't be married at all'... The twins took the pigs off elsewhere and sanitized the pigsty with quicklime. " The Arab culture considers pigs to be filthy creatures, so

Marquez continues to play on this belief by using the pigsty as a metaphor for the impurity of the marriage. Additionally, the parents rely upon the brothers to clean up both before the marriage, and after it's destroyed by their sister's untraditional actions, adding to the metaphor.

Marquez also utilizes a rabbit similarly to the pig. Santiago walks into the kitchen for breakfast where Victoria Guzman, " had been quartering three rabbits for lunch. " "[Victoria Guzman] couldn't avoid a wave of fright as she remembered Santiago Nasar's horror when she pulled out the insides of a rabbit by the roots and threw the steaming guts to the dogs. " In this scene not only is Marquez foreshadowing the killing of Nasar, but he's also using irony to emphasize details of his violent and cruel demise.

Marquez then adds to additional irony by showing Nasar's opposition to this treatment of living or dead things when Guzman wonders how " a man accustomed to killing defenseless animals could suddenly express such horror... She went on feeding the dogs with the insides of the other rabbits, just to embitter Santiago Nasar's breakfast. " The emotions expressed by Nasar in this scene add to his and Victoria Guzman's characterization: Nasar's opposition to violence, and Guzman's hidden despise for Nasar.

Dogs are also a motif used by Marquez in Chronicle of a Death Foretold. One of the first scenes that Marquez utilizes the dogs in is the previously mentioned scene with Victoria Guzman feeding the guts of the rabbits to the dogs. But before she does this, Nasar tells her with regards to her actions, " " Don't be a savage... Make believe it was a human being. "' This scene foreshadows Nasar's killing, but then Marquez uses the dogs in a similar way

on page 73, after the actual killing has occurred: “ The dogs, aroused by the smell of death, increased the uneasiness.

They hadn’t stopped howling since I [the narrator] went into the house, when Santiago Nasar was still in his death throes in the kitchen and I found Divina Flor weeping in great howls and holding them off with a stick. ‘ Help me,’ she shouted to me. ‘ What they want is to eat his guts. ’” The parallels between the two scenes add to the ironic humor Marquez creates. The dogs are often also used as a motif for the people in the town, especially regarding to their gossip and the way word spreads.

As the Vicario brothers are leaving their house to sharpen their knives in preparation for killing Nasar, “ they left by way of the pigpen gate, with their knives unwrapped, trailed by the uproar of the dogs in the yards. ” It’s as if the dogs are people gossiping and spreading the word that Nasar is to be killed. This motif continues on page 67, where “ The dogs barked at [Santiago Nasar] as usual when they heard him come in, but he calmed them down in the half light with the tinkling of his keys. In this instance it’s as if people have the intent of warning Nasar, but nobody seems to be able to, and the word is continuing to spread to everyone but him. The dogs also represent the population when they are “ aroused by the smell of death. ” The people throughout the story get excited with the idea of a murder, and while many are opposed to the actual act of killing Nasar, they still find excitement in the event and act in accordance with their feelings: they spread the word like wildfire, nobody takes time to warn Nasar until it is too late, and then they gather to watch the act.

They treat the entire thing like some exciting, thrilling event, not like a tragic and cruel act, as one would expect. They act like dogs with their animalistic group reactions to the events that take place. Marquez sums up these animalistic reactions on the last page of the book, as Nasar is walking through the neighbors' house carrying his entrails. Poncho Lanao, the neighbor, recalls ““ the terrible smell of shit. ”” This recollection carries two related meanings. The first being the entire event ‘ smelled bad’. It showed a terrible side of human behavior and leaves bad impressions on people who hear of it.

This relates to the second, which comes back to people acting like animals. Animals are often described as smelling bad, or ‘ like shit’, and from the way Nasar was killed to the way the people in the story acted, this entire event was extremely animalistic. Birds, in particular falcons, are also a motif in the story. In the dedication of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* there is a quote from Gil Vicente, “ The pursuit of love is like falconry. ” This could mean that like in falconry, where the falcon learns to accept its role under its master, a woman must learn to accept its role as wife and lover under her husband.

This belief, however, is one of tradition, and this novel is constantly bringing into question whether or not tradition is good or bad, right or wrong. This quote could also mean that it is up to somebody to go out and find a suitable lover, one will not just show up, just as a falconer must go out and seek a falcon. Another use of the falcon is on page 65, where the narrator, a friend of Nasar's, warns him he should not sleep with Maria Alejandro Cervantes, someone who slept with many men his age. He tells Nasar, “ ‘ A falcon who

chases a warlike crane can only hope for a life of pain. ” This is again relating the falcon to love.

This time, however, the falcon is the one doing the pursuing. Santiago’s friend is warning him that should he choose to be with this woman who sleeps with many men, he can expect to be hurt as a result. Similarly to the falcon, Marquez uses a hawk to characterize Nasar. When Nasar grabs Divina Flor in the front room, Marquez describes his hand as “ the butcher hawk hand. ” This goes back to the falcon motif with love. The description of Nasar as a hawk again is used on page 90: “ He was a sparrow hawk. He went about alone, just like his father, nipping the bud of any wayward virgin who began showing up in those woods. This similar to the last, compares Nasar to a hawk, a predatory animal that survives by preying on helpless animals. Nasar is being described as a man who goes from virgin to virgin, taking advantage of them, but never actually engaging in extended relationships with any of them. Gabriel Garcia Marquez uses animals as motifs frequently throughout Chronicle of a Death Foretold to aid in his establishment of theme, characterization, emphasis of events, foreshadowing, and as means of humor. He utilizes a variety of animals, in particular the pig, rabbit, and birds to carry out this variety of literary functions.