

The metaphorical
martyr: an analytical
exploration of the role
of symbolism in th...



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If the world were a desert, art would be its oasis. Within the realm of art and literature is the craft of symbolism, by which artists invest their characters or other such depictions with deeper meanings. What is most likely the most common symbol of all time is the cross for Christ and the homage it pays to the Christian faith. Said symbol is prevalent in literature, as seen for example in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. In the Novella, Gabriel Marquez is able to bring across a deeper meaning for his readers by incorporating the symbol of Jesus Christ by linking Santiago Nasar to him through his name. Santiago Nasar's fate informs his fate by dint of its' of etymology, explicit references, and implicit allusions. Through the employment of these literary aspects, Garcia Marquez is able to write the faith of Santiago Nasar in the stars.

The primary measure by which Marquez is able to foretell the fate of Santiago Nasar using his name is by way of its underlying meaning.

Etymology is the study of names and their history, and by employing this academia, Marquez is able to craft a destiny for his characters before the plot even begins. Santiago or James is the Patron Saint of Spain, which is the first link that Santiago Nasar has to the Christian Faith. Secondly, Nasar or Nazarus is the Latin word denoting someone as Christian. Other characters in the Novella also have names that tie them to their fates, such as Divina Flor who is deflowered. Therefore, if one's name writes one's fate, then Santiago Nasar by virtue of his name is destined to die as a martyr as Jesus Christ did before him.

The etymology of Santiago Nasar's name leads to further symbols linking him to Jesus Christ. This can be explicitly seen when he is being murdered in <https://assignbuster.com/the-metaphorical-martyr-an-analytical-exploration-of-the-role-of-symbolism-in-the-novella-chronicle-of-a-death-foretold/>

the final chapter of the Novella. Whilst being slaughtered Nasar does not bleed after the first blow of the Vicario's knife slices through his hand and pins him to the wood of the door behind him. The lack of blood is a symbol of divinity and immortality. Furthermore, the knife that pierces his hand pins him to the wood of the door in the same way that the nails that pierced Christ's hands pinned him to the wood of the cross. Furthermore, as the knives continue to bombard him, Nasar lets out a cry of pain akin to that of an innocent calf, which is another illusion to divinity and purity.

Subsequently, in the middle of the novella, while Santiago Nasar's body is going through the autopsy and the hole in his hand is found, Garcia Marquez directly states that his body resembled that of a fallen Christ. The image of the crucifix and the calf are but more examples of Garcia Marquez adding depth to depth to his exploration of Santiago Nasar as being a symbol of Jesus. On that account, Marquez is able to use Santiago Nasar's name to explicitly reference him to Christ.

The last implication of Santiago Nasar's name for the purposes of determining his fate is the implicit allusion that Marquez builds in the last few pages of the Novella. Chronicle of a Death Foretold is set in what seems to be early 20th century Latin America. The setting is not specified as it serves as a metaphor for the entire continent. Marquez uses the novella to comment on the cults of honour and image that he himself witnessed while growing up. Through the Vicario brothers, these cults are brought to light. After Angela Vicario dishonours her family, her brothers are dictated by the cults of honour and image to restore dignity to their name by dint of an honour killing. After the deed is done, the brothers claim that it was " an act

before God” thought the Bible directly states that “ thou shalt not kill” as it is the 6th of the holy 10 commandments. This portrays how in the society depicted, the cults of image and honour have superseded the religion under whose authorities individuals claim to act. Because of this loss of priorities, the entire town in which the story is set is in a whirlpool of sin. Santiago Nasar is murdered because the cults of honour and image demanded his death, and the sin of this demand is the reason for which he dies. Just as Jesus Christ died for the sins of others, Santiago Nasar dies as a Martyr for the sins of his entire town. Marquez is able to create this allusion and convey this deeper meaning of the novella on principles purely established on the basis of Nasar’s name and his connection to Christ.

By way of his use of etymology, references and allusions, Marquez is able to dictate the fate of Santiago Nasar based solely on the premise of the name that was given to him. The complex metaphor comparing him to Jesus Christ helps expose a society that has succumbed to a world of sin. Just as symbolism aided Marquez in the depiction of his characters and their fates, it has helped countless others. A world without symbols is one that is black and white in the sense that everything is what it is, and the grayscale that is similies and metaphors does not exist, however, is one blurred shade of grey if no deeper meaning can ever be gleaned from the world.