Repetitions and reflections in Chronicle of a Death Foretold


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**Abstract**

Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is a spiralling search for satisfying explanations of why events occur as they do. The first sentences prefigure the book’s concern with the nature of memory and our perception of reality as describable in words. The narrator’s declared intention of reassembling “the broken mirror of memory” allows the scrutiny of many kinds of reflections: dream images, recollections and retrospective insights, repetitions and contradictions. Memory is both individual and collective; separate voices are joined in a town history. The story of a small town murder becomes a chronicle of a universal need to understand the purpose of life. The fallibility of memory and of words is expanded into the impossibility of recovering the past objectively. We are able to perceive repeated patterns of behavior but the meaning of history eludes us. Interwoven throughout the cycling narrative fabric of repetitions, mockeries and fragmented insights are affirmations of the creativity and strength of human imagination, and Chronicle is ultimately a celebration of the power of words, despite the inadequacy of language to mirror objective reality.

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In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, we already know who did it and know their reasons from the start. Instead, the narrative focuses on unraveling the circumstances surrounding the killing and its aftereffects on the inhabitants of the unnamed Colombian town in which it is set. Why, for example, was the murder allowed to happen in spite of the fact that everyone in town already knew about the Vicario brothers’ plan to kill Nasar beforehand? I found Chronicle of a Death Foretold, the story of Santiago Nasar’s murder by the two Vicario brothers to protect their sister’s honor, a pleasure to read.