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tem. However, regarding Angela, they are a family that pays no attention to such essential values as love, respect for others, and free will. They know, because Angela tells them, that she does not love Bayardo San Roma n and does not want to marry her. However, they ignore her and decide to marry her even without her consent. Their morality takes a back seat when it comes to this marriage of convenience because Bayardo San Roma n is rich beyond imagination. The moral value system of Bayardo San Roma n, the offended husband who returns his wife, is also ambiguous, if not ironic. He is the one who decides to marry Angela at first sight, before even being introduced to her. He is the one who, instead of courting her, pays more attention to seducing her family with his money and his charm. It is he who marries Angela, as if to purchase his happiness with his immeasurable fortune. It is Bayardo who, showing no scruples, forces Xius, a widower who married and lived in love in his house for many years, to sell that house to him because he wants it. Bayardo, as a character, shows no moral value system greater than his monetary system. The moral and legal institutions of Church and state pay little attention to the Vicarios' thirst for revenge. Father Carmen Amador, who presumably is in charge of the town's religious values, refuses to get involved although he is clearly capable of putting a stop to the planned murder. He justifies his action by saying that he was concentrating his attention on the imminent arrival of his bishop. Ironically, the bishop arrives but does not disembark to greet the people who so anxiously await his visit. The civil authorities could stop the killing, but also choose to ignore it. The mayor of the town, Lazaro Aponte, could incarcerate the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to kill Santiago, but he chooses not to. It is his nonchalant way of enforcing the law that permits the twins to commit their crime. Relating to the theme of moral responsibility, the town at large also bears its share of responsibility for the crime. The narrator insists that everybody in town knows the intention of the twins, but few make an honest attempt to stop it. There seems to be a kind of secret complicity among the townsfolk. Their silence can be viewed as a form of acceptance, a belief that the crime against Angela had to be avenged. Santiago, according to the town's code of moral responsibility, has done something wrong. The town's moral value of virginity is superior to a man's death. Only the blood of the perpetrator can wash off the blood of stolen virginity. The Vicario brothers believe that, but the townsfolk seem to enforce it. Early in the morning of the day of the killing, a crowd of women, men, children, and young people congregates on the dock to receive the visiting bishop. This type of behavior is consistent with what would be expected of a Christian town. Therefore, one would also expect to find a solid moral value system. However, when it comes time to stop the killing, the townspeople assume a passive role and act as mere observers of the spectacle. Their inaction seems to imply that redeeming a family's lost honor by the killing of the perpetrator is consistent with their collective sense of moral values. All the town's individuals, from the civil and religious authorities to the simple folks, demonstrate an ambiguous sense of morality that challenges the presumed values of the town and the fundamental beliefs of society.

SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT Chronicle of a Death Foretold is one of Garcia Marquez's works that is least concerned with the political context, which permeates many of his other writings. Whether in Leaf Storm, No One Writes to the Colonel, In Evil Hour, One Hundred Years of Solitude, or Love in the Time of Cholera, the reader is faced with descriptions of the Colombian civil wars of the end of the nineteenth century. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, however, this historical fact is dealt with in a single reference. The reference, how- ever, should not pass unnoticed. General Petronio San Roma n, father of the groom, Bayardo San Roma n, is a member of the Conservative Party regime. Although the narrator describes him with admiration (he routed Colonel Aureliano Buendia of the Liberal Party), the narrator's mother, when she recognizes the general, will not even shake his hand. Luisa Santiaga remembers him as a traitor who ordered his troops to shoot Gerineldo Marquez in the back (208). Although the historical context of the novel can be inferred from what has already been noted, the novel is not at all clear about the exact time of the events. What is clear is the time when Garcia Marquez, working as a journalist, first heard of the incident, 1951; and the time when he published the book, 1981. In the early 1950s, Colombia was experiencing terrible shootouts between conservatives and liberals. This social and historical moment, recognized in Colombian history as La violencia (the Violence), is neither the background nor the focus of the novel. What are the background and focus, instead, are the disparity and even hatred between the rich and the poor. The marriage of Bayardo San Roman and Angela Vicario provides a striking example of opposing social and economic forces. No one in town is as rich as Bayardo San Roma n. It is his wealth, along with his charm, that wins people over to him. This includes everyone—the priest, the mayor, and the town's aristocracy. Because of his wealth, Angela Vicario's mother says, in response to Angela's statement that she does not love Bayardo, "Love can be learned too" (209). The attacks on the wealthy found in No One Writes to the Colonel are well camouflaged in Chronicle of a Death Foretold, due, perhaps, to an effort to fully focus on the main plot. Another such attack, for example, occurs when Faustino Santos, an obscure character, asks the Vicario brothers why they must kill Santiago Nasar when there are plenty of other rich men who deserve to die first (223). The narrator, however, adds that Faustino Santos says this jokingly. By 1981, when Chronicle of a Death Foretold was published, Colombia was facing many of the guerilla factions still fighting today. The guerilla groups of Colombia have been at war with the government's army since the 1950s. The Colombian guerrillas, as reported by the world news, continue to resist to the present day. In 1981, Garcia Marquez and his wife, Mercedes, were linked by rumor to a guerilla group, M-19, which specialized in urban violence. Although just a rumor, the government forces wanted to arrest Garcia Marquez and his wife. The couple sought asylum in the Mexican embassy and then left the country. Later that year, Colombian President Belisario Betancur invited the couple to return (Anderson 70). Bibliography Alonso, Carlos J. "Writing and Ritual in Chronicle of a Death Foretold." In Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Views. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989. 257-69. Alvarez-Borland, Isabel. "From Mystery to Parody: (Re) Readings of Garcia Marquez's Cro'nica de una muerte anunciada." In Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Views. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989. 219-26. The Christian Science Monitor, January 1983: 9. 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Source: Rubén Pelayo - Gabriel García Márquez A Critical Companion (2001, Greenwood) Categories: Latin American Literature, Literature, Novel AnalysisTags: Analysis of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Bibliography of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Character Study of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Chronicle of a Death Foretold Analysis, Chronicle of a Death Foretold Criticism, Chronicle of a Death Foretold Essay, Chronicle of a Death Foretold Guide, Chronicle of a Death Foretold Lecture, Chronicle of a Death Foretold PDF, Chronicle of a Death Foretold Summary, Chronicle of a Death Foretold Themes, Criticism of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Essays of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Gabriel García Márquez, Gabriel García Márquez as a Magical Realist, Literary Criticism, Magical Realism, Magical Realism in Gabriel García Márquez's Novels, Notes of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Plot of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Simple Analysis of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Study Guides of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Summary of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Synopsis of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Themes of Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. 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