

nes como "para mí, eso es latín" dan origen a las conversaciones de Jose Arcadio Buendía con el padre Antonio Isabel. "estaba marcado" a la cruz de ceniza que llevan en la frente los 17 Aurelianos. "me contagié el sueño" a la peste del insomnio, etc.

A todo esto surge la pregunta de quién es el narrador de *Cien Años de Soledad*. La respuesta más inmediata que se ofrece al lector es Melquíades, el autor de los manuscritos que descifra Jose Arcadio al final de la obra. Esta respuesta, no obstante, es una concesión que se hace a esa necesidad occidental burguesa de definir el dónde y el cuándo del narrador, la posición que ocupa en el espacio y en el tiempo al instante de narrar. La verdad es que la experiencia de la lectura no se modifica gran cosa cuando se considera la posibilidad de que los manuscritos de Melquíades coincidan palabra por palabra con la obra. ¿Cuál es entonces la función de este personaje: Jorge Guzmán no lo dice. Sus ideas pueden parecer polémicas a la luz de otros ensayos críticos sobre *Cien Años de Soledad*, pero ante todo quieren ser una invitación a revisar los presupuestos en que se funda la narratología.

Harvey F. Kline
COLOMBIA: PORTRAIT
OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY.
Boulder.

Westview Press, 1983, 148 pp.

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Brief, recent, introductory: these adjectives summarize both the strengths and the limitations of this work. If one keeps these in mind, he will find the work useful; if not, he will be tempted to criticize the author for not writing a different book.

The work is brief, composed of six chapters which survey the land and the people! history from pre-discovery to the present, government and politics, the economy, and international affairs, followed by a set conclusions and projec-

tions. There is little room for detail. Space, scarcely allows for more than a frustrating suggestion of the complexity of Colombian history and society for the past four hundred years, a fact openly lamented by the author. It is a recent work. Indeed, perhaps its most original contribution lies in its summary of political-economic issues from 1960 to 1982. Bibliographical sources include personal interviews with contemporary figures and recent doctoral dissertations, as well as a variety of published primary and secondary sources. Finally, the work is an introduction. For the specialist, there is little startlingly new. Most of the information is already available in works like the *Area Handbook for Colombia* (when it is up to date). As an introduction to an area not previously encountered, however, this work is much more manageable and probably more readable. Considering the virtual void that exists in English-language surveys of Colombia, this work serves aptly as a textbook introduction for undergraduate students. It provides a useful point of departure for further reading of more specialized works.

Among the more interesting interpretations are the author's assertion of Colombia's uniqueness as a country not easily categorized, nor easily identified as a model for others; his feeling that Colombia has one of the most inequitable distributions of wealth in Latin America; and the prediction that "economic conditions will be paramount in determining the future course of Colombian politics." He characterizes the Colombian elite as one suffering from an inferiority complex ("no somos capaces") in a manner reminiscent of Arthur Ramos and Octavio Paz in their descriptions of Mexican society, and he finds Colombia "neither democratic nor dictatorial in political terms nor capitalist, state capitalist, or socialist in economic ones". Instead, Colombia is a highly eclectic nation with its own peculiar mixture of institutions.

One might quibble with some details. There is the insistence that there was only one military government in the 19th Century. Adequately explained, this might be true, but on the surface it is hard to understand why the Melo Revolt of 1854 is counted but the rebellions of General Rafael Urdaneta, 1830 - 1831, and General Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera, 1860 - 1861, are not. Given the author's clear use of dependency terminology for Colombian economic history, why ignore the nation's identification with the

Group of 77 arguing for changes in the international economic order? And, in view of Colombia's subsequent identification with the Contadora proposals for Central American affairs, one can ask if the section on Colombia's relations with the United States is not just a bit overdrawn. Nevertheless, this is a usable, readable survey which avoids polemics and the temptation to seek scapegoats for complicated Colombian realities.

Jaime Manrique

COLOMBIAN GOLD

(New York: Avon, 1984), 180 pp.

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Jaime Manrique wrote his second novel, *Colombian Gold*, in English. The work of this contemporary Colombian writer exemplifies the dynamics of what can be coined "inter-American literary relations," the increasingly intense and creative dialogue that is developing between writers and artists of North and South America, and that is becoming a structuring element of their artistic production. Manrique is part of a stellar circle of Latin American and American writers and painters in New York, a group that generates a body of work consciously elaborated to express the symbiotic North-South experience. Central to this experience is the city, and Manrique has said in an interview, "New York is not a city, but a state of mind. It's an intergalactic place that belongs nowhere. In spite of the fact that it is located in the United States, I don't consider it representative of this continent in any way. It's a city that only obeys its own laws. For every rootless person, New York is a perfect place".

Through the filter of displacement, home becomes an obsession, which Manrique translates into stark, expressionistic images very analogous to the primal energy of Bill Sullivan's impressive volcano paintings of Ecuador. Bill Sullivan, the

American landscape painter, is one of those to whom the book is dedicated, and who is a leader of the group of New York artists to draw on Latin American motifs for their own work. As Jaime Manrique writes of Colombia in the contemporary mode of William Burroughs, Jerzy Kozinski, Nabokov and Conrad, Sullivan puts an almost industrial clarity into the Latin American landscape. When the protagonist of *Colombian Gold*, Santiago, walks in the streets of Bogota after a long absence, the narrative reads: "Santiago was more familiar with Paris and New York than Bogota. He turned onto the Carrera Séptima, the spine of downtown. For someone who had lived abroad, entering Bogota was like stepping into a time machine. Tall, narrow buildings stood at attention like soldiers in the half-empty streets. Indian women, wrapped in heavy, dark ruanas, lingered on corners, shielding scuzzy, disheveled children from the cold. Mal...boro, Mal...boro, they chanted".

Manrique's book is an indictment of contemporary Colombian society, so powerful that the author openly admits he is afraid to return to Bogota because the viper Caridad, the female lead character, is easily identified as the former head of DAS, the Colombian secret police. On the surface, *Colombian Gold* is one of the many drug exposes that link narcotics traffic to the inner circles of Colombian political and social life.

Santiago Villalba is the bastard son of one Colombia's wealthiest oligarchs. He returns to Colombia to his father's deathbed and the rage he has harbored against his father for a lifetime explodes — he smothers the dying man in his hospital bed. This episode launches Santiago into a nightmare world of death and drugs that ironically places him in the corrupt role for which his father had been preparing him to assume. He is forced to represent both the family drug business and the repressive Colombian government in its attempt to control political terrorists (in the book called the F-69, a transparent pseudo-acronym for the M-19). Santiago's lovely, emotionally disturbed wife, who is used in the novel to represent the wreckage of Colombian bourgeois womanhood, falls victim to the violence. Santiago is framed by Caridad and her gang. In an apothecic finale, Caridad tries to kill Santiago as he prepares to leave Colombia, supposedly with her, at the airport. He is saved by the F-69, one of whose members is Santiago's Indian maid Blanca, whom he raped. This is a story of rape,