

ters, the anecdotes, and the realistic images.

In order to avoid any suspicion of arbitrariness, Miss Maturo has arranged the essay into two parts: the first, "Mito y Literatura" (three chapters), is purely conceptual and theoretical. In it, problems of hermeneutics in relationship to structuralism and mythical consciousness are examined. Symbolic language in the Western tradition is also examined, as is the relationship between myth and novel. The second part, "El Lenguaje de los Símbolos en la obra de Gabriel García Márquez" (eleven chapters), studies the author and his works: *La Hojarasca*, *La Mala Hora*, *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba*, *Cien años de soledad*, and *El relato de un naufrago*.

With an erudition that is overwhelming, and sometimes tiring, Miss Maturo discusses in great detail metaphors, images, descriptions, dialogues, episodes, and protagonists, all of which build up, in one way or another, her central thesis. After each story there appears a scheme, or mythical pattern, which is the "núcleo significativo" where all the components and levels are resolved. Every moment is projected to a universal and timeless plane. Thus, the

first three tales — *La Hojarasca*, *La Mala Hora*, *El Coronel* — are dominated by the idea of death and rebirth; *Cien años de soledad*, which stems from a combination of various mythical codes (Hellenic, Hebraic, Alquimist, Christian) contains an eschatologic vision of man and history, whose centre is Christ, the joining point of providence and liberty. All the works of García Márquez have, according to Miss Maturo, a deep religious significance, without being sectarian.

Only time will tell to what degree this essay is revealing and convincing for readers of the Colombian novelist. In criticism, as in other humanist disciplines, to begin with a theory which is too elaborate is to be tempted to prove that theory at the expense of the author and his works. On the other hand, the excessive myth-hunting which is being practiced today, entices one into the trap noticed by Philip Ravh some time ago: "The critics captivated by this procedure are inclined to take for granted that to identify a mythic pattern in a novel or poem is tantamount to disclosing its merit — an assumption entirely false, for the very same pattern is easily discoverable in works entirely without merit."

DISCUSSION AND COMMENT

The readers of the IFR are invited to express their opinions and to comment on the articles and reviews included in this issue. Letters should not exceed two typewritten pages.

BOOKS RECEIVED

FICTION

Benton, Kenneth. *Spy in Chancery*. New York: Walker, 1973. 160 pp. \$4.95.

Biernath, Horst. *Ein Mund voll Glück*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973. 192 pp. DM 20.

Böll, Heinrich. *Gruppenbild mit Dame*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1971. 400 pp. DM 25.