

2012

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Bush, Daniella Wittern (April 2012) "Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012)," *Inti: Revista de literatura hispánica*: No. 75, Article 2.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/inti/vol1/iss75/2>

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CARLOS FUENTES (1928-2012)

Daniella Wittern Bush

Renowned Mexican novelist and public intellectual Carlos Fuentes died at his home in Mexico City on May 15, 2012, at the age of 83. A Brown University professor-at-large based out of the Department of Hispanic Studies since 1996, he had just been to campus in April to participate in the department's sixth Transatlantic Conference, "Transatlantic Poetics: Toward a Cross-Cultural Syntax."

Fuentes came to Brown every spring to teach classes, give public talks, participate in dialogues with other leading figures of the Hispanic world, and to contribute to the series of Transatlantic Conferences organized by Professor Julio Ortega and students from the Department of Hispanic Studies. He presented lectures within the departments of French Studies, Latin American Studies, and Literary Arts, while also partaking in a number of high-profile, international Brown events: he was part of former Brown President Vartan Gregorian's Dedication to Hispanic Studies; he participated in Brown's Transatlantic gathering in Madrid with then-Brown President Gordon Gee; and served as co-host, along with fellow Latin American author Gabriel García Márquez, to President Ruth Simmons for her Julio Cortázar invited lectureship at the Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico. He received an honorary doctoral degree from Brown in 1995, when Professor Ortega was chair of the Department of Hispanic Studies—a department consistently recognized as one of the top in the country by the National Research Council.

Carlos Fuentes is the author of 50 books that cover the spectrum of genres, including novels, essays, plays, and anthologies. Best known throughout the Spanish-speaking world for what many call his masterpiece, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, published in 1962), Fuentes

became well known within the United States for his 1985 novel *Gringo viejo* (*The Old Gringo*)—the first book by a Latin American novelist to become a best seller here. *The Old Gringo* was later made into a film starring Gregory Peck and Jane Fonda (1989). With Professor Ortega, Fuentes edited *The Picador Book of Latin American Short Stories* that was launched by Vintage Press in New York. Carlos Fuentes's collected works (*Obras reunidas*) are currently being published by the leading Mexican publisher, Fondo de Cultura Económica, and a group of graduate students from Brown's Department of Hispanic Studies has worked as editorial assistants on the production of the first five volumes of this series edited by Julio Ortega. For his writing, Fuentes has been the recipient of, among other prizes, the Premio Rómulo Gallegos (1977), the Premio Cervantes (1987), and the Premio Príncipe de Asturias de las Letras (1994). Before joining Brown, he was a visiting professor at Harvard, Pennsylvania, Dartmouth, and Princeton universities.