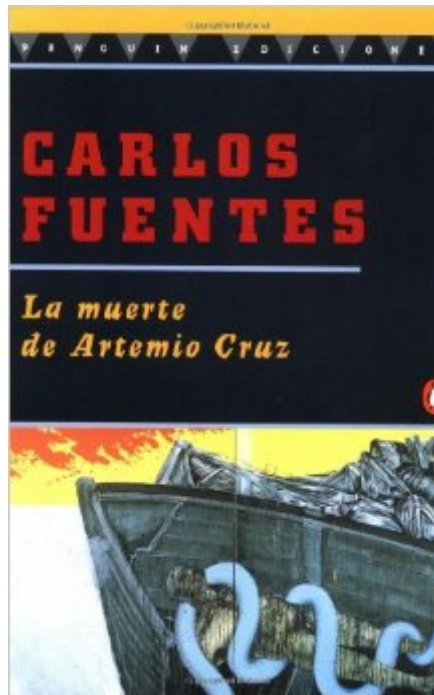


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La Muerte De Artemio Cruz (Spanish Edition)



Synopsis

After collapsing from an illness while attending a business meeting, a dying Artemio Cruz, a rich and powerful land owner in modern Mexico, is driven by conscience to recall his corrupt life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As an intersection of two major themes - the illusion of independence pictured in a faint bourgeois environment (*Las Buenas Conciencias*, 1959) and the nightmare of transculturation in contemporary life (*La RegiÃ³n MÃ¡s Transparente*, 1958), *La Muerte De Artemio Cruz* (1962) rebuilds Mexican history on the ruins of individual and social consciousness. The protagonist (the "yo" instance) is led to seek the truth in his own past, while the voice of memory ("tÃº") recalls the origins of a betrayed revolution ("Ã©l", the stream of historical action) and gives the dying man the last chance to imagine how things might have been from another point of view: the wish of community, a future raised by plural needs and dreams - "nosotros". From the epigraphs to the end of the novel, death and memory join forces to restore that manifold identity, stifled by Artemio's overwhelming projects. The physical death of Artemio corresponds to the rebirth of Mexican history as a social body made of facts but also of feelings and emotions, concealed under the rough mask of authority. Throughout the text the feminine figures accomplish this mission as well, reflecting, like mirrors (so often mentioned in this book), the reality Artemio wants to deny. Four women - Regina, Catalina, Lilia y Laura - symbolize different periods of Artemio's life strongly attached to main revolutionary commotions (from the beginnings to their later political and economic metamorphose). In each one

of them, financial ascent and physical/moral degradation are but one painful and irreversible process.

Caveat: This review is specific to my current, idiosyncratic reading needs. Specifically, I need not to have my depression exacerbated. Short version: if you are ill and trying not to focus on your physical being, and would be disturbed by the graphic depiction of the physical decomposition and mental fragmentation of a dying protagonist who is sociopathic, power-consumed, hateful and in no imaginable way sympathetic, don't read this book. Longer version follows.-----Some people achieve greatness, and some people assiduously avoid it and have great novels thrust upon them. This one was inflicted on me by my book club, which chose it, presumably, to honor the recently-deceased Fuentes (who unquestionably *deserves* to be honored). I chose to read the Spanish edition, just because I could and would have felt guilty about doing otherwise, so your mileage may vary, linguistically speaking, if the English translation is especially good or bad, but I think my opinion would be language-invariant over all editions. I'm sure it'd be equally unremittingly depressing rendered into any form of human communication. (Don't get me wrong; it's a powerful, superlatively-well-written, historically- and politically-illuminating novel. Don't read it if you're already dysphoric, though.) Understand that this isn't going to be incisive literary analysis (fat chance of that; sooner will I press a Mack truck than succeed in deconstructing Fuente's narrative technique). I'm really more interested in the politics of power and brutality and oppression. Mikhail Bakunin said that, the day after the revolution, the revolutionary ought to be executed.

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