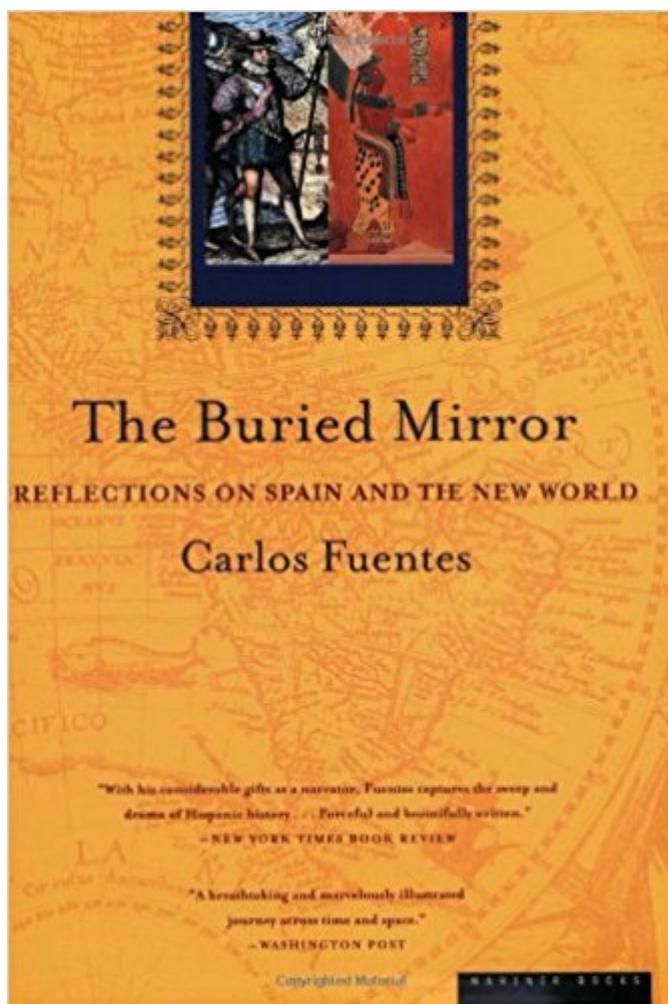


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# The Buried Mirror: Reflections On Spain And The New World



## **Synopsis**

As the Los Angeles Times said: "Drawing expertly on five centuries of the cultural history of Europe and the Americas, Fuentes seeks to capture the spirit of the new, vibrant, and enduring civilization [in the New World] that began in Spain." Fuentes's singular success in this remarkable endeavor has made the book a classic in its field. (A Mariner Reissue).

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Mexican novelist and statesman Fuentes believes that a common cultural heritage can help the countries of Latin America transcend disunity and fragmentation. In a splendidly illustrated survey, companion to a TV series, he perceptively explores Spanish America's love-hate relationship with Spain and its search for an identity in its multicultural roots. His guiding metaphor is the mirror--whether the glass found in Olmec tombs that guided the dead through the underworld, or Cervantes's Knight of the Mirror, who attempted to cure Don Quixote of madness. In the popular assemblies of medieval Spain's townships, Fuentes finds a model for democratic change in Latin American nations warped by oligarchy and U.S. imperialism. He paints a composite portrait of a dynamic culture through sophisticated meditations on Hernan Cortes's Machiavellian character, Spain's self-mutilating expulsion of its Jews, the pillage of Indian society, Goya and the Enlightenment, Bolivar's quest for self-rule, modern painting, and the Hispanic community in the U.S. 50,000 first printing; author tour. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Fuentes has used the occasion of the quincentennial of Columbus's voyage to the New World to reflect on the Latin American experience in this tie-in to the BBC series of the same name to be aired on the Discovery Channel on April 19-23, 1992. The theme of his thoughtful essay is the accommodation of cultures--Spain unique in the Old World in bringing together Christians, Moors, and Jews and the New World intermingling the blood and cultures of Spaniards, Indians, and blacks. It is the unavoidable encounter with the Other that has shaped the New World experience: "When we exclude, we betray ourselves," counsels Fuentes. "When we include, we find ourselves." Spanish America's predicament is that it inherited from Spain neither institutions nor attitudes necessary for full partnership in the modern capitalist world. Latin America remains derivative in culture and economy. Every page in this lapidary essay offers profound insight into the Spanish American psyche. Fuentes concludes, "We have the right . . . to celebrate the great wealth, variety, and continuity of our culture. Indeed, as the quincentennial comes and goes, many throughout Latin America will ask themselves, 'Why have our artists and writers been so imaginative and our politicians so unimaginative?' " Highly recommended for a wide range of readers. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 12/91.- David Keymer, SUNY Inst. of Technology, UticaCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is the English translation of *El Espejo Enterrado*, by Mexican writer and diplomat Carlos Fuentes. It consists of 399 pages divided into 5 parts and 18 chapters which describe the history of the Spanish speaking people from their Cretan and Greek roots, through their development during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Imperial Period, all the way to modern Spain and South America. The book also includes 5 two page tables titled The Monarchs of Spain and showing detailed genealogical information on the families that ruled Spain from 970 ad to the beginning of the 20th century (not included in the Spanish version published by Taurus-Bolsillo 1992), as well as a large number of beautiful black and white and color illustrations (also not included in the Spanish version published by Taurus-Bolsillo 1992). I missed such information, when reading the Spanish version, particularly the illustrations, because the author refers to them in the text, often with very detailed descriptions. The book ends with the credits, acknowledgements, and index. *El Espejo Enterrado* is listed as an essay, although it probably should be classified as a history book. Yet it is more than that, because Carlos Fuentes is more than an essayer or a historian. He is a multifaceted artist who sees and describes reality in a more comprehensive as well as captivating manner than the average essayer or historian would. Hence he does not just give the description of the events

that shaped the history of the Spanish speaking people, he makes them interesting, he makes the reader want to learn more. For example, by discussing the individuals whose thoughts and actions influenced the decisions of the Spanish speaking people (e.g., Jean Jacques Rousseau and Napoleon); by relating the major world events from which those related to the Spanish speaking people developed (e.g., the Renaissance, the French Revolution, the American Revolution); or by describing the works of some of the major Spanish speaking artists (e.g., Don Quixote, La Vida Es Sueno, Las Meninas, La Maja Desnuda). Hence with this book, you will learn more than the history of the Spanish speaking people, you will meet some of the great thinkers of the Western world, you will be reminded of the history of the Western world, you will learn about the products of the most illuminated minds of the Spanish speaking world. You will also discover about many word origins, (how many among you reading this review know the meaning of the word Saragoza, the origin of the name Malinche, the identity of the woman from whom California got its name, the reason why the Mexicans call the turkey guacolote). And you will acquire an awful lot of useful information which would otherwise not be easily available all in one book, for example, the real significance of Goya's painting *Saturn Devouring his Children*. If you are educated in the history and artistic expressions of the Western World and interested in Spain and South America, you will not be able to put this book down until you come to the end. In actual fact, you will probably wish that you never came to the end.

This is being used as a textbook for one of my university classes. Finally, a required book that I actually enjoy reading! It's incredibly well-written and contains plenty of imagery.

An extremely ambitious project; handled well. A recount of history, slightly depressing in clearly showing how little we humans learn from past mistakes One of a few books I will read a second time

Beautiful text to accompany Fuente's amazing account of what has formed and made Spanish America what it is today. A beautiful "reflection" of what Latino Americans and the rest of us should take into account when considering the history, identity and future trajectory of the Latino world.

Fuentes' depth of knowledge of Spanish/Latin American history, along with his rich use of language and understanding of symbolism, makes for a breathtaking read! He is at one with his heritage and marries, beautifully, the ordinary with the epic. The photos and painting are a perfect accompaniment to this rare book.

I needed this book for class. I'm reading it in Spanish as well as English. Overall, it's a condensed historical overview and critical cultural analysis of Spanish and Latino culture. Great for any culture buff. Arrived used and in great condition, too!

Carlos Fuentes sums up Latin American culture and history in a way all can understand and never forget. A great book for teachers of Spanish and anyone else who wants an introduction into the history of our Latin American neighbors. Edward Bucacci

One of the better History books I have read for a class. It has more personality than most and stay engaging throughout.

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