Editor’s Message: Why Literature Matters

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Why Literature Matters

Mario Vargas Llosa is on our minds as we delight in his being awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. From his earliest narratives, Vargas Llosa’s writing has extended beyond the literary into broader spheres of influence. Prior to the Nobel Prize, he was already part of the Spanish-language literary canon. Now with this milestone, Vargas Llosa truly becomes a global icon whose presence has even found its way onto social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook. As the literary fuses with popular culture, I would like to think that literature has not become irrelevant in a world that Vargas Llosa has described as la civilización del espectáculo. With his recent recognitions, Vargas Llosa has obtained a new platform through which to affirm the value of literature in a society increasingly consumed by entertainment culture. Throughout his distinguished career, Vargas Llosa has eloquently made the case for why literature matters in our world and for that we are grateful.

As Editor of Hispania, when I learned that Vargas Llosa was to receive this highest of honors, my thoughts went immediately to my colleague, David P. Wiseman. Professor Wiseman is Hispania’s new Managing Editor with whom I have had the privilege of working quite intensely over the last year in our new editorial roles. Last fall, while learning about Hispania’s operations, he was also putting the finishing touches on his dissertation, titled “Mario Vargas Llosa and the Politics of Literature”. Coincidentally, he was preparing to defend his doctoral thesis at Vanderbilt University when the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature was revealed. Not long after that, I invited him to reflect on what Vargas Llosa’s international honor meant to him as an educator and a scholar whose work has focused principally on the novelist. His reflections on the subject are on the next page in the guest column titled “Celebrating Vargas Llosa”.

David P. Wiseman is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at Lewis-Clark State College, where he teaches a variety of Spanish language and culture courses as well as international literature in English. His academic interests include literature, pedagogy, and scholarly editing. He comes to Hispania with considerable editorial experience at the Afro-Hispanic Review and Decimonónica. His boundless energy, skillful editing, and strong organizational skills enrich Hispania quarterly. It is a privilege to have such a dedicated young scholar on Hispania’s team. I urge you to become better acquainted with Managing Editor Wiseman as well as our esteemed Nobel Laureate Mario Vargas Llosa by inviting you to read the guest column on the following page.

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Editor  
Hispania