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A publication for faculty and staff of the WMU College of Arts and Sciences

Doctoral Student Interviews Renowned Latin American Writer

A doctoral student in the Spanish Department, **Hedy Habra** recently received a Fellowship for Dissertation Completion and is writing her doctoral thesis on the narrative of **Mario Vargas Llosa**, one of the foremost Latin American contemporary writers. On the Nobel list for decades, Vargas Llosa is one of the leading exponents of the Latin American “Boom” alongside **Gabriel García Márquez**, **Carlos Fuentes** and **Julio Cortázar**.

His work has been translated in 32 languages. An award-winning essayist, novelist and playwright, Vargas Llosa’s novels cover a wide range of genres, from historical and political narratives to novels with lyrical or humorous overtones. He has just been granted the Maria Moors Cabot Prize from Columbia University for his exceptional journalistic achievements. Vargas Llosa is also a recipient of the most prestigious literary award in the Spanish-speaking world, the Premio Cervantes.

Habra has developed a great interest in Vargas Llosa and has published several refereed articles on some of his novels. On Oct. 19, she was granted an interview from Vargas Llosa in Georgetown where he is currently teaching as a Visiting Professor. She was able to discuss several points relevant to her thesis and address specific questions that he graciously answered in detail. This meeting was stimulating and useful for a better understanding of his work.

For her doctoral dissertation Habra has chosen a combined critical approach, which consists of the linking of the function of the visual to the concept of “small worlds” which stem from characters’ fantasies. Vargas Llosa transforms his characters into producers of short films, which multiplies the levels of interpretation and sheds light on the fictional plot, inducing reader’s involvement in the interpretation and recreation of the text. She feels that meeting Mario Vargas Llosa was instrumental in improving the depth and quality of her research and insights on his complex narrative.

For more about Habra or Vargas Llosa, visit one of the following websites:

- www.hedyhabra.com
- <http://www.mvargasllosa.com/> (Vargas Llosa Official Website)
- <http://www.mvargasllosa.com/distin.htm> (Awards and Distinctions)
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_Vargas_Llosa (English and other languages)



Spanish Department doctoral student, **Hedy Habra** (left) after her interview with **Mario Vargas Llosa** at his home in Georgetown.

PRISM DEADLINE NOV. 21—READER’S SURVEY ONLINE

The editors of the PRISM newsletter are looking for feedback about the publication.

The October and November issues will be combined into one publication. *The deadline for submission to the October/November issue is Tuesday, Nov. 21.* Please send your items for submission to Cheri Bales at cheri.bales@wmich.edu. PRISM is not published in December. The January issue will incorporate changes and suggestions as a result of the reader’s survey.

Take the survey at: <http://survey.atis.wmich.edu/other/prism/prism.htm>.