*"[Carlos] Fuentes was one of the most admired writers in the Spanish-speaking world, a catalyst, along with Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa and Julio Cortázar....In the tradition of Latin American writers, Mr. Fuentes was politically engaged, writing magazine, newspaper and journal articles that criticized the Mexican government during the long period of sometimes repressive single-party rule…”[[1]](#footnote-1)*

*Carlos Fuentes spent the 1979-80 academic year teaching at Princeton. While he was visiting the University of Notre Dame, he talked with Professor José Anadón and Anadón’s students. Below is an excerpt from that discussion, from* WORLDVIEW *magazine, September 1980. Fuentes’ response has been shortened for the classroom.*

**In much of your work you have criticized an élite class, the colonial class of Mexico, [as] old and corrupt. Does this situation prevail in the present society [1980]?**

… Although the elite in Mexico changes a great deal, there is nonetheless a group of very powerful impresarios, partisans, and millionaires that has been around for a long time and is almost like a gerontocracy. In spite of this, however, there are dynamics at work in that system, in that it recruits new members, changes them, and displaces old political cliques. It is in constant flux. Our Party of Revolutionary Institutions, the PRI, in fact, offers many more ideological options than your two-party system. This alteration you have in the United States between tweedledee and tweedledum is not really a political choice such as one has in France, Spain, or Italy.

In Mexico we have an almost one party system, limited now by political reforms and also by the presence of the Communist Party, the Mexican Workers party, etc. The PRI, in effect, has several wings within itself constantly battling it out, though unfortunately in a totally secret manner. Only the politicians know about this, if anyone does. People know there is a left wing of the party, a right wing, a center, that these factions battle it out, and that compromise is eventually reached. But there is no popular participation. I think in Mexico we should demand at least a democratization of the electoral process. If we had primaries and precandidates who would discuss public issues and establish priorities, this would be an enormous benefit to the country as a whole.

1. Excerpt fromThe New York TimesObituary, "[Carlos Fuentes, Mexican Man of Letters, Dies at 83](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/16/books/carlos-fuentes-mexican-novelist-dies-at-83.html)" May 15, 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)