

TRUST

Biographical Paper: Hernan Diaz,

Submitted by Toby Siegel

To give you information about the importance of the author Hernan Diaz, a man in his fifties, born in 1973, who wrote tonight's book choice, "Trust", I will describe his brief background and then the influences that helped shape his writing career of, "consistent excellence." Due to political changes in Buenos Aires, his family moved to Sweden and then America. Diaz is a member of the Latin X authors, who produced works as Americans and were of Latin descent. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, a few streets from deceased Martin Amis's home. His wife Anne, is a filmmaker and their daughter attends school in the area. His favorite genre of books has been the Classics and studied in London and New York where he received a PhD from New York University. His first novel, "In the Distance", a story about the adventures of Hakan a Swedish immigrant who travels across America during the 19th century, was a Publisher's Weekly Top 10, a winner of The Saroyan International Prize and a finalist for both the Pen/Faulkner Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. He edits an academic journal at Columbia University, has written articles, stories and essays in *The Paris Review*, *The Atlantic*, *The Yale Review*, and after his second novel was published in 2022, "Trust", he received the Pulitzer Prize.

Hernan Diaz was influenced by Edith Wharton, whose books about the gilded age helped him understand the wealthy class of the 1870's in New York, after he read "The Age of Innocence." She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, and the first female recipient to receive this honor. The novel helped Diaz understand that prose and the novel were an important form of writing. It gave him insights into the clash between old and new money, and the conflicts of this time. The "second influencer" was Jorge Francisco Isidoro Luis Borges Acevedo known for his important writings about philosophy, a critic, librarian, translator of the Spanish language, and

poet..The young Diaz had full access to the Diaz home library and Borges's writings were the basis for his third novel, "Borges, Between History and Eternity." He was quoted as saying he wouldn't be the writer he was, without the influence of Borges. Latin American writers including Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende who wrote, "The House of the Spirits," and poet Pablo Neruda, introduced Diaz to magical realism which blurs the lines between fantasy and reality.

When "Trust" received the Pulitzer Prize, it was listed as the best book of the year in thirty different publications, and was said to be Barack Obama's favorite book for the year 2022. Diaz became a media sensation and in an interview with NPR's Scott Simon described the illusion of money, the volatile stock market, and the reality- effect of powerful women and men in leadership roles. C.B.S. featured Diaz on a "Sunday Morning" podcast and he said, "Trust" the book, is something you can't trust, and that is a very good thing. Values and good fortune have the ability to bend reality"

Perhaps you wondered how Diaz became so important in such a short time. It was suggested in one article, that this is a Metafiction, a term coined by William Gass in the 1970's that means a reader is reading a work of fiction, often a parody, about the relationship between the writer, who is exhibiting playfulness with the text, and the reader. The narrator or characters are aware that they are part of a work of fiction, The boundaries are broken between reality and fiction, and reality and art. In his book , "Fiction and the Figures of Life," Gass wrote, "Metafiction can add depth and complexity and can encourage the reader to engage with the text in new and exciting ways." In my opinion Hernan Diaz has accomplished this in his novels.

In conclusion, as Bevel negatively said to Ida Partenza in "Trust", "The more people partake in your everyday life the more they feel entitled to spread rumors about you.... You'd think closeness would engender trust." However, several contemporary writers whose books we have read, have happily followed Diaz's style include Amy Tan, born to Asian immigrants in California, *The Joy Luck Club*, that The Novel Club did not read, writer Junot Diaz originally

from the Dominican Republic, wrote *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and rural Kentuckian, Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*, that we did read, trusted Hernan Diaz and gained great notoriety. They trusted, and won prizes, and guess what, made a lot of money, too!

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