



# **Rudolfo A. Anaya: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)**

*Margarite Fernandez Olmos*

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Rudolfo A. Anaya's seven novels can all be viewed in terms of the Chicano literary tradition though their rich texts have earned Anaya a place of respect in mainstream modern American literature. Fernández Olmos guides the reader through Anaya's literary world with clear signposts, illuminating the mythical, cultural, and linguistic complexities of his astounding stories. From his coming of age masterpiece *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) to his most recent work *Shaman Winter* (1999) Anaya's writing with its rich spiritual symbolism is brought down to earth and made accessible to the student reader by Fernández Olmos insightful analyses. This work devotes a chapter to each novel, enabling Fernández Olmos to guide the reader through each, showing both the patterns and variations of literary devices in Anaya's works, while offering interesting alternative interpretations of Anaya's writing.

Fernández Olmos presents a well-researched chapter on the life of Rudolfo Anaya, familiarizing readers with his Hispanic cultural background which figures so prominently in his writing. A chapter on Anaya and the Chicano literary tradition deepens the reader's understanding and appreciation of the writer's tremendous contributions. Fernández Olmos then devotes a full chapter to each of the novels, *Bless Me, Ultima*, *Heart of Aztlán*, *Tortuga*, and *Albuquerque*; his detective novels, *Zia Summer* and *Rio Grande Fall*; and his modern-day parable *Jalamanta: A Message from the Desert*. Student readers and researchers will find the bibliography which includes reviews, criticisms, and other secondary sources to be very helpful.

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