



# **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. Fern<sup>^</sup>D'andez 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 Fern<sup>^</sup>D'andez Olmos insightful analyses. This work devotes a chapter to each novel, enabling Fern<sup>^</sup>D'andez 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.

Fern<sup>^</sup>D'andez 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 Alberqueque*; 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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