



Julia Alvarez: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

Silvio Sirias

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Julia Alvarez made her mark on the American literary horizon with the 1991 publication of her debut novel *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, a story based on her own family's bicultural experiences. Readers and critics alike quickly discovered the writer's penchant for extracting humor from hardship, and weaving personal history into vivid prose. Within a decade, Alvarez had published three more highly acclaimed novels, including *!Yo!* (1997), a delightful sequel to her first novel. This Critical Companion introduces readers to the life and works of Dominican American writer Alvarez and examines the thematic and cultural concerns that run through her novels. Full literary analysis is provided for each, including historical context for the factually based works, *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994) and *In the Name of Salomé* (2000). A brief biography and a chapter on the Latino novel help students to understand the personal and literary influences in Alvarez's writing.

This first full-length treatment of Julia Alvarez discusses her entire canon of writings including her poetry, short stories, children's fiction and nonfiction. The four novels are analyzed fully, each discussed in its own chapter with sections on plot, character development, literary device, thematic issues and narrative structure. Cultural and historical contexts of the work are also considered, and alternate critical perspectives are given for each novel. A select bibliography makes this volume a valuable research tool for students, educators and anyone interested in Latino literature.

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