CARIBBEAN IDENTITY AND MIGRANCY: THE NOVELS OF JULIA ALVAREZ

CONCEPCIÓN BADOS CIRIA
Universidad de Alcalá

(Resumen)

Julia Álvarez pertenece a la más joven generación de escritoras hispanocaribeñas afincadas en Estados Unidos. Sus novelas *How The Garcia Girls lost their Accents* (1992), *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994), *¡Yo!* (1997) hacen posible que sea considerada una pionera de la literatura que registra las experiencias de las mujeres caribeñas emigradas a Estados Unidos, bien por motivos políticos o económicos. La obra narrativa de Julia Alvarez lleva hasta los lectores estadounidenses el Caribe Hispano a través del ejercicio de la ficción y de la memoria. El propósito de este trabajo es demostrar que las novelas de la escritora nacida en República Dominicana, plasman unas voces y un estilo que recogen múltiples componentes de la identidad hispanocaribeña. El proceso de asumir una identidad multicultural por parte de los personajes de las novelas de Álvarez supone una insistencia en un concepto multidimensional y plural de la subjetividad. De modo que la retórica preferida por la escritora es la más cercana a la fragmentación y la yuxtaposición de relatos, incluso de géneros literarios. Tales estrategias narrativas permiten que las diferentes subjetividades se expresen a través de múltiples voces que hablan por sí mismas, mientras que la propia voz de la autora enmudece marginalizada, como una presencia ausente, en la trastienda de las narraciones. En última instancia, Julia Älvarez adopta como técnicas discursivas, aquéllas cercanas a la evocación y a la memoria, unas técnicas que confrontan, exploran, afirman y hacen coherente la peculiar identidad caribeña, una identidad construida a través del exilio, la diáspora y la emigración.

Julia Alvarez belongs to the latest generation of Latina women who write ibn order to make bridges that link the margins to the center, as much as her books cross borders with an obvious intention: to allay the pain of acculturation and the stigma of being an outsider making the displacements of language and geography to be the medium of art. She can be considered a pioneer of the growing literature of Caribbean women "émigré" that deftly connects two different cultures. Julia Alvarez, like Cristina García from Cuba, the author of *Dreaming in Cuban* (1993) and *The Agüero Sisters* (1997), and Esmeralda Santiago from Puerto Rico, the author of *When I was Puertorican* (1993) and *America's Dream* (1996) brings acquaintance of the Spanish Caribbean to the United States readers through the exercise of memory and fiction.

The purpose of this paper is to show that the novels of Julia Alvarez inscribe a matter of finding a voice or style that involves the many several components of her Spanish Caribbean identity. Such a process of assuming an ethnic identity is the insistence on a pluralist, multidimensional, or multifaceted concept of self; that is why Alvarez's favorite rhetoric is the one

framed by yuxtaposition and fragmentation. This writing strategy allows multiple sets of voices to speak for themselves, with the own author's voice muted and marginalized as a presence in the background. In order to illustrate my statementm I will anticipate that *How the Garcia Girls lost their Accents* (1992), incorporates several narrators—the four sisters—and, the same occurs in the novel *In the Time of the Butterflies,* where four sisters, again, are the tellers of a somehow fictionalized testimonio. !Yo!, the third novel I will be exploring, is a book made of fragments, as many as the multiple voices that will describe Yolanda García—the alter-ego of Julia Álvarez and, at the same time, the main character in *How the García Girls lost their Accents.* What I would like to emphasize is that the profusion of so many voices coming from the various Caribbean subjectivities ends up by cannibalizing the English language in which the novels are written. These novels inscribe differente re-accentuations, strategic inflections and other performative moves in syntactic and lexical codes at the level of language, in order to affirm that the multiplicity of voices coming from the Caribbean aerea play the most important roles in the configuration of a new American Literature and culture.

On August 6, 1960, Julia Alvarez and her family arrived in New York City, escaping from the tyranny of the dictator Rafael Trujillo. Her father had participated in an underground plot that was cracked by the SIM, Trujillo's secret police. She grew up in a middle-class Queens milieu and never lost contact with the island where she was born. She was sent to a private boarding school at the age of 13, and later attended Connecticut College. After a M.F.A at Syracuse University, she lit out for the heartland, taking a job with the Kentucky Arts Commission as a travelling poet-in-residence. For two years she was "a migrant poet, I would go anywhere" (Bing, 1996: 38). She began publishing poetry in 1984 with *Homecoming*, a book that features a 33-sonnet sequence called "33," and which portrays the emotional vertigo Alvarez suffered on her 33rd birthday, facing middle age without a secure job, a family of her own or a career to sustain her. In 1996, a second edition was released: *Homecoming: New and Collected Poems.* She published in 1995 another book of poetry entitled *The Other Side/El otro lado.* Even though both books are written in English, the traces of Spanish Caribbean identity and culture are always present throughout the poems. Julia Alvarez was offered a tenure-track position as professor of English at Middlebury College in 1991, coinciding with the emergence of her first novel *How the García Girls lost their Accents.*

Álvarez's first novel recaptures the childhood of four sisters, the Garcías, while recreating the difficulties experienced by the family on their arrival in the United States. The family portrayed in this novel could be any family fleeing any Latin American dictatorship and starting a new life full of nostalgia and fears in a new place. Yolanda, the second sister and the writer of the family remembers her first contacts with the English language at school. She is aware of her otherness, nevertheless without feeling it as a traumatic experience. The chapter entitled *Snow,* gives Yolanda García the opportunity to speak up about her feelings. It was December 1960 and after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, the menace of a war against the communists was in the air. That is why, Yolanda confuses the snow--something completely unknown for a Caribbean--with a bomb. She recaptures in lyrical terms her vision of the streets and buildings covered by the white element: " 'Snow', I repeated. I looked out the window warily. All my life I had heard about the white crystals that fell out of American skies in the winter. From my desk I watched the fine powder dust the sidewalk and parked cars below. Each flake was different.

Sister Zoe has said, like a person, irreplaceable and beautiful" (167). In this new migrant landscape, Yolanda pieces together her cultural identity, made of a multicultural reality like the Spanish Caribbean, while confronting her anxiety for identity through the act of writing. In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora,* Stuart Hall refers to Caribbean cultural identities in relation to at least three presences, borrowing Aimé Césaire's and Léopold Senghor's metaphor: the African presence, the European presence and the American presence (392-403). The African presence is the site of the oppressed; the European presence plays the role of the dominator and is the site of power; the third presence, the American one, is the juncture-point where the creolisations, assimilations and syncretisms are negotiated to make possible a "new" space (401).

Thus, in the same vein, writing for Yolanda García opens up a cathartic movement that involves migration, a journey throughout the three Caribbean presences to exorcice her quest for identity. She does so from the site of the diaspora, defined by the recognition of hybridity, heterogeneity and diversity. But writing involves also a certain distance between herself and the contexts that define her identity. After many years in the States, Yolanda García, the alter-ego of Julia Alvarez, comes to realize that she too has made "others" of her own countrymen during her years in exile.

Confronting anxiety for identity suggests, inevitably, discourses of feminism, Marxism and psycoanalysis that converge, merge and diverge throughout the pages of the novel. Carla, Yolanda, Sandra and Sofía, the four girls, recount their memories using a spontaneous, childish and colorful language, where family, politics and the Catholic religion play the most important roles in the formation of their four subjectivities framed by codes such as social class, race and gender. Nevertheless, the exiled subject also lives with a fiction: the homeland generated by nostalgia that always threatens to displace every day reality. The great threat is that the lost homeland, doubly lost because it is the past and because there is no way to return to it, will become a fetish. In that sense, the importance of the family as a clan is underlined constantly by Yolanda. She declares that "back then, we all lived side by side in adjoining houses on a piece of property which belonged to my grandparents. Every kid in the family was paired up with a bestfriend cousin" (225). The significance of the family ties continues to grow after the Garcías immigrate to the USA; the parents send them to the Island to spend summers there, so that they wouldn't lose touch with la familia. According to the sisters, there was a certain resistance from the parents that their daughters would assimilate completely to the new culture. For Carlos and Laura García "the hidden agenda was marriage to homeland boys, since everyone knew that once a girl married an American, those grandbabies came out jabbering in English and thinking of the island as a place to go get a suntan" (109).

To learn the English language properly becomes a priority for the sisters, because having an accent meant to be treated in a different way. They discover the power of language and that is why Doña Laura, her mother "was the leader now that they lived in the States. She had gone to school in the States. She spoke English without a heavy accent" (176). The father, on the contrary, always kept a strong one, being the most reluctant to assimilate completely to the English language.

Gender, social class and race are the issues that concern Yolanda García while confronting her anxiety for identity. She traces her genealogy in *How the García Girls lost their Accents* going back to The Conquistadors. In the family tree, Yolanda makes explicit that her great-great

grandfather married a Swedish girl. That means that the Garcías are considered and treated as white people. On the other hand, Yolanda asserts that her mother's relatives belonged to the upper-class in the island. Being white and upper-class, the García sisters approach both the issue of racism and social class, in a very interesting way. Remembering the old days on the island, a lost paradise in the present, the sisters recreate the endless desire to return to "lost origins," to go back to the beginning, a beginning where black maids and servants were an enchanting part of their daily lives. The oldest sister, Carla, recaptures with special interest her relationship with Chucha, Gladys and Nivea, the three maids that are seen as something familiar but still exotic, peculiar and fascinating at the same time. Since they were black and came from the mountains or little villages, they were illiterate and their dream was to go one day to make a better life in New York. Nevertheless, the influence of Doña Laura, her mother, makes Carla see the servants in a different way: "My mother says Gladys was only a country girl who didn't know any better than to sing popular tunes in the house and wear her kinky hair rollers all week long, then comb it out for Sunday mass in hairdos copied from American magazines my mother had thrown out" (285). Moreover, Carla is excited about the blackness of the latest of their laundry maids, who was "black-black" (260). Carla assures that her mother "always said it twice to darken the color to full, matching strength. She'd been nicknamed Nivea after an American face cream her mother used to rub on her, hoping the milky white applications would lighten her baby's black skin. The whites of the eyes she now trained on me were the only place where the cream magic seemed to have worked" (260).

The most impressive character among the maids is the one named Pila, the old laundry maid, who is depicted by Yolanda as follows: "She was Haitian, though obviously, only half. The light-skinned Dominican maids feared her, for Haiti was synonymous with voodoo" (280). She was dismissed one day by Doña Laura for having stolen some linens and when she was gone, she left behind all the spirits she claimed lived in the coal shed. Those spirits would haunt Yolanda, the author of the family, forever and would give her the strength to write in order to achieve liberation by means of articulating and making coherent her identity. By revealing the lives of the maids, the sisters recover the history of the Island, with its racial and political conflicts.[1] Fifi, the youngest sister remembers the oldest maid:

> There was this old lady, Chucha, who has worked in Mami's family forever and who had this face like someone had wrung it out after washing it to try to get some of the black out. I mean, Chucha was super wrinkled and Haitian blue-black, not Dominican café con leche black. She was a real Haitian too, and that's why she couldn't say certain words like the word for parsley or anyone's name that had a j in it, which meant the family was like camp, everyone with nicknames Chucha could pronounce (218).

She had a sad story, since she escaped the massacre organized by Trujillo, the dictator, in 1937. The servant, Chucha, is the one who recalls for the readers the departure of the Garcías. She is given the right to speak out about what she thinks of the white culture: "They

1. Rafael Trujillo ruled the country from 1931 to 1961. In 1937 he ordered the assassination of 20,000 Haitians to avoid the africanization of The Dominican Republic.

are gone, left in cars that came for them, driven by pale Americans in white uniforms with gold braids on their shoulders and on their caps. Too pale to be the living. The color of zombies, a nation of zombies. I worry about them, the girls, Doña Laura, moving among men the color of the living dead" (221). Obviously, Chucha is a good example of the writing strategies that include juxtaposed viewpoints of different narrators and informers from different perspectives. After the departure of the Garcías, she stays in the house to take care of it; she accomplishes with her rituals, saying her prayers to the *loa* of the night and washing her face and arms with agua florida. Then, as is her habit, she lays in her coffin where she sleeps every night to accustom her body to the burial that will soon come. In the deserted house, Chucha stands for a living spirit that haunts and protects, at the same time, the García girls that emigrated to the United States.

If the issue of race haunts Yolanda García in *How the García Girls lost their Accents*, it is in *¡Yo!*, the last novel of Julia Alvarez, where a black Caribbean woman, is given the privilege to tell what she thinks of the Garcías and, especially, of Yolanda herself. *Yo,* which means I in English, is a book made of fragments, constructed like all her other books from multiple viewpoints, displaying a historical sweep and a mobility of voices ranging freely from sassy gossip to animated autobiography, but always concealing a forceful political undercurrent. The three sisters, the parents, the teacher, the best friend, the student, the suitor, the maid's daughter, the stalker, the night watchman, the landlady, the caretakers, the wedding guests, the cousin, among others are the multiple narrators of the fragments that depict and describe Yolanda García, naked, in the most intimate and critical moments of her life. Some of them report from the USA, others from the Dominican Republic. The novel reinforces a familiar theme: the displaced exile must make the journey home to become whole again, but before doing so she/he must face the wreckage that historical circumstances have made of Caribbean history.

The fragment entitled "The maid's daughter" deals with the question of social class, gender and ethnicity, issues that frame and mark as "otherness" the diverse Caribbean identities. All along the chapter Sarita reports her ambivalent emotions toward the Garcías. She was an illegitimate daughter of Primitiva, one of the de la Torre's maids. When the Garcías decided to stay in New York they asked her to be a housemaid for them. Then, Sarita, a little girl, had to go to the countryside to live with her grandmother. She remembers the pictures that the Garcías sent her, signed with their names, and recognizes with irony that they were grateful because one of them, Yo, would add a little note saying "dear dear Sarita, we love your querida mamá and we thank you so much for lending her to us" (55). When she finally goes to live with the Garcías, she is considered as the fifth sister; not only does she go to the same school, but also she wears the same clothes; her desire of belonging to the family makes her invent a story that fulfills her expectations: she makes people believe that she is one of the sisters. It turns out that Sarita has in her veins the blood of the Conquistadors herself: when her mother was a young maid she was abused by one of the men of the de la Torre family. Sarita recognizes, though, that "Until the end, the USA Garcías never rejected Mamá. It was the de la Torre family back on the island that accused her of having lost her mind when she claimed—at the very end—that one of them was my father" (71). The only thing that makes Sarita happy is to show Yolanda that she is an independent woman, richer, more prosperous and more beautiful than the Garcías.

The conflictive relationship master/slave, white/black is the result of revenge through recognition on the part of Sarita; on the part of Yolanda García it results in a liberation of guilt.

In the chapter mentioned above, Sarita, an orthopedist with one of the top sports medicine clinics in the country, with a Rolex that cost four times the annual wages of her mother before she came to New York, receives the visit of Yolanda García to express her condolences for the death of her mother. Sarita makes explicit that she is in better economic position than her. She remarks "Yo García, starving writer, sometime teacher, in a cheap jersey dress" (72). Although Yolanda insists that Sarita's mother was a mother for the Garcías and that herself was a sister for them, Sarita wants to emphasize their differences; there is a lot of resentment in Sarita's heart and, at the same time, a desire to hurt the Garcías for what they were, white and middle class. When Yolanda leaves inviting Sarita to see her again, she says: "I doubt I am ever going to see any of the García girls again. Mamá has died. The past is over. I don't have to make believe anymore that we are five sisters" (72).

Between How the *García Girls lost their Accents* and *¡Yo!*, Julia Alvarez wrote a novel that inscribes the political concerns that had always haunted her since she left the Dominican Republic at the age of ten. *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1995) inscribes the terror suffered by Dominicans during the dictatorship of Trujillo. The novel is based on a true story. Almost four months after Alvarez's family escaped to the United States, three sisters who had also been members of the underground plot cracked by Trujillo's secret police, were murdered on their way home on a lonely mountain road. They had been to visit their jailed husbands who had purposely been transferred to a distant prison so that the women would be forced to make this perilous journey. A fourth sister who did not make the trip that day survived. Alvarez confesses that when she was a girl she could not get out of her mind the "accident" and the Mirabal sisters --who were known from the time they confronted Trujillo's tyranny as "the Butterflies". The novel not only incorporates history in the sense of a chronology of particular events. It adds also fiction, as the author herself declares in the *Postscript*: "I sometimes took liberties—by changing dates, by reconstructing events, and by collapsing characters or incidents. For I wanted to immerse my readers in an epoch in the life of the Dominican Republic that I believe can only be understood by fiction, only finally redeemed by the imagination" (*In the Time of the Butterflies*: 324). But, above all, *In the Time of the Butterflies,* provides a *Testimonio* as it is defined in the context of Latin American Literature.[2]

2. Ariel Dorfman in "La última novela de Capote: ¿Un nuevo género literario?."Dorfman asserts, following the rules of the Casa de las Americas context that " Testimonios must document some aspect of Latin American or Caribbean reality from a direct source. A direct source is understood as knowledge of the facts by the author or his her compilation of narratives of evidence obtained from the individuals involved or qualified as witnesses. In both cases reliable documentation, written or graphic, is indispensable. The form is at the author discretion, but literary quality is also indispensable." *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 124 (1986): 97-117. Translated and quoted by John Beverley in "The Margin at the Center. On Testimonio." *De/Colonizing the Subject* (1992), Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson eds., 113.

Testimonios must document some aspect of Latin American or Caribbean reality from a direct source. Julia Alvarez had previously tackled the subject in an essay in a small press book on heroic women, but in returning to the island to research the novel, she made an astonishing discovery: there were in fact four sisters, and the eldest, Dedé, had survived and was still living in the Dominican Republic. Alvarez interviewed Dedé and began to piece together the minute details of the sisters' lives. The first chapter of the novel registers the encounter between Dedé and her interviewer: "Could the woman please come over and talk to Dedé about the Mirabal sisters? She is originally from here but has lived many years in the States, for which she is sorry since her Spanish is not so good. The Mirabal sisters are not known there, for which she is also sorry for it is a crime that they should be forgotten, these unsung heroines of the underground"(3). Alvarez refers to a certain distance between her and Dedé, her informer, marked mainly by the fact that she has lived in the USA and cannot speak Spanish very well. In this sense the novel follows a well established tradition in Latin American Literature, with works such as *Biografía de un Cimarrón* by the Cuban Miguel Barnett; *Yo, Rigoberta Menchú,* compiled and written by the Venezuelan Elizabeth Burgos-Debray; *Hasta no verte Jesús Mio* by Elena Poniatowska, in Mexico, and *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Espezanza's Story* by Ruth Behar, among others (Logan 1997: 199-211).

In the Time of the Butterflies includes testimonio since it offers an answer to the problem of women's access to literature in colonized countries. The novel represents an affirmation of the Mirabal sisters as subjects but in connection with a group marked by marginalization, oppression and struggle; at the same time, it shatters common stereotypes of low-income and middle-class Latin American women as politically passive and socially marginalized, voiceless and submissive.[3] On the other hand, the novel emphasizes the persistence of orality in women's culture and, by extension, in the culture of the colonized, inasmuch as the form of the novel; it introduces original changes in theme and point of view as well as writing techniques and experimentation, thus subverting the dominant tradition and its forms of women's cultural idealization. Reading *In the Time of the Butterflies* brings to mind the "boom" in contemporary Latin American literature written by Latinas and Chicanas, often with women as central characters that reflect a deeply rooted tradition based on spoken rather than written words. In that sense I would mention the works of Chicana writers such as Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros, Denise Chaves, and Helena María Viramontes, among others.

---

3. The novels of the "trujillato" present a masculinism/nationalism revisited, revolutionary in intent but suspiciously familiar and patriarchal in content and form. Pedro Mir's *Amén de Mariposas* is an ellegy where collective patriotism and prophetic rhetoric combined with a romantic content introduces the equation of country with woman and establishes the analogy between land and mother. Miguel Aquino's *Tres heroínas y un tirano,* is written with the pretension of telling the true story of the sisters, and with "the intention of clarifying some facts distorted by fiction and invention." See: *One Master for Another. Populism as Patriarchal Rhetoric in Dominican Novels,* by Doris Sommer (1983), New York: University Press of America. *Amén de Mariposas,* by Pedro Mir. Santo domingo: Nuevo Mundo, 1969. *Tres heroínas y un tirano,* by Miguel Aquino. Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, 1996.

John Beverley asserts that testimonio establishes with its readers a complicity that involves identification—by engaging their sense of ethics and justice—and in this sense has been important in maintaining and developing the practice of international human rights and solidarity movements (112). The Epilogue of the novel, narrated by Dedé with rage and pain is very effective as she recalls her encounter with the murdered bodies of her sisters in a very stirring tone: "I didn't want to hear how they did it. I saw the marks on Minerva's throat; fingerprints sure as day on Mate's pale neck. They also clubbed them, I could see that when I went to cut her hair. They killed them good and dead. But I do not believe they violated my sisters, no. I checked as best I could. I think it is safe to say they acted like gentlemen murderers in that way"(303).

Dedé, the surviving sister, is worried at the end of the novel by "the absence of her left side" (321), which suggests that she had her left breast removed. This feminine loss stands as the allegory of the familiar tragedy perpetuated forever in her body; Simultaneously, the nostalgic title of the novel reconstructs the allegory of a national tragedy made eternal in the Dominican Republic since the Mirabal sisters are considered icons by Dominicans. Julia Alvarez confessed the fear she felt when she began to make them human beings throughout the pages of the novel. In an interview for *The Publishers Weekly* she declares: "I was constantly telling North Americans about the Mirabal sisters, surprised that my well informed friends had never heard about them. So the desire to tell the story was there from the very beginning. The hard part was that they had become legends: they had become such mythical characters that they had been robbed of their humanity, you know, and I was afraid of make them real"(39).

There is a personal interest, on the part of the author, in writing this novel: her father was also a member of the underground that the Mirabals started, but the Alvarez's escaped and the assassination of the three sisters had haunted her since then. Somehow, the discovery of the surviving sister was a blessing for Alvarez, because she brought the other three alive to the writer. Undoubtedly, the personal is linked to the political, which is made explicit in the intentionality of the author. The relation of narrator and compiler in the production of testimonial narratives can function as an ideological figure to give voice in literature to a previously "voiceless", anonymous, collective popular-democratic subject, thus suggesting a committed political response from the audience. This is what Julia Alvarez has in mind when she affirms in the *Postscript* of the novel: "I would hope that through this fictionalized story I will bring acquaintance of these famous sisters to English speaking readers. November 25th, the day of the murder, is observed in many Latin American countries as the International Day Against Violence Towards Women. Obviously, these sisters, who fought one tyrant, have served as models for women fighting against injustices of all kinds" (324).

In the Time of the Butterflies provides *testimonio* since it opens channels of communication to Latin American Women. Moreover, in spite of the problematics of translation, it is intended to bridge two different worlds by bringing the Margins to the Center. Last, but not least, by informing about oppression in the Caribbean and women's resistance to it, the writer, Julia Alvarez, desires to influence the formation of public policy toward Latin America. Yet, by writing and publishing *In the Time of the Butterflies,* Alvarez ensures that the Mirabal's place in American history will no longer go unrecognized and unrecorded. To conclude, I would like to insist on the importance given to voice and language in the novels of

Julia Alvarez. In an interview with Jonathan Bing, she attributes her interest in voice to the storytelling traditions of Dominican life. "We didn't have TV, we didn't have books. It was just what people did. That was our newspaper... In the Dominican Republic I was a non-reader in what was basically an oral culture and I hated books, school, anything that had to do with work" (39). In fact, the novels of Julia Alvarez insert themselves in what Stuart Hall calls "the aesthetics of the cross-overs" since the subversive force of her hybridizing tendency is most apparent at the level of language. She is decentering, deranging and cannibalizing the linguistic domination of English--the nation--language of master discourse, through strategic inflections, re-accentuations and other performative moves in semantic, syntactic and lexical codes. Ironically, she does so, in spite of the fact that she is a professor of English in a well known institution in the United States. Last but not least, just as the travel account and the ethnography served as forms for explorations of the "primitive" world and the realist novel served as the form for explorations of bourgeois manners and the self in early industrial society, so ethnic autobiography and autobiographical fictions can perhaps serve as key forms for explorations of pluralist, post-colonial, late twentieth-century society (Michael and Fischer 1986: 194-233). Ultimately, Julia Alvarez adopts as writing techniques the postmodern arts of memory that explore, confront, enhance and make coherent the Spanish Caribbean identities conformed through diaspora, exile and migrancy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alvarez, Julia, *How the García Girls Lost their Accents.* New York: Plume, 1992.

---. *In the Time of the Butterflies.* New York: Plume, 1994.

---. *¡Yo!,* New York: Algonquin Books, 1997.

Beverley, John "The Margin at the Center: On Testimonio" in *De/Colonizing the Subject.* Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, eds., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 91-114, 1992.

Bing, Jonathan, "Julia Alvarez: Books that cross the Borders." *The Publishers Weekly,* 16 December, 1996, 38-39.

Dorfman, Ariel, "La última novela de Capote: ¿Un nuevo género literario? *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 124, 97-117, 1986.

Fanon, Franz, *Black Skin, White Masks.* New York: Grove Press, 1967.

García, Cristina, *Dreaming in Cuban.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.

---. *The Aguero Sisters.* New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 1997.

Hall, Stuart, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A reader.* Patrick Williams and Laura Christian, eds., New York: Harvester/ Wheatsheaf, 392-403, 1994.

Logan, Kathleen, "Personal Testimony: Latin American Women Telling their lives" in *Latin American Research Review* 32, I, 199-211, 1997.

Michael M. and J. Fisher, "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory" in *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., Berkeley: University of California Press, 194-233, 1986.

Santiago, Esmeralda, *When I was Puertorican.* New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

---. *America's Dream.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996.