



# Taking Their Word: Literature and the Signs of Central America

*Arturo Arias*

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Central Americans are one of the largest Latino population groups in the United States. Yet, Arturo Arias argues, the cultural production of Central Americans remains little known to North Americans.

In *Taking Their Word*, Arias complicates notions of the cultural production of Central America, from Mexico in the North to Panama in the South. He charts the literature of Central America's liberation struggles of the 1970s and 1980s, its transformation after peace treaties were signed, the emergence of a new Maya literature that decenters Latin American literature written in Spanish, and the rise and fall of *testimonio*. Arias demonstrates that Central America and its literature are marked by an indigenism that has never before been fully theorized or critically grasped. Never one to avoid controversy, Arias proffers his views of how the immigration of Central Americans to North America has changed the cultural topography of both zones.

With this groundbreaking work, Arias establishes the importance of Central American literature and provides a frame for future studies of the region's culture.

Arturo Arias is director of Latin American studies at the University of Redlands. He is the author of six novels in Spanish and editor of *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* (Minnesota, 2001).

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