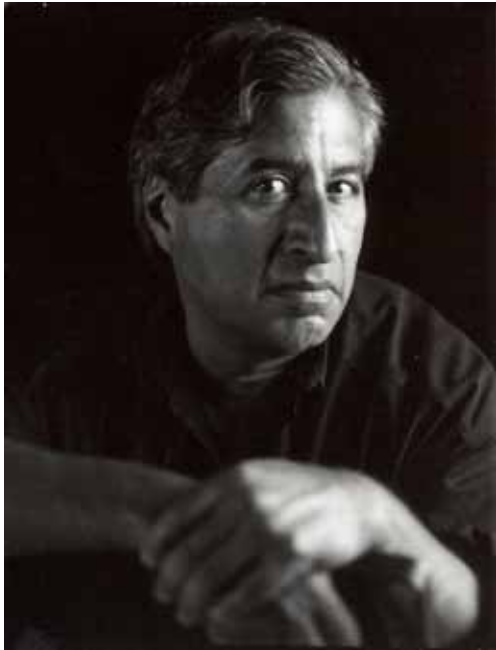


RICHARD RODRIGUEZ



- Hispanics in America: Who are they?
- Miscegenation and Our National History
- Religion in America

Richard Rodriguez has been hailed by *The Washington Post* as one of the most eloquent and probing public intellectuals in the country.” Because of three memoirs, because of his television essays for nearly twenty years on *The NewsHour* on PBS, and because of his essays in newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and Europe, he has become the most prominent Hispanic intellectual in America.

The son of Mexican immigrants—a self-described “scholarship boy”—Rodriguez, in his first and most famous book, “Hunger for Memory,” wrote about the painful but necessary experience of assimilation and of his difficult Americanization in the classroom. He was criticized by some readers and celebrated by others for voicing skepticism about bilingual education and affirmative action. Rodriguez remains adamant in his opinion that class is a more important factor for one’s life in America than race or ethnicity.

His second book, “Days of Obligation, An Argument With My Mexican Father” was a loving but unsentimental assessment of cultural tensions between what he calls “Catholic Mexico” and “Protestant America” and the dilemma of being “Mexican American”. “Days of Obligation” was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in Non-Fiction.

Over the years, he has written about a variety of subjects, from the death of America’s newspapers to the meaning of burritos to body-building. Since September 11th, he has been focused on religious violence. While Rodriguez is openly gay—has written poignantly of the AIDS epidemic and the deaths of many friends—he remains Roman Catholic. (Indeed, he often describes himself as “Irish Catholic”—because of the influence of Irish nuns and priests on his upbringing). He also describes himself as “brown”—belonging to a mix of races. And he predicted the eventual “browning” of America in his most recent book, “Brown: The Last Discovery of America.”

Presently, he is writing two books—one concerned with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and the desert ecology that shaped them. The other is a book on beauty.

In 1993, he was awarded the National Endowment for the Humanities Medal. It is the highest award the federal government gives to recognize work done in the humanities.