



RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

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

RICHARD RODRIGUEZ, one of America's most important essayists and a master of the "personal essay," writes about the intersection of his personal life with some of the great vexing issues of America.

Rodriguez, the son of Mexican immigrant parents, grew up in Sacramento, California. He was an undergraduate at Stanford University. He went on to spend two years in a religious studies program at Columbia. He then studied English Renaissance literature at the Warburg Institute in London and was a doctoral candidate at the University of California in Berkeley.

In 1982, he published an intellectual autobiography, *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. Widely celebrated and criticized, this book is today read in many American high schools and colleges. A memoir of a "scholarship boy", *Hunger* remains controversial for its skepticism regarding bilingual education and affirmative action.

In 1992, Rodriguez published *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father*, a "philosophical travel book," concerned with the moral landscape separating "Protestant America" and "Catholic Mexico." *Days of Obligation* was a runner-up for a Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction in 1993.

In 2002, Rodriguez has published *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*. In a series of essays concerned with topics as varied as the cleaning of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, cubism, and Broadway musicals, Rodriguez undermines America's black and white notion of race and proposes the color brown for understanding the future (and past) of the Americas.

As a journalist, Richard Rodriguez worked for over two decades for the Pacific News Service in San Francisco; he has also been a contributing editor for *Harper's Magazine* and the Sunday "Opinion" section of the *Los Angeles Times*.

Many Americans probably recognize him from his television appearances on PBS. For more than ten years he has appeared as an essayist on "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer". His televised essays on American life were honored in 1997 with a George Peabody Award.

In 1993, Richard Rodriguez was given the Frankel Medal (now renamed "The National Humanities Medal"), the highest honor the federal government gives to recognize work done in the humanities.