

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

In the Long Run: Luis J. Rodriguez's Life and Literary Legacy

Editors Josephine Metcalf & B. V. Olguín

Luis J. Rodriguez's first collection of poetry, *Poems Across the Pavement*, was published in 1989, with journalism and individual poem publications preceding this book. His subsequent testimonio, *Always Running—La Vida Loca: Gang Days in LA*, released in 1993 in the aftermath of the LA uprising, garnered Rodriguez widespread national and international attention. *Always Running* is renowned for its candid and meta-critical account of violent gang life in East LA in the 1970s, which the author experienced alongside his participation in the tail end of Chicano Movement and subsequent political work as a union organizer, journalist, and community-based activist intellectual. Throughout his literary career, Rodriguez has published 17 books of poetry, short stories, young adult literature, testimonio, anthologies, and a novel in addition to producing related multimedia works, which has led to him being dubbed “a superhero in Chicano literature.” Rodriguez also collaboratively established Tía Chucha's Cultural Center in southern California as a catalyst for writers, activists, and community members. He subsequently received the “Unsung Hero of Compassion” award from the Dalai Lama. Rodriguez's accomplishments, acclaim, and ongoing activism have led to extensive critical scholarship, but the complexity and diversity of his life and work have yet to be fully assessed.

This anthology seeks proposals for scholarly essays, critical testimonial reflections about substantive issues, and additional creative-critical explications of Rodriguez's life and work. We especially seek research that assesses works by Rodriguez that have not been subject to sustained scholarly inquiry, such as his children's and young adult literature, fiction, journalism, video poems, and spoken word CDs, in addition to his collaborative literary and community activities, including his political activism. Above all else, this anthology is designed to critically appraise the impact and contributions, as well as the complexities and contradictions of *all* of his literary works and extraliterary activities. We encourage proposals that consider:

- Global reception of Rodriguez's work (e.g., translations, reading tours, etc.)
- National reception to his works (e.g., canonization, banned books, etc.)
- Comparative approaches to his works
- Role of Indigenous histories and cultures in his life and writings
- His depictions of family, gender and sexuality
- Masculinity in Rodriguez's works
- Spatial studies (e.g., life in Los Angeles and Chicago, and writing about other locales)
- Work as Poet Laureate of Los Angeles
- His literary awards (among non-literary honors)
- His role as a publisher, editor, and collaborator
- His work with Tía Chucha's Centro Cultural and Bookstore
- Rodriguez's Marxist formation and organizational experiences
- Contributions to theatre and film as script writer, script doctor, and consultant
- His political “career” (e.g., 2014 run for California Governor)
- His role in US prisons (edited collection *Honor Comes Hard*, workshops, readings, re-entry programs)
- His negotiation of gender stereotyping, and theme of gendered bodies as receptacles of violence
- His role as a “red-carpet celebrity” despite his rebuttal of fame
- His use of digital technologies/social media (blog, twitter, podcast etc) as extensions of literary works

Please submit a 250 word abstract for 5,000-7,000 word essays/chapters, or creative-critical pieces of 3,000-5,000 words, along with a 2-page CV, to j.metcalf@hull.ac.uk and ben.olguin@english.ucsb.edu by October 20, 2020. We aim to respond by November 20, 2020. The date for selected contributors to submit their full drafts will likely be April 2021. We welcome proposals from postgraduates and independent scholars across the globe. Contact co-editors if you have any questions about the project and please share this CFP.