Author’s Name

Subject

Date

A struggle Between the Public and Private Life

Richard Rodriguez is a well-known American writer, famous for his publication “Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez”. The article is an autobiography in which Richard highlighted various social issues such as cultural, ethnicity and language that people face in everyday life. Richard immigrated to the US along with his family when he was very young. As his native language was not English he only knew a few words of English. So when he was admitted to school he was unable to interact with other children owing to his inability to speak the English language. According to Richard’s views culture was a point that tied their family together. So when his family-focused more on learning English rather than embracing their own culture he thought that it will move his family farther from each other. To improve Richard’s English his parents arranged daily tutoring sessions. However, after learning English he became more resentful to his parents. He felt ashamed at his parents’ lack of education and English speaking ability.

According to Richard’s views, bilingual education limits students’ and serves as a barrier to assimilation. Despite belonging from different ethnicity he strongly disapproved of bilingual education. He also labeled Spanish, his native language as a private language. Initially, he was upset with his parents for speaking English at home but later when he was fluent in English he drifted away from his family. If there was any education bilingual program when he was in school, he would have not been afraid and shy in the class yet after learning the English language his views changed. As once he used to think that learning English will drive him away from his culture but when his teacher said that he was losing all the traces of Spanish language accent he became extremely happy. Rodriguez believed that public education that is monolingual education can enhance the ability of a child too confidently participate in public life.

While discussing Rodriguez’s views about identity he was contradictive regarding his affirmative action. Although, when given the opportunity to teach minority literature he denied teaching the subject after some time he accepted the request. He also claimed in his autobiography several times that he is against affirmative action policy yet he benefited from it. For instance, when given the option to mark his ethnicity on various applications he could have left the options blank yet when he knew that he would get benefit from marking his ethnicity he always used to fill it out as Hispanic. Another reason that Rodriguez was against the affirmation action as he did not consider himself disadvantaged. According to the author, poor people are called disadvantaged and he was not poor yet he belongs from different ethnic groups. Furthermore, according to the author people should not be called disadvantaged based on their skin color.

Rodriguez always struggled to find a balance between his public life in which he had to speak English to become socially acceptable and private life in which he can speak the Spanish language. In the context of Rodriguez’s assimilation in America, his childhood depicts his journey towards realizing the necessity of public life. According to his views, forcing public life to look and feel more like a private was an act of deliberate separateness that in turn disadvantages the marginalized group. Although, he felt discomfort in living public life yet still his wish to assimilate in the American society farther him from not only his family but his culture and identity. According to Rodriguez, people are differentiated from each other based on class rather than race. He believed that race is a vast category that flattens a person’s individuality. He ever liked to be identified as a Mexican-American man rather he preferred to be identified as a middle-class man. In short, Rodriguez's views regarding language, family, and identity made it easier for him to assimilate into a new society and drift away from his own culture.

While reflecting on my views, I would rather prefer bilingual education rather than monolingual education. This is because an individual must never be embarrassed about his culture or his or her parents’ inability to assimilate into a different culture. Also, cultural identity can facilitate an individual in creating a sense of belonging. Even in educational institutes, it is necessary to have bilingual educational programs so that children from different ethnic groups can also feel more confident while sharing their views and ideas. For instance, if a child has migrated to another country where he or she is not familiar with the culture and language of a new country, it will be extremely hard for him or her to interact with other children because of a language barrier. Furthermore, a child may not be able to learn more quickly due to the language barrier as compared to the other children who are familiar with the language. If in schools bilingual educational programs are launched, then a child who has language issues can also share his ideas more confidently. Moreover, he or she will be able to learn English as well as they can compare the words in English with their native language and can, therefore, become more fluent in speaking the English language as well. Additionally, in a bilingual educational program, a child does not have to drift away from his culture and family to assimilate into a new country rather he or she can own his or her culture while can also assimilate into a new society.