

Good essay on always running

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



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Introduction

Always Running is Luis J. Rodriguez's first non-fictional book where he provides a first-hand account of his experiences as a Mexican-American growing up in East L. A. Rodriguez documented this memoir in 1993 about his youth as a gang member so as to steer his teenage son, Ramiro, from a gang group "la vida loca," that he had joined. The book has ten chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction and lays a general discussion about Rodriguez's childhood (Rodriguez's, 1993). He describes himself as a boy belonging nowhere. He strategically sets out his goal in the introduction and in the subsequent chapters contributes to the theme, to build an argument presented at the start. It is important to note that Rodriguez finishes his story as a respected person in the society where he is reunited with himself and the community.

The argument of the author is that the idea of living a normal life is very different for different people. He for example explains what to him and his peers were meant by living a normal life in comparison to someone who was

growing up in Orange County at that time. Normal according to Rodriguez meant survival, whereas normal for a kid growing up in Orange County would mean going to school every day and eating dinner every day. His argument is that some people are so sheltered from others (Rodriguez's, 1993). He then proceeds to argue that not knowing what else to do; he sought protection through violent related activities and peers and therefore started to live a life of crime. He grows up questioning everything and having to learn to think for himself.

In a change of event in the subsequent chapter, he starts to learn how not to be ashamed of his family and heritage, and works his life out to secure the respect of his community (Issaquah, 2006). Part of his heritage is Spanish language which makes him incorporate several Spanish words into the text. The author has included a glossary in the back of the book with translation for every Spanish word used to help everyone understand. This is therefore a story of self-discovery where a young boy is thrown into a cruel world and thus becomes a victim. Most of the chapters in this book are written in a chronological order where each major event discussed is signifying a new stage in Rodriguez's life.

General organization of the Book

The style elements and general organization of the book is well formulated which makes the book more interesting and easy to read. This is because a large part of the book is written in dialogue (Issaquah, 2006). This makes the reader get a clear picture of how the characters interact with each other. The reader also can easily identify the feelings of each character towards the other character and draw more accurate conclusions about why things

happened the way they did.

For example, Rodriguez dialogue with his peers before they shoot at him few nights after that helps the reader understand the peers lose of respect for him and their unwillingness to protect him. They felt that they needed to get rid of him because he had become a liability and no longer believed in continuing the violence; his peers call him a " pinche puto" (Rodriguez 1993 p. 208). The reader cans easily connect what they did to by shooting at Rodriguez after reading this dialogue.

Comparison with other Books

I have read Sandra Cisneros' " Never Marry a Mexican," which is a criminal justice book and comparing it with Rodriguez's book, these two book are similar in the fact that both authors often justifies their violent actions. However, although the authors provides convincing reasons for their actions that does not make the action right (Sandra 1999).

Shortcomings of the Book

The shortcoming of the book is that there is a significant amount of repetition of events and less significant events being in a disorderly manner which makes the story confusing as the reader has to figure out for themselves where to place the event in the author's life. The things Rodriguez has endured and the number of shootings and beatings he has survived seems unrealistic. The author provides little detail behind the facts that the highly charged events he provides, such as shootings, rapes, Mexican funerals and arrests really happened (Issaquah, 2006). Although there is no reason to doubt his argument, the fact that those activities

indeed happened may make readers less inclined to believe all these stories and therefore make it less successful to convince people to turn from their gang life.

References

Rodriguez's J. L., (1993) *Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L. A.*, New York, Simon & Schuster

Issaquah, S. (2006) *Always Running Review* Retrieved from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-880684-06-1>

Sandra C., (1999) *Never Marry a Mexican*, New York. Open Media