**The Others**

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Books Reviewed

Lewis, Oscar. “The Children of Sanchez.” Random House,1961

Menchu, Rigoberta.” I, Rigoberta Menchu An Indian Woman in Guatemala.” Verso, 1983

Problems rise around the world no matter wherever you are. Some parts of the world have prosperity while others don’t. However, everyone has a different view of the world no matter where they live; city, county, state, region, country, north, south, east, west, mountain ranges, desert, jungle, etc. The best way to understand ourselves and the others, is by having an approach appropriate for everyone. New Solutions to Problems define “A global studies approach offers new way of thinking that have the Potential to generate solutions to the kinds of global-scale problems that our rapidly globalizing world faces. Pressing issues such as climate change, economic development, regional violence, and resource depletion are among the new issues that call for innovative, perhaps previously unthinkable solutions. (Darian-Smith 30) “The Others” will review on the “The Children of Sanchez” followed by “I Rigoberta Menchu…” because these stories are about daily lives affected by poverty, violence, politics and family. However, each individual lives their life different and deals with conflict differently.

“The Children of Sanchez” gave us connected narratives to the Sanchez Family, including Jesus Sanchez himself. A great book, but the narratives were also disappointing because there was so much bad news that crossed paths with the family. One such bad example that happened in one of these true stories is how Roberto Sanchez always gets into trouble. "So, I said to him, 'what can I do for you?' he said, ' You know what? you can go fuck your mother?' Words like these usually start a fight here in Mexico..." (195) Although this type of hostility wasn't started by Roberto himself, you come to find out that he has done so many low life things and troublemaking , but he still didn't deserve the most inhumane treatment.

The oldest brother and sibling, Manuel, was also very irresponsible, despite having tried to do something with his life. He didn't always consider the consequences of being negligent. " One day, the father of Manuel's compadre, who was also a shoemaker stopped me and said, 'You are Manuel's sister, aren't you? Well tell your father if Manuel doesn't mend his ways, his business will go broke…' I listened to the man, but I didn't tell my father. " (247) This part communicated by Consuelo, the sister and the most responsible, has a lack of connection to her family because she has dreams and aspirations that aren't fully supported.

" My world existed outside the house" (247)

-Consuelo

Then there was Martha, the youngest of the bunch, who lived in the moment like her brothers and had relationship problems with her baby daddy. "If he came back to me it would have been because he wanted to." Sad to hear but very true.

Of course, the true root of all this is how the father raised them without a mother. The more you get to know the environment and the family the more you understand each situation. Not all lives are fortunate; when it comes to the role of gender, poverty, culture and religion. Basically, it’s a hard life for the people

For many of us, I would almost consider this a sad ending. A sad never ending! On the contrary, Oscar Lewis knew how to keep you involved from the way he helped brought together the narratives of this family. Truly; emotional, tragic, and gear grinding. One can only imagine how life truly is difficult in a hostile environment. I can’t say I like the story, but I can still say that the book keeps you intrigued. I rate it 5/5 for being very blunt for its own time period. How would most elderly men and women think of this book? Maybe take it to heart or just think it was published recently due to the content and the popularity it gains in the 21st century. I have never read a blunt book since “Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A”. by Luis J. Rodriguez. Despite many disappointments, these are the types of books you steal off a bookshelf because it’s the thrill that drives the reader. As a matter of fact, Roberto is most thrilled person of all the Sanchez family and that’s where most of the excitements happens. Although, the narratives are thrilling throughout the entire book.

I don’t recommend anything to the author, but I do recommend the audience to not take things to heart. Let’s remember that this book is about one family and a community but does not paint a brush over Mexico nor represent every single person in the community described by the book. This is based on a family perspective and not the perspective of Oscar Lewis. So, I encourage readers to pick this book and open their horizon to how life was in the past for this type of environment. Then think, how do some people around the world still relate to this typical lifestyle. What a true thrill! Read and let it take you away in another perspective of the past from a different region of the world

On the Contrary to thing, some people are very noble. Also, as hopeful as Consuelo. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the family accepts to have lower values or pessimistic view, despite Consuelo having higher hopes out of all of them. These stories are true, but they aren’t the only family who have problems in the world. Like most parts of Mexico living in poverty with politico and economic problems, Guatemala has very similar problems. Despite the Sanchez family being from Mexico, they are considered sell outs by some indigenous groups for not keeping traditional indigenous roots alive. The Sanchez Family maybe seen as the Mestizo or Ladino by indigenous groups particularly from Guatemala. However, Rigoberta Menchu might see them as people with issues and see similar struggles.

The book shows a great point of view from the indigenous community/communities of Guatemala. This particularly emphasizes on the family and community of Rigoberta Menchu, who grows up speaking the quiche language and learning old Mayan traditions. This autobiography gives us not just a background perspective of Mayan traditions and spirituality, but also an emotional one; discrimination and violence. Rigoberta also identifies the number of indigenous groups; “There are twenty-two indigenous ethnic groups in Guatemala, twenty-three including the mestizos, or ladinos, as we call them. Twenty-three groups and twenty-three languages. I belong to one of them-the Quiche people- and practice Quiche customs, but I also know most of the other groups very well through my work organizing people.” (p. 1-2) One of the morals of the book, is how unity between different ethnic groups gives people a fighting spirit. Even the ones who separate themselves from their own people have a struggle as the book mentions “ladinos,” also being separated by class, must have the moral to unite. “Something I want to tell you is that I had a friend. He was the man who taught me Spanish. He was a ladino, a teacher, who worked with the CUC. He taught me Spanish and helped me with many things. We used to meet secretly because we couldn’t meet openly where he lived...it was when we began supporting the struggle of peasants in general, and carrying out coordinated actions...The example of my compañero or ladino made me really understand the barrier which has been put up between the Indian and ladino, and that because of this same system which tries to divide us, we haven’t understood that ladinos also live in terrible conditions, the same as we do.” (p. 165) As Menchu describes it, the moral is to make sure teamwork strives amongst all suppressed people, no matter who you are.

For any reader of this book, keep in mind the unity is strong and the unity is the concept of Menchu’s work in life. The barriers that society puts out in real life is the enemy of Menchu’s struggle for equality and justice among everyone. Hopefully to anyone interested in learning about indigenous and poverty struggles, this book will be your best eye opener. Better yet, its a real eye opener to privileged people who lack knowledge of suppression in all regions of the world. I Rigoberto Menchu… serves as a great example and a gateway for people who need awareness in a world full of suffering. However, I also warn anyone wanting to read the book better be ready, because it gets very graphic from Menchu’s experience. The acts of violence that men-soldiers- do to innocent people makes you cry, angry, and helpless. As a matter of fact! Here is a passage that you may not want to read:

My Brother was very badly tortured, he could hardly stand up. All the Tortured had no nails and they had cut off part of the soles of their feet… There was a squadron of soldiers there ready to do exactly what the officer ordered.” (p.177)

This part of the book is what made me sad but most of all made me angry. Unfortunately, the villagers were at a disadvantage due to lack of military equipment. But what can you say? Or do?

Though events like these are probably what made the author, Rigoberta Menchu, stronger. The strength is what brings me back to unity and It's amazing how an indigenous woman who was taught to deny the ladino society, is also taught to embrace the catholic religion. In my opinion, Catholicism is the religion of the colonizer-the Spaniard- who forced their ways upon the indigenous communities and even African slaves. Of course, the views of Rigoberta Menchu differ much in a sense of unity. “Catholic Action is like another element which can merge with the elements which already exist within Indian culture...as far as the earth is concerned, we must go on worshipping through our own intermediaries, just as we always have done, through all the elements found in nature.(p.80) Then she finishes off with being true to one’s roots in life.

Overall, I feel that people must read books like these; its eye opening, emotional, graphic, but very informative in the end. The moral of Menchu’s story is being true to oneself and their roots while unifying against suppression. So, for anyone not wanting to read this book or another book like it, I hope they at least have a good situational awareness.

Modern Western scholarship seeks to rationalize the study of society and social practices, breaking units down into ever-finer categories and discrete areas of specialization. In contrast, global studies reintegrate our understanding of the world. (Darian-Smith, 42) So our understanding of the other doesn’t always help us understand. Though, by having the right approach can help us resolve problems in difficult areas while building relationships.

Bibliography

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