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**Lives in Limbo: Book Review**

**About the Book**

The book “Lives in a Limbo: Undocumented and coming of age in America” is written by Roberto G. Gonzales. The author very effectively discusses the struggles that are faced by the undocumented migrant youth. Lives in a Limbo is more than a book, it is quite unique and gives the reader a wakeup call. This book helps shed light on the young Latino migrants who were brought up in Los Angeles. Gonzales made use of qualitative research to find authentic data to construct this insightful book. The fact that gives this book an exceptional touch is that Roberto followed the stories of the immigrant youngsters for a whopping 12 years (Gonzales). This kind of dedication and hard work has never been put in by any generalist. This is one of the core reasons why the book gives the true essence of what it is like to be an undocumented immigrant youth.

Lives in a Limbo explains things in an interesting manner by sharing the stories of the youth in context. It is done by the examination of the historical, sociological, cultural and political forces that pay a role in structuring the results for the undocumented Americans. This book is a complete insight and authentic take on the life of immigrants. The author gives the reader a raw and in-depth look in the lives of Latinos without stereotyping or fabricating anything.

**Summary**

Lives in a Limbo talks about how two million of the total American population (around 11 million) consists of immigrants. The thing to reflect on is that these immigrants have been living their lives in the United States since their childhood without getting legal. The immigration system of America is not the best, which has left these people with ambiguous futures. In the book, Roberto introduces the readers to two groups of people: one group that went to college and the other that did not. This scenario was explained with the help of real-life examples; Ricardo, a child who was able to secure good grades in school. A stronger community support helped him get a college education, however, the Dream Act organization still placed him in a factory job after he graduated (Gonzales). Then there is Gabriel, who was not able to perform well in high school. This led him on a journey of dead-end jobs, migrant barriers and restrictions based on legality. This small yet deep example helps see that how both the educated as well as the uneducated immigrant suffered the same faith. This fact is unfortunate as it is hyped that higher education in America leads to the path of success. So, the research conducted by Gonzales exposes the American system for what it really is. Going through results based on an extraordinary twelve-year-old research, Lives in a Limbo helps give insight on a failing system. The pool of 150 undocumented youth in Los Angeles sheds light on a deteriorating system that assimilates children in K-12 institutes then rejects them the compensation that they deserve for their hard work. The immigration system of the United States is wrecked and everyone is well aware of that. It has been this way for decades, but no one is trying to take any initiative to make it any better.

**Book Review**

There is no doubt in the fact that around millions of undocumented people are living in the United States. The story of every immigrant is quite unique, especially the ones who have been living in America since they were children. Form a cultural context all these children were the citizens of the United States since they were legally living in the country. Lives in a Limbo by Roberto Gonzalez follows the lives of 150 undocumented immigrants. It reflects on how these children had to face great hardships under the American policies. The book provides a very humanistic take on the problems and difficulties that the Mexican and the Salvadoran migrants have to go through. Roberto also effectively reveals how the members of these communities emphasize their sense of belongingness regardless of the legal status that they have (Heredia, 410). One of the main reason why this book carries an important status is because it makes use of ethnographic tactics. The technique that the book uses proves the fact that the legal status that a person holds, carries stout social and political inferences for the daily lives of the undocumented migrants and their relatives.

Gonzalez gives a raw take on the lives of the Mexican immigrants by using a pool of undocumented migrant youth for twelve years. The research made it crystal that whether an immigrant puts in full effort in getting good grades or not, there is still no security of a stable future. This is in fact a bitter reality which helps the reader get an insight of the truth behind life as an undocumented immigrant. In the very first chapter of the book, Gonzalez gives the reader a full detail of what his plan is and how he will be materializing his research. In the second chapter of the book, he gave a look at the children from two categories. In the third and fourth chapter of the book, the reader can have a look at how the children who had a stronger network felt like they were US citizens as opposed to the migrants who dropped out of school (Rivas, 1240-1242). The early exiters might have gotten by in providing for their families, but they had no hope of ever getting the legal status. While, the students who went to college still had hope but Gonzalez made things explicit in the 8th chapter of the book by the mention of the “master status.”

Now, looking at things in the light of Immigration Reform and Control Act, these children would have gotten the legal status if they arrived the United States prior to 6th November 1986. However, that is just not the case. In fact, things just got worse for the immigrants as the time passed. The 9/11 incident completely changed the way people looked at migrants and the concept of associating them with terrorism started. There were many Muslim migrants who faced quite the back lash after that time as well regardless of the standing that they had in the country. The book helps see the bitter reality of what the American immigration system has turned into. Looking at Los Angeles today it can be seen evidently that there is a stark division among the Latinos and the whites. It shows that how the Latino community has faced poverty due to their immigrant status regardless of how much effort they exerted in trying to become respectful members of the society (Martinez, 414-418). Although the Mexican community has put in a significant amount of labor but they still do not have the standing that they deserve. Gonzalez just shows the truth of how the status of the undocumented immigrants has deteriorated over the course of time.

**Personal Assessment**

The book also exposes how the Mexican and Latino community is heavily labelled. It shows that Obama was a little too late with the reforms he was planning to bring. Further, this book helped me see the stereotypical picture that is painted of the immigrants who are present in the United States. The reality is far from what it is portrayed. It was never about giving a community priority, it was more about equally rewarding them based on the efforts that they put in. I will definitely like to recommend this book to other people as it was an eye opening experience for me. The immigration system of the United States is heavily crippled and it needs major reforms to bring a difference for the migrants.

Works Cited

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