Nickel And Dimed: Book Review

I found out while reading the book that from the beginning, she already has a negative expectation about how life would be with such a low wage. She attempts to prove herself right so that the experiment would meet her expectations. I think she has built the theme of the book on something she was already convinced in without doing this experiment.

Obviously, she had sympathy for the poor but at the same time, I think she shows unintentionally her superiority; mentioning several times her native English accent and her whiteness. Off course, it would be wholly unfair to deny that she has good intentions to improve society but the readers can find traces of class distinctions.

Making the experiment, she stepped out of her comfort zone and abandoned her luxurious life for 3 months. However, I do not think it's an experiment that any low wage worker can identify with because she was raised in an educated middle-class family that hadn't experienced poverty, she had money “in case she needed something” and most importantly, she didn’t have the fear of getting fired and she didn’t hesitate to quit whenever she felt fed up. All of these facts prove that she made this experiment as an anthropologist in order to discover a different world knowing well that the consequences of losing a job could be contained, unlike the real poor who don't share that luxury. What is poverty if limited?

However, it was an interesting study to introduce the difficulties that minimum wage workers have to deal with every day. It's an eye-opener and perspective changer as it destroys the stereotype that the poor are poor because they are lazy. On the contrary, she shows how hard it is to have physically exhausting and mentally challenging jobs and how it is almost impossible to make it on law wages. She wants to make sure that having a job doesn’t mean getting out of poverty.

Nickel and Dimed is at once a document of the contemporary financial problems of the poor in the US, and it’s an interesting book which can be read like a diary of a part of the author's life. The book is not free of satire and comedy but this comedy is always linked with sadness; it aimed at the unjust society which turn a blind eye to its least well-off citizens.

Essentially, the book blames American society because low pay workers are somehow trapped as they are forced to take on more than one low wage job just to afford putting food on the table and enable their families to survive and they have no means or money to improve their situation through education.

This book is worth reading to know about the daily life of the law wage workers and it’s also important to educate the rich about the poor who often take the brunt of poverty, especially women. Unfortunately, we’re still living in a world where social classes try to be but can’t be equal.