

Student #2

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Growing

When viewing society's structure, a good place to start would be by comparing the many similarities between intersectionality and the strengths theory. Intersectionality encompasses how society is viewed having a dominant narrative – this is considered to be the group of individuals who have a voice – and the subjugating narrative – the group in society who are constantly being silenced and ignored. Understanding this power shift between these two groups is classified as dual perspectives. In relation to intersectionality the strengths theory is also shown in the memoir, the theory reveals how someone – in this case Diane – can overcome trauma through flexibility, determination, and having support of others. The memoir, *In the Country We Love*, by Diane Guerrero and Michelle Burford exposes these two theories in a whole new light, one that is not spoken of as often as it should. Diane's struggle to live in a society where she was constantly ignored, gave her the ability to generate enough strength to overcome the system and accomplish her dreams.

Understanding how someone's narrative is formed is an important part of intersectionality and strength, both theories are heavily influenced by society. Being a part of an oppressed group where you do not have the ability to voice out concerns can be very aggravating, for example, when those individuals grow up in an environment that does not credit them for their accomplishments and an environment that rewards special resources/privileges only to the dominant group allowing them to have a much greater chance of exceling. In order to

grow and overcome a hardship like this strength needs to be created, a positive shift needs to be created to overcome the heavily divided power shift that is faced in everyday life. When acknowledging that both narratives – dominant and subjugate – are not treated the same then the conversations for change are able to be made. The strengths theory believes that both macro and micro involvement can make an impact as to how personal and societal change can be made. With the theory of intersectionality bringing in the perspective of society and the strengths theory bringing in the growth perspective of those in society, a better well-rounded understanding of one's narrative can then be made.

Alone, it can feel lonely and isolating when the whole world decides to keep revolving but to you it feels like it has gone to a complete halt. In the memoir, Diane begins to feel this isolation when she arrives home only for her parents to be gone for good, leaving her scared and alone (Guerrero and Burford 84). This sort of recklessness of the system not realizing that they left a young girl basically an orphan goes to show how little of importance they – the dominant group – gave to the immigrant families – Subjugating group – they so desperately wanted to separate. Though this was an extremely tough time Diane was able to overcome it with the help of her parents and close friends, from this she built the strength to fully process what happened and begin the steps she needed to move forward (Guerrero and Burford 87). By using two theories to analyze what happened in this moment to Diane the audience is then opened to viewing her character development and how she was able to persevere through a difficult experience, one that is only granted to those unfortunate. As the years passed Diane realized the divide in opportunities and experiences and how she always received the short end of the stick, she decided that she too should be allowed to chase her dreams, so she did, and after many years of hard work she broke into the film industry (Guerrero and Burford 204). Diane understood that

she lived in a society that favored pale skin and generations of living in stolen land over her olive skin. Because of this she decided to create new resources that were in her favor, making her work ten times harder than the average person to accomplish her goals. This is an example of how she used dual perspective to create strength through determination to then later on life become an advocate, a voice amongst all those silenced.

While reading the memoir I was surprised as to how intimate the book was, it was truly able to encompass the happiest, most pure moments while also capturing the dark and lowest moments of her life. When hearing people talk about the effects of separating families, they are never able to truly go into the psychological effects and how the trauma stays forever. Both authors beautifully go in depth and give an organic and intimate example of what separating families can cause, allowing audience members who may be part of the dominant group catch a glimpse of what life may be like for some on the other side of the spectrum. I was also shocked to see how much personality was added onto the book, I personally believe it goes to further emphasize that not only was she young when this happened, but she was also viewed as a “statistic”. The day that I.C.E came for her parents and didn’t bother to check on Diane, a US citizen, was the day she became a statistic, and I believe it is hard for people to sympathize when the matter does not affect them or when the media portrays them as “another” statistic. The personality in her book helped to make the point that no she is not a number she is a human being, one that should not be in these circumstances.

To conclude, the idea of being left behind at such a young age is frightening and the notion of not being able to feel at home because you’re in someone’s home saddens me. Though this may not be the case for the majority it was Diane’s, at an early age she was exposed to the harsh reality of a split society where she is seen as a minority. Through the connection of

intersectionality and the strengths theory both cause and effect are revealed. Cause being how society treats certain people – Diane and her family in this case and effect being how she is able to overcome society's views of her. Viewing this from the strengths perspective she was able to get through her struggles at such a young age with the help of her community which then powered her to become more determined to use her past as a way to grow, ignoring the fear of taking risks and finally giving her the strength to follow her dreams. Furthermore, harsh realities are not shown as vulnerable as this memoir has beautifully done, the book allowed for any audience member to enjoy and understand the significance of this topic and by further analyzing using the two theories I was able to enjoy a deeper understanding of how experience affected her psychologically.

Work Cited

Guerrero, D., & Burford, M. (2019). *In the country we love: My family divided*. GRIFFIN.