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Humes 103

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The Voices of Deoli was a documentary describing the horrors during and after the internment camps in Deoli, India. Half presentation, half documentary, a speaker by the name of Yeeva Chung, began to brief viewers about the goals of this presentation, and why exactly spreading the victims' voices matters so much. Her father, Micheal Chung, had lived during the internment camp from ages 6-9, and the lasting effects of the camp prompts him to describe the filming process and what it means to him to be Chinese-Indian. Truly fascinating, hearing a different accent than the perceived accent based on race. The documentary then begins, taking an hour and half, leaving a lasting impact on the audience.

Different cameos from different survivors of the camp shed light on the consequences of the camps. Joy Ma in particular stood out. A harrowing scene comes after the camps. Joy Ma, at the time three, was unable to realize the Deoli were imprisoned, and she would typically refer to the camp as 'home' and ask why she could not go back. Many of the prisoners had been children during this, but Ma had been born in the camp. She struggles to remember, but as the Deoli people eat dinner every year, they reminisce about baby Ma. This documentary highlights how powerful community is for these people; they went through a deeply traumatic event that they cannot erase from their memory. Instead of sitting in silence, they all eat together once a year, and spark protests, demanding India for an apology. That, to me, not only shows high levels of resilience, but also how genuine the Chinese-Indian community is.

This piece stuck out to me as an emotional, anger inducing, out cry of injustice. Yeeva Chung explicitly stated the goals: which were the displacement many faced, as well as generational trauma. Micheal Chung's brothers, all varying in ages during the internment camp time, still suffer with the memories. Chung's youngest brother breaks down during the documentary, saying that without the support of his brothers he might not have been able to endeavor reconstructing life. This story greatly emphasizes building community, creating voice, interconnecting different voices to make one big story that impacted over 3,000 people. The main idea is clear: that India's uncalled for and unjust racism towards the Chinese-Indian people ruined not only their name as a government, but the lasting lives of the survivors of the Deoli internment camp.

Success to me means that the documentary's goals align with my interpretation of the work after watching and analyzing the construct. In this framework, I would say the documentary worked to highlight the experiences the Chinese-Indians went through, and the lasting effects of India's corrupt racism. Through the different experiences of Deoli camp prisoners, and juxtaposing their life from when they were younger to the modern consequences made the story touching and personal. Every story made me melancholy, realizing the promise of the life they could have lived. The documentary was nothing short of emotional and heart wrenching, and had me invested in the injustice so many civilians suffered years ago. A message that stuck is the notion that while the Indian government can forget about the blimp of the Deoli internment camps, the victims of the torture can never forget. Some had family members die during the experience, stuck with lifelong trauma, and others had to fight to the end to attempt to rebuild the life they once so happily had.

I was personally both remorseful and inspired by the documentary. A contrast to how I first felt, what I first believed would be a simple documentary, taught me to respect the community I have and will continue to build upon. The optimism of the Deoli, people who have gone through so much, incentivizes me to persevere. I will carry every story the survivors had the vulnerability to share, and I am so grateful I was able to listen in on their history. In a way, I felt guilty that I had not heard of the war in India and its effect on citizens, but more than anything, I want these people to receive an apology. It would not pardon their torture, but in a way ease the Deoli's harsh realities.