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A World of Pain

The character that I chose to write about is one from a show called *Naruto Shippuden*. For context, there are five shinobi countries in this world: the Land of Earth, the Land of Lightning, the Land of Water, the Land of Wind, and the Land of Fire. We open at a battlefield located in Amegakure, the Village Hidden in Rain, a land ravaged by war and suffering. A bloody war, known as the Second Great Shinobi World War, has been raging on and has almost consumed the land as a whole. We meet our main character, Nagato, a bit of a loner and anti-social individual. During this war, we see Nagato living with his parents for a short amount of time before we witness his parents get murdered by shinobi of Konoha, the Hidden Leaf Village. Our story begins here as we see Nagato basically go door to door in this war infested land in order to survive. We see that he is quickly ignored and resented for being poor and powerless in his life. He befriends a dog named Chibi and later meets his comrades, Yahiko and Konan. With the war still going on, Chibi gets caught in the crossfire that came from the battle between Hanzou, the leader of the Wind, and the Legendary Sannins. Struck with grief, Nagato mourned and promised that he would change the world and bring peace. When the war ends, the group finds themselves in the presence of the three Sannins and one of them, Jiraiya, agrees to stay with them and train them to be shinobi, until they can defend themselves. In the three years that they trained, Nagato had awakened his Rinnegan, a rare ocular power, and Jiraiya stood by his

belief that he would bring peace to the world. These three had become formidable warriors and delt with those who opposed them in many ways. The three of them created a group called the Akatsuki, which started as a peaceful and revolutionary group. However, Hanzou saw them as a threat and made a trap for Nagato where he had to choose between killing Yahiko and Konan. Yahiko stabbed himself with the kunai and sacrificed himself to ensure that Nagato and Konan survived. Nagato took Yahiko's body and Konan before launching an attack against Hanzou's men so that he was the only one standing. This left Nagato in pretty bad shape and severely emaciated. Now adopting the moniker, Pain, he set out to complete his quest using the six paths of pain. Later in the series, Jiraiya discovers a lead about the Akatsuki and who their leader is. He travels to the Village Hidden by Rain and confronts Tendo Pain, who was created from Yahiko's body. He discovers the true identity of Pain and tries to reason with him but that fails. He blames Jiraiya for leaving them and returning home with how things were in their country. Jiraiya eventually faces all six paths of pain and puts up a good fight. He gets his throat crushed by one of them when he discovers the truth and is then stabbed by the other Pains, and ultimately perishes at the hands of not one, but two of his former students.

It took a while to pick a theory that fits this character, as there were many that could work. However, the one that was chosen was the subculture of violence theory developed by Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti. This theory argues that within communities, there exists certain subcultures that resort to violence more than other cultures and subcultures. This violent behavior can develop through many things; social, economic, and cultural conditions. These conditions include poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and a severe lack of social mobility. Social mobility refers to how easy it is to move between or up through the social classes within a community or country. According to Wolfgang and Ferracuti, violence was an adaptation that

was culturally learned. They also argued that these norms can be used as an escape and a way to deal with the struggles of everyday life within an environment that thrives off of violence. These subcultures can be found in disadvantaged countries, where poverty, crime, and social disorganization are abundant, but can also exist among social groups within a community. In this subculture, violence is not only seen as a means of keeping order, but also as a mark of power and status. A common theme is that if you use violence, that person becomes respected and admired, as well as feared. We can see this subculture in our world today. Countries with a stratocracy, or a country with the military as leaders, and/or dictatorships may have a violent subculture especially if there is social inequality among classes within the country.

You can see many theories at play with this character, but I think this one fits him the most. Nagato is a product of his environment, and we see that where he grew up is very much military based. During his childhood, we see that Nagato is surrounded by war and a strong military presence on either side of him. This causes him and his comrades to form a military group themselves and try to get rid of the people they find themselves up against and end their oppression. Cultures and subcultures often begin in small, organized groups and become bigger when more people are added to the fray. Nagato was seen as a messiah figure and someone who will one day bring peace to a country that has not known it for a long time. We see that Nagato becomes an authority figure due to the violence that he uses against his enemies and others that oppose him. The many displays of violence seen in his backstory and main storyline gave him the status he desperately craved and made it known that he would bring peace. Nagato can be seen using this nature of violence to cope with all that he has lost in hopes of creating peace in the world.

Works Cited

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