

Reflection- Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents
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This past summer, I read the book *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson which is an amazing eyeopening book. This book defines the word Caste, an engraved hierarchy we have as humans from the day we are born, "patterns of a social order that have been in place for so long that it looks like the natural order of things."¹ This system is enforced by our daily actions, and as humans we are subconsciously enforcing the Caste system and the long history of it. For example, intermarriage was illegal for awhile, and of course one member from the marriage would have to be from the upper caste which was huge disgust to society that they would have to marry someone "below" them, and someone from another caste, as if they were a foreign creature. Many citizens despised these types of marriages. I learned what caste is and the difference between class, and how prevalent it is in our lives today. This system holds everyone in a specific place, it's a ranking system. The Caste system puts a spotlight on white people who are considered the upper caste, and makes it very hard to for lower caste members to try and be an upper caste citizens. It made me realize how much as humans we like to group people, and we are constantly doing it and labeling people. In the Caste system the grouping is done by physical features. Caste did not only apply in the United States of America but also India and Germany. India had the biggest Caste system in the world. You could tell the caste someone was apart of based on their name. Citizens of the lower caste could not even have basic human connection with those of the upper caste in the Indian Caste System. The Germans looked at the United States of America for examples on way to seperate people and dehumanize people.

This book/Caste relates to quite a few our Global Studies themes such as human rights and technology/communication. Caste affects the way we treat others which is a system that does not treat others with human rights. As everyone should be equal and the Untied States of America's constitution says so, the Caste system does not enforce it. Members of the upper caste are treated better, and members of the lower caste usually bow down to the upper caste members. Throughout the 1900s African Americans were thought to have different skin than Whites, and when Whites were in the pool and one African American were to come in the swim area, they were not allowed, members of the White community thought that they are were physically toxic. Lifeguards of these pools would have to disinfect the whole pool before a White person could enter. Caste relates to technology/communication because lower caste communities are less accessible to technology and affording a computer. This leads them less opportunities to apply for jobs and land a job to make them money to survive.

When I first saw that Global Studies was reading this book, I had no idea what Caste was. I was intrigued to know what it was, and how it had to do with "The Origins of our Discontents", I started reading. It turns out, I love it. I love how factual it is, and the amount of examples that were given to help explain what Caste was. To help get a deeper understanding in how rooted the Caste system is in out society Wilkerson showed different examples in different time periods that it is alive. I believe to realize Caste, you either have to read this book or have it pointed out to you. This book challenged me to look at myself and question if I have been raised with a caste mentality or show behaviors that enforce this system. I do not believe I have done any work on this topic or human rights in general, but this book was a great place to start.

¹ *Caste* By Isabel Wilkerson. Page 70