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Origin Reflection

After watching the movie “Origin,” by Ava DuVernay, I was hit with such grief, anger, and helplessness. I learned about the Dalits in India, something I never even heard of, and I learned more about just how cruel this world is pertaining to the identical framework for American Slavery and the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. I find it so frustratingly interesting with how interconnected these atrocities are. From learning what caste is to realizing that racism is just an outcome from that hierarchy system, everything was just an emotional rollercoaster that I’m glad I got on.

Starting at the beginning, Isabel Wilkerson’s research question was ultimately asking how American racism is rooted in a caste system instead of the discrimination that is outwardly conveyed. She talked about certain things such as if white people saw us as less than human, then why would they force us to raise their children, teach them, and care for them. Those factors did not add up to the message that was being shared.

What drove her to engage in this work was the family and friends she had around her. In my perspective, she kept a circle that influenced her to always think against the tide. When everyone was saying one thing, she made it her business to back up the other. Much deeper than that, in just a short amount of time, she lost her husband, her mother, and her cousin. They were all people she deeply cared about and they were also people who pushed her to keep going. She

felt a sense that she needed to continue her work in order to do justice for her husband who didn't conform to the caste system in place, her mother who endured the trying times of segregation, and her cousin who supported her in everything she did.

Secondly, Wilkerson constantly pushed away from the box that society tried to place her in. She constantly went out of her way to have one on one conversations with people who had those first hand experiences, she didn't let her research be based completely off of what she could find on the internet. She even didn't allow others who tried to shut down her research stop her from working hard to figure out the answer to her question. She was very passionate about finding that answer because she knew it was there and all she had to do was look.

When it came to her study, I believe that Wilkerson's perspective benefitted her study because she could bring the eyes of a black woman in America to her study while also bringing an unbiased perspective to the new things she learned. However, her perspective did come with its limits because there might have been perspectives completely different from hers that she just couldn't understand or empathize with. Even so, she still diligently came into every new experience with a yearning to learn about the history and experiences that were lost.

In conclusion, this was an amazing movie that brought to light Isabel Wilkerson's journey in making the book "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents." It showed us the joyful parts, the confusing parts, as well as the painful ones. By doing that it allowed us to understand just how deep this story is and why it is one that needs to be shared and known far and wide.