

AR 100 – Great Discoveries in Archaeology  
BU Day of Collective Engagement: Racism, Anti-racism, Our Realities and Our Roles  
BLM in Archaeology  
Reflections and Responses – June, 2020

Selected Quotes:

“Racial injustice prevailing throughout the world has always been a hot topic of debate, in which white supremacy always being at the center of the debate. The killing of George Floyd, while being held in a police custody, by a white police officer sparked once again the debate over racial injustice. People choose to live in places where they feel the air of security. But what if that air becomes contaminated just because of the color of skin? The incident of killing of George Floyd initiated #BlackLivesMatter moment throughout the globe.”

– *Jeimin Garibnavajwala (CAS'21)*

“African-American often receive varying levels of stress related to encounters of microaggressions or even at times, blatant racism and violence. Stress is known to be detrimental to the body over time, researching even showing shorter life expectancy. On top of that, in the literal sense, African-American's physiology is affected when seeking medical care. Within the medical systems, there are still practices and beliefs that show how black people feel less pain, or require less medication. This works the other way around as well, as some African-Americans might receive too much, even lethal, amounts of medication. Furthermore, these negative effects also cause psychological damages to them. Their children can have these traits passed down, and research shows that a child might have increased chances of developing schizophrenia if their parents are constantly experiencing stress/fear (i.e fear of being shot by police on any given day).”

– *Brian Lin (ENG'22)*

“Ina Joseph, a recent grad, mentioned that in classes, people of color need to talk about the issues, and in classes where there are no people of color, professors need to ask the students why that is.”

– *Maxwell Malamut (ENG'22)*

“An Instagram account has been recently made called BlackAtBU. This account posts the experiences anonymously that black students, faculty, and alumni at BU have dealt with. Some of the stories are absolutely shocking and show to the BU community the outward racism and microaggressions that our own PWI has on our black students. I cannot imagine how difficult and frustrating it must feel to be the only black student in a mostly white classroom. The feeling of continually being one of the few “representatives” of your race to white students and instructors must be absolutely exhausting..”

– *Kaylin Rix (SHA'22)*

“What I do know is that academia is the perfect storm for racism, due to an unspoken existence of implicit bias mixed with the act of gatekeeping knowledge. From my understanding, the outdated but long-standing ways of academia seem like an “old boys club”. I especially feel like the “traditional” archaeology academia world has undoubtedly looked to gatekeep and gaslight archaeological knowledge and hypotheses since its inception.”

– *Kaylin Rix (SHA'22)*

“What I really supported was the discussion for professors to adapt a more equitable and compassionate form of teaching that entails diversity and inclusion. I believe that even the simple point in the “Please learn my name” argument was a trivial yet important part of learning.”

– *Sean Cheng (ENG'22)*

“The session brought up the importance of having equitable assessment, which was to have assessments that do not perpetuate inequities in something as important as higher education since not everyone is exposed to the same learning environment. Basically, there has to be transparency with students, check for internal biases, and students’ clear understanding of learning outcomes. To do so, assessment of student performance should be accommodating to different standards in various forms of assignments.”

– *Sean Cheng (ENG'22)*

“Another point that I found interesting came from Professor Grundy, when she talked about how when people talk about how they, or an organization, has made progress on diversity or fighting racism, that is viewing racism as a static entity when it is in fact dynamic and every changing.”

– *Casey Spillane (COM'22)*

“Saida Grundy’s statement on the history of racism is that Racism is the mother of Race. Race as a classification system, historically followed Racism. Colonialism necessitated a false system of human categorization to justify European colonialization. We did not have a category of Race before we necessitated human exploitation.”

– *Raziel Perez (CAS'21)*

“The best way of learning is stepping outside from what you know and understanding someone else’s perspective narrative. Not having an ethnocentric view is key. The underlying issues must be addressed and people have to have these conversations included in their day to day lives in order for there to be change.”

– *Raziel Perez (CAS'21)*

“My favorite quote from the conversation was “Forgetting was a part of history,” which Louis Chude-Sokei said when talking about how a big part of this movement is seeking acknowledgement, and seeking for the facts of the situation and history that occurred to become accepted common knowledge, not just the knowledge of the people fighting.”

– Casey Spillane (COM'22)

“One of the presenters brought up the point how we as Americans are systematically taught to forget...In order to know about the past would require a sense of sensitivity that some people unfortunately don't have. It's not difficult to see how a substantial amount of people in this country fail to believe that racism is still very much prevalent today. The presenter followed up by saying “the final act of violence is the denial of violence.”

– Varsha Saravana (COM'22)

“One of the quotes that I heard that reminded me of class was about how the person said when they wanted the actual history of their people it is not taught in schools but rather they need to pursue it and seek out the information...Disregarding and not representing certain population's stories, history, and their identity helps to attempt to assimilate them into an American history rather than allow them to be embraced as a part of the collective history. Lacking representation of these cultures in the historical classes of schools yet having their items in museums as a manner of having a collective identity is very contradicting.”

– Ryan Blake (QST'22)

“According to Dr. Alexandra Jones, authors should include the archaeological sites of black people in archaeology books for kids. If kids are taught about the archaeology of white people, they must also be taught about the archaeology of black people. This is the time when the characters of the kids are shaped...Racial segregation starts to build up and might result in stereotypical mindsets if a kid is only taught the archaeology of one racial group. According to Jones, this racial segregation must be reduced.”

– Jeimin Garibnavajwala (CAS'21)

## Full Responses:

*Nicole Anaya (QST'22)*

For the BU Days of Collective Engagement assignment I attended President Browns and Jean Morrisons town hall question and answer session. For this session individuals were able to ask questions about what Boston University is planning to do to address equality and work towards a more inclusive campus. This was an interesting session to attend as I was able to hear about the plans for the campus and actual actions that are being planned to be put in place. In this discussion questions were raised regarding topics such as the BU PD, diversity in the student body, diversity in staff and faculty, minimizing things such as microaggressions on campus, and whether or not BU is planning to host a symposium like this on an annual basis. These questions gave a good overview of the plans that the university is currently working on in order to make BU a more diverse and inclusive campus and which makes all feel comfortable and at home.

Overall I found this session to be informative along with it showing that BU is taking active steps in order to address issues of inequality and systemic racism that exist everywhere. Through listening to this town hall style meeting I found that the university is taking these issues seriously through examining them and working on plans to address issues of inequality. Furthermore in my opinion it was a good sign that they have been working on addressing diversity in the student body for the last few years and that they did not just start caring about these issues out of necessity and pressure due to the current political climate. Through addressing the diversity of the student body by taking actions to make the campus more diverse starting with the admissions process I believe that the university can become a more diverse and inclusive place as a whole. This is because as more people of different backgrounds are brought in they will be able to bring to the surface issues that exist in the community that may not be as readily visible on the surface. Therefore, addressing these things in order to make the university more diverse and accepting to future students.

In conclusion it seems that BU is working to address the issues of inequality that exist throughout the university. This is reassuring; however, in my opinion they could work on this more by opening up the conversation more to students and those who are members of the community rather than simply having the administrators address what they see as being the issues that BU faces. This could be something as simple as sending out a survey asking students and other members of the community what they think about campus life and its culture in regards to diversity and inclusion along with what areas a need for improvement are seen in and any suggestions on how to address these issues. Through doing this the community could see that administrators value their opinions along with showing common areas that there is a perceived need for improvement.

*Ryan Blake (QST'22)*

One of the quotes that I heard that reminded me of class was about how the person said when they wanted the actual history of their people it is not taught in schools but rather they need to pursue it and seek out the information. This is the same as the people of the tribes and places we are learning about in class that their history is not seen in schools, textbooks, or really even acknowledged. Not all information is displayed throughout history in schools showing how there are needs for reforms to schooling to reflect and portray the vast amounts of people in the United States and around the world. Disregarding and not representing certain population's stories, history, and their identity helps to attempt to assimilate them to American history or another country's history rather than allow them to be embraced as a part of the collective history. Lacking representation of these cultures in the historical classes of schools yet having their items in museums as a manner of having a collective identity in museums is very contradicting.

School curriculums need to be revisited to display a collective representation of all of the people from the past of a given country. For example, the stories and identities of more prominent black individuals to really reflect the history of being black in America better than it is being portrayed today. Also, a civilization like Cahokia being in the United States and having never been taught in schools is quite confusing, the entire history of the peopling of America should be taught in schools to understand that Cristopher Columbus was not the great

navigator who found untouched lands, he discovered a continent that already had life, structures, and so much more that is never really acknowledged. Instead not addressing late great societies in schools creates the illusion that the people who were in America were uncivilized and needed to be taught how to live normally.

In addition, the people in the Collective Engagement: Racism and Antiracism spoke about how no real change can come until there are conversations and discussions between all people and these uncomfortable conversations and looking inwards will lead to actual change. These conversations start at a young age and being able to teach the next generations of people the whole truth and allow them to understand the past was not good so there must be extensive change to allow for these young groups to hear, understand, and learn from and about the people who have faced injustice. Otherwise we will continue to see injustices as the younger generations will grow up thinking nothing is wrong and continue with the ways that no change is necessary. Also, while there is no way to understand the life of another individual or the experience of the collective identity of another people it's important to learn as much as you can and schooling would help that to make future generations more knowledgeable. All and all it is important to discuss and educate ourselves to be able to learn about all people to better understand the past and make changes to not repeat it in the future.

*Sean Cheng (ENG'22)*

On Wednesday's day of collectivism, I attended the session titled, "Inclusive Pedagogy and Decolonizing the Curriculum." I surprisingly enjoyed the discussion and presentations the different speakers had during the session. Firstly, I never knew that the School of Public Health actually had a program wherein they require students to read books as part of a preparatory requirement before the semester and that these books included ones that touched upon the topics of racism and colonialism in relation to access to public health, education, and other opportunities. Out of curiosity, I have bookmarked some of these books for my own interest. However, I am not entirely sure how effective this strategy is given many students do not seem to actually read the books before the start of a semester. Nonetheless, I appreciate the effort and I'm sure many others did as well.

What I really supported was the discussion for professors to adapt a more equitable and compassionate form of teaching that entails diversity and inclusion. I believe that even the simple point in the "Please learn my name" argument was a trivial yet important part of learning. Although professors may not always remember your name or pronounce it properly, the simple effort of trying to learn feels so much better rather than the ignorance in not trying at all, which could determine the initial impression a student may have. I always appreciate it more when my professors do this simple action and this makes a clear difference in my class performance.

In relation to our lessons in AR100, the discussion of decolonizing academia is in a similar vein to the topic of decolonizing archaeology. They both have the same goal of making their subjects much more unbiased, equitable, and indiscriminate. The session brought up the importance of having equitable assessment, which was to have assessments that do not perpetuate inequities in something as important as higher education since not everyone is exposed to the same learning environment. Basically, there has to be transparency with

students, check for internal biases, and students' clear understanding of learning outcomes. To do so, assessment of student performance should be accommodating to different standards in various forms of assignments. Just as there has to be transparency and engagement between involved living cultures in archaeological studies and the archaeologists conducting them, education has to possess the same features between teacher and student in order to truly pursue decolonization.

I am really glad to have been part of this day of discussion to move society towards a better place. I learned much about BU's plans and I am proud to be a part of this community striving to right the wrongs of its past and current practices. I hope all these plans, even those in the other sessions I was unable to attend, will come to fruition in the near future and make living and studying at BU more enjoyable for all.

*Jeimin Garibnavajwala (CAS'21)*

Racial injustice prevailing throughout the world has always been a hot topic of debate, in which white supremacy always being at the center of the debate. The killing of George Floyd, while being held in a police custody, by a white police officer sparked once again the debate over racial injustice. People choose to live in places where they feel the air of security. But what if that air becomes contaminated just because of the color of skin? The incident of killing of George Floyd initiated #BlackLivesMatter moment throughout the globe.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, a panel discussion held by the scholars over zoom addressed the diverse topic of "archaeology in the time of Black Lives Matter." The discussion was led by Ayana Flewellen, Maria Franklin, Tsione Wolde – Michael, Justin Dunnivant, Alexandra Jones, and Alicia Odewale. Keeping the present scenarios at the center of the talk, the scholars discussed over the involvement of racism in the field of archaeology. According to Alexandra Jones, authors should include the archaeological sites of black people in the archaeology books for kids. If kids are taught about the archaeology of white people, they must also be taught about the archaeology of black people. This is the time when the characters of the kids are shaped.

Racial segregation starts to build up and might result into stereotypical mindset when a kid is taught the archaeology of only one racial group. According to Jones, this racial segregation must be reduced. Dunnivant, during the discussion, added that "public perception of the field" must be changed. His concerns can be related to the early archaeological observations of the Great Zimbabwe when German explorer Karl Mauch "refused to believe that indigenous Africans could have built such an extensive network of monuments." In fact, many European writers defended Karl Mauch "believing that Africans did not have the capacity to build anything of the significance of Great Zimbabwe."

This clearly shows the extent to which black community has been underrated since long time ago. The fact is that laws of science are same for every being on earth. The time flows at the same rate, and the gravity is always attractive for all beings. Then how come black community cannot have the capacity to be civilized? Studies have confirmed that the site was built by the Bantu speaking people of that region enough to break the stereotypical thoughts towards the black community. During the discussion, Dunnivant also raised concerns about repatriation of the artifacts.

Dunnavant spoke in the same voice as Trevor Noah about the repatriation of the artifacts. Many Europeans argue over returning the artifacts back to Africa. They think that Africans don't have capacity to handle the artifacts. Doesn't this sound like a third person arguing that her mother can't take proper care of her? I personally think that the artifacts must be repatriated with the permission to keep enough artifacts for the people to learn about their culture.

*Jonathan Limo (ENG'22)*

I thought attending the Archaeology in BLM zoom session was super eye-opening in how to be an accomplice to the movement. They went over what an anti racist world would look like and a checklist to cross off as you are pushing for this positive change in the world. The recent tragedies that have been covered by media sources has allowed for more people to understand the constant threat that police officers pose to the lives of African Americans. The panel pointed out that they were happy but that the large response we are seeing all over the world is exciting but it is important to not let this just be a trend since trends don't force the systemic changes that are needed so desperately in our country. The panel also shared information on how as an individual what you can do to push this systemic change. Removing your implicit bias is an important one. They suggested, do not just ask if an incident was racist, ask how much racism played a role in the scenario. This way we do not let anything slide under the rug and grow. They discussed methods that archaeologist professors and researchers should take to further this systemic change in universities and the industry. As a student they talked about diversifying your actual courses, and decolonizing your own bookshelf. Decolonization was something we went over in class which was aimed to reverse the ethnocentrism that is done all around us. A lot of times for example you will have a white man telling you about the struggles of African Americans as opposed to learning from black authors or researchers. They pointed out that communities are the necessary experts and this reminded me of the indigenous people in Australia who told scientists that they were descendants of these people who left behind those sites and artifacts. However they did not listen to these people and later on found out. Then researchers pushed the message to the people that they were right and it is backed by science but these people felt discredited because they had been saying that from the beginning. I thought this statement that the panel shared was directly related to what we have been discussing in class.

*Brian Lin (ENG'22)*

During the BU session regarding the psychological and physiological Impacts of racism, there were many things that were discussed. For example, African-American often receive varying levels of stress related to encounters of microaggressions or even at times, blatant racism and violence. Stress is known to be detrimental to the body over time, researching even showing shorter life expectancy. On top of that, in the literal sense, African-American's physiology is affected when seeking medical care. Within the medical systems, there are still practices and beliefs that show how black people feel less pain, or require less medication. This works the other way around as well, as some African-Americans might receive too much, even lethal, amounts of medication. Furthermore, these negative effects also cause psychological

damages to them. Their children can have these traits passed down, and research shows that a child might have increased chances of developing schizophrenia if their parents are constantly experiencing stress/fear (i.e fear of being shot by police on any given day).

Although there was more said, I would like to relate this to the treatment of Natives Americans, who for no reason, were thought to be savages, despite also having civilized cultures (some can even argue that they were more civilized than the European). Just like African-Americans who are thought to have higher pain tolerance despite no research supporting it, Natives American were thought to be uncivilized. The destruction of Natives Americans continued each generation, as land was gradually taken from them, as well as the genocide of their culture occurring over time. This shows some sort of parallel with African-Americans, as the worse they are treated, the more psychological and physiological damage is caused to them. As a result, their children are more likely to develop negative conditions, which can continue for generations down the line.

As history has shown, ignorance has no place in our society, and the result of that ignorance is evident today. With all the information gathered from archaeology, it is important to learn the significance of past events in order for our present to thrive.

*Maxwell Malamut (ENG'22)*

I attended the BLACK at BU conversation today, as part of BU's day of collective engagement. For me, not only was the discussion eye pening, but it was very important for the ways I perceive not only the BU campus but also Boston as a city. One of the most notable points was when one of the speakers, Joel Gill, mentioned "In the south, they don't care about how big you get, as long as you don't get too close. In the north, they don't care about how close you get, just as long as you don't get too big." This was interesting to me because I always assumed that "the north" was so much more progressive. However, I was aware from a previous school project about the significant inequality of wealth in Boston. Boston has one of the highest inequality rates of any city in America, which is really worrying. Gill also mentioned that having grown up in the south, he thought moving into Boston would be so much better, but when he got here, people told him not to go to certain areas because they weren't safe. He said when he was a kid growing up, he knew where the KKK would meet in his hometown, but he still felt like he could go places safely around his town, but in Boston he was warned about going to certain places. Ina Joseph, a recent grad, mentioned that in classes, people of color need to talk about the issues, and in classes where there are no people of color, professors need to ask the students why that is.

*Raziel Perez (CAS'21)*

Listening to Associate Provost for diversity and inclusion Crystal William's opening statement. I asked myself if I had ever experienced any form of bigotry or bias because of the color of my skin or because of my name. I'm a Cuban-American with an Aramaic name. To date, I am grateful that I have never found myself in any hostile situation where I felt that my life was in any immediate harm. I do however ponder on how much of a dis-advantage I have when it comes to living in this American society.



I agree that history shows that as a collective we can make a change. First we gather as a group to learn about the context (history), about the methods (strategy) and then about implementation, how to turn the theory to action. Education has been the key to true understanding since the beginning of time. The issues today are the sources. Where are you getting your information from? Is it Fox news, CNN?, or any other bias news, article, or book. That alone divides our opinions and creates internal conflicts that cover the underlying issues within our civilization. I don't think that having opposing ways of thinking is wrong, on the contrary. The best way of learning is stepping outside from what you know and understanding someone else's perspective narrative. Not having an ethnocentric view is key. The underlying issues must be addressed and people have to have these conversations included in their day to day lives in order for there to be change.

Saida Grundy made a great point to say that our racial hierarchy isn't innate and that it can be changed. Africans are humans and the idea of inferiority wasn't an overnight thing. It happened gradually through the course of around 100 years but it can be undone. She also mentions how the same incentive to keep that racial hierarchy is still persisting today. As it is undeniable to say that our country is being run by racist capitalism. One powerful statement that from Grundy's statement on the history of racism is that Racism is the mother of Race. Race as a classification system, historically followed Racism. Colonialism necessitated a false system of human categorization to justify European colonialization. We did not have a category of Race before we necessitated human exploitation.

Understanding our nation's history of racism is so critical to understanding our current reality.

*Kaylin Rix (SHA'22)*

Note before you read this: Since I know you also attended this talk, I am not going to go into super-fine detail about what the panelists talked about. Instead, I am going to elaborate on my own thought processes about the issues at hand that were discussed, and the changes that need to be made.

Yesterday I attended a Zoom meeting/talk hosted by the Society of Black Archaeologists, where they discussed race within the archaeology field and in academia. I learned A LOT from this talk, and though it was a talk pertaining to the archaeology world, I still learned a ton of insights that can be applied to nearly any study or industry.

The speakers in this talk discussed many of the flaws within the relationship between race and academia, especially within predominantly white institutions. I have always known that PWIs are inherently racist structures, but I have never fully considered the chain-reaction effect that this embedded racism has caused within academia. Given that I am an undergraduate student who is not on track for a career within academia, I have a very basic knowledge of how this discipline works. What I do know is that academia is the perfect storm for racism, due to an unspoken existence of implicit bias mixed with the act of gatekeeping knowledge. From my understanding, the outdated but long-standing ways of academia seem like an "old boys club". I especially feel like the "traditional" archaeology academia world has undoubtedly looked to gatekeep and gaslight archaeological knowledge and hypotheses since its inception. Yet, I am so incredibly optimistic about the future of the archaeology world. The

young scholars that I have heard about seem significantly more active in having far more than just a white, colonizer approach to archaeology. Their work will certainly change how history is presented, which will hopefully ultimately change our education of youth.

This is unrelated to the Society of Black Archaeologists zoom talk, but instead about the experiences of racism here at Boston University. An Instagram account has been recently made called BlackAtBU. This account posts the experiences anonymously that black students, faculty, and alumni at BU have dealt with. Some of the stories are absolutely shocking and show to the BU community the outward racism and microaggressions that our own PWI has on our black students. I cannot imagine how difficult and frustrating it must feel to be the only black student in a mostly white classroom. The feeling of continually being one of the few “representatives” of your race to white students and instructors must be absolutely exhausting. PWIs create a cesspool on microaggressions, and sometimes outward racism towards students of color. It is truly disgusting, alienating, and downright unfair and detrimental to our community. It angers me as a white person when I see blatant white privilege and class privilege constantly happening right before my eyes. The toxicity within PWIs needs to change. A future full of white privilege, unequal opportunity, microaggressions, and implicit bias is NOT a future my peers and I want to see. We need to actively work to dismantle the racist academic structures built before us, and shape them into better educational institutions for tomorrow.

*Varsha Saravana (COM'22)*

I sat in on a discussion surrounding the history of racism, and not only did I learn new things, I also saw different points of views and explanations surrounding how racism has evolved in this country over the course of the past few centuries. The talk discussed the issues in society and inside people's minds that inhibits racism to be solved. One of the presenters brought up the point how we as Americans are systematically taught to forget. This is a concept made to benefit capitalism since “forgetting is crucial to creating new things” also known as innovation. In a historical context one presenter said that the knowledge of the past is not fun in America. In order to know about the past would require a sense of sensitivity that some people unfortunately don't have. It's not difficult to see how a substantial amount of people in this country fail to believe that racism is still very much prevalent today. The presenter followed up by saying “the final act of violence is the denial of violence.”

People think that racism is static. People compare today to the 70s and jump to the conclusion that segregation and racism don't exist anymore. Although in reality there has been progress made, that doesn't mean it is not there anymore. I also learned how in the early 1900s the way people determined the maintenance of public areas was by seeing whether or not it affected the white citizens. The example the presenters gave was a case where a white family hired a black person as the help. This black person was now in charge of doing their laundry, and they would be walking the laundry down certain streets in the black areas. Since the white family didn't want their clothes to be getting dirty in these unmaintained streets, the streets were then cleaned and taken care of now that a white person was affected by its condition. Situations like these have been going on, they have just been mutating into different scenarios, some are more subtle than others. It isn't until now that people are forced to see the racism and

confront the issues, no matter what their race is. A presenter said “the only way to correct racial injustice is to see injustice.”

I learned a lot of fine details during this talk. It was also interesting hearing it from scholars who study African American culture and history. Leaving the talk I felt more educated and hopefully I can also share what I have learned with people who still refuse to accept that racism exists.

*Casey Spillane (COM'22)*

I was really impressed by the panel and the discussion they had. I found it informative on the facts of the history of racism, but what I found most compelling was the insight that the panelists had on the concept and importance of history itself. My favorite quote from the conversation was “Forgetting was a part of history,” which Louis Chude-Sokei said when talking about how a big part of this movement is seeking acknowledgement, and seeking for the facts of the situation and history that occurred to become accepted common knowledge, not just the knowledge of the people fighting. I think this connects greatly to this course in that collecting the material culture in order to observe and using it to prove the true history of a civilization, so that it may become knowledge that is not forgotten or misrepresented is at the route of archaeology. Another point that I found interesting came from Professor Grundy, when she talked about how when people talk about how they, or an organization, has made progress on diversity or fighting racism, that is viewing racism as a static entity when it is in fact dynamic and every changing. This made me think about our discussions in class about social complexity, which involved inequality that was not necessarily black and white, and just as it does in present times, changes a lot as society and culture shifts and changes whether that be because of a change in rule, or religious beliefs or anything. In order to understand social complexity and inequality in any civilization, present or past, it is important to understand how it changes over time. And since describing and knowing that social complexity is integral to really knowing a society or civilization, that aspect should not be forgotten as Professor Chude-Sokei mentioned before. The final point that I found important was how much of the history of racism in the past and present is a series of events that occurred as a response to something else. This connects to class in that really I think a lot of the acts made by societies and civilizations that we have studied have been in response to other events, especially when connected to social complexity. AN example of that would be when Native Americans were forced to drop their culture and attend boarding schools that taught them to be “human” instead of “savage”, because the white people believed that they were superior socially and saw that their population was not decreasing despite the white population spreading and decreasing the native territories.

*Dan Xu (CAS 21)*

As of today, the people of America have participated in a nearly month long protest against police brutality and racism. This is by far the largest, and probably most important human right protest ever in our generation. On May 25, the untimely death of George Floyd sparked tremendous discontentment among Americans and public outcry for equal treatment among all racial groups. Even though the four policemen involved in this incident were all

prosecuted, this hideous crime against an innocent black American reminds us just how prominent racism still is in our society and demands us to reflect on what we could have done to prevent this from happening. On June 16, Robert Brown, the president of the Boston University, called upon all the BU students and affiliates to take a day off and contemplate on this issue and I did.

As a Chinese student, I came to the US 8 years ago without knowing what racism really was. Back home, we don't really have a significant problem with racism, because though there are more than 50 different ethnic minority groups in China, we all essentially look the same. Therefore, it is hard to tell an individual's race and subsequently it is harder to judge people based on it. However, I immediately noticed why racism was a serious issue here in the US the day I got here. It is because people have different skin colors. In this Caucasian dominant culture, any other skin color will be categorized as minority. Throughout the years, I studied American history and came to realize what the black community has been through in this country. It really shows how systemic racism is inherently embedded in the American society. Even though I am not black, I can still feel the disadvantage of being a minority.

Perhaps people assume I know Kong Fu, (which in and of itself is a stereotypical thing to assume) I rarely get harassed or call on. However, despite nobody saying anything racist to me in person, this would happen quite often online. With the anonymous disguise of the internet, I have heard people called me a "Chink" or kindly asked me to leave their country. I usually will not take it personally but it is not hard to imagine how many other minorities are treated this way. According to Ibram Kendi, being non-racist and being anti-racist is not quite the same. Even though both might identified as "they don't have any prejudice against other race," anti-racist will go out their way and actually do something constructive about racism. I will categorize myself as a non-racist because I don't believe I have done anything to help the situation, nor that I know how to. However, Asian Americans are also mistreated heavily in this country and the only reason people are not aware of it is because Asian people tend not to be outspoken. Therefore, it is important to come together and voice our opinion against racism and stand in solidarity with other minority groups in this country to fight for a more equal environment for generations to come.