

This iBelieve Essays

Democracy: Exclusive to Whites Only

by **Michaela Shelton**

In 1776, the minorities held power when Yankees shouted “give me liberty or give me death” to the British and dumped their tea into the Boston Harbor, but that was roughly 240 years ago. Now, in the 21st Century, White Americans represent the racial majority, making up over 75 percent of the populace in this country while African Americans and Hispanics create a combined percentage of 25. *Because our country lives for utilitarianism and making decisions in the best interest of the majority, how is it possible for minorities to have a voice?* It appears to me that America doesn’t care about the minority consensus anymore.

This belief of mine only became more prominent to me when I finished my first year of high school. Towards the end of my freshman year, I enrolled in a class called Global Feminism that was taught by one of the most socially cultivated teachers at the NYC iSchool, Ms. Jenkins, and learned about intersectionality between the feminist movement and other movements. Initially, I was left perplexed by the idea that oppression could be viewed under multiple lenses and asked my teacher if that meant all forms of discrimination were connected. Before she had the chance to answer my question, however, one of the sophomore boys in the classroom pointed out that “minorities like to play ‘the race card’ in every scenario that doesn't work in their favor” and how half of the time “race isn’t even a factor.” As a minority myself, I was disappointed to see that such a narrow-minded student existed at the iSchool and reminded him of the detrimental effects of systematic racism, yet all he could say in response was, “Well, it’s a *free* country, and this is just *my* opinion.”

Now, I agree that America was born a free nation and founded under the guise that all men were created equal, but that shouldn’t be used as an excuse to stifle the flow of conversation. Just because these problems may not be affecting everyone does not mean they aren’t of significance to anyone else, and it’s about time *White* America realizes that democracy was not intended to be for Whites only. Martin Luther King Jr. once said that “A threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” The principles our countrymen have been fighting for overseas won’t mean anything to the world if this racial turmoil doesn’t get resolved on American soil.