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“Black Is Powerful”: A Gramscian Rhetorical Analysis of Post-Racialism at the University of Missouri

Taylor Bauer

Illinois State University, tabauer@ilstu.edu

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“BLACK IS POWERFUL”: A GRAMSCIAN RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF POST-
RACIALISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Taylor Bauer

100 Pages

The election of Barack Obama brought an uptick in discourse surrounding the notion of a “post-racial” America. This thesis will investigate post-racialism and the backlash surrounding its assumptions about the United States in the context of an act of resistance that took place at the University of Missouri in 2015. Black football players on the Missouri football team joined students in the #ConcernedStudent1950 activist group in calling for the resignation of university president Tim Wolfe. Threatening to abstain from athletic activity, Wolfe stepped down, signaling a victory for the minority student body. By utilizing Gramscian rhetorical theories and concepts, the events at Missouri will guide a conversation on the backlash to post-racialism, and the ways in which the student athletes participating in the football boycott illuminated the role of black Americans in issues of hegemony and racial inequality.

KEYWORDS: post-racialism, Gramsci, hegemony, resistance movements, rhetorical criticism

“BLACK IS POWERFUL”: A GRAMSCIAN RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF POST-
RACIALISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

TAYLOR BAUER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
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TAYLOR BAUER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Joseph Zompetti, Chair

Touré Reed

Maria Moore

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In nearly every aspect of life in America, black men and women are forced to make sacrifices and compromises in order to participate in the simple act of living in the United States. The extent to which black Americans go to answer society's expectations of what is asked of them is difficult to grasp, especially for individuals of racial, economic, and familial privilege. The issues at the heart of racial injustice in America today are complex and diverse in nature, stemming from a transition at the turn of the century that attempted to move past race; yet, the issues that affected black men and women in 2008 continue to pose challenges for black Americans in 2018. No stretch of the imagination would be required to predict that in the near future the relentlessness against an already excessively strained group of people will not cease.

In any struggle of power between the social elite and the general public, a variety of influences are at play that orchestrate the processes of oppression that simultaneously fuel some, and deter others. While the wheels of power have crushed the lives, both physically and theoretically, of countless individuals who have attempted to counter these injustices, progress is slow, and often just as much a product of timing as it is dedication. The triumphs of any movement for social justice, like the issues that inspire their activism, are diverse and formed through countless influences. The complexities of this subject matter serve not as a deterrent or pessimistic overtone on which any fight for equality must take place, but rather the overbearing pressure to which every oppressed individual must rise in the morning, continue throughout the day, and fall asleep at night. The insurmountable turmoil that takes place daily, and punishes the mind, body, and soul of countless black Americans would seem a force far too great to allow for any resistive movements or actions. Throughout the history of racial discrimination and social

injustice in the United States, scholars have utilized the rhetoric behind these oppressive forces as a guide to the power discrepancies that force some Americans to fold at the hands of others.

A case in point occurred in 2014, when students of color on the campus of the University of Missouri were experiencing racially-charged harassment that made them feel powerless. The yelling of racial epithets, swastikas drawn in feces on the bathroom walls, and threats in the hallways between classes were just a few of the many grievances students shared with one another and the world, taking advantage of the reach of social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook (Hefferan, 2016). With responses from the administration proving to be insignificant in terms of student's sense of safety and inclusion, the school's football team posted a photograph on Twitter of all the players of color with linked arms, and an accompanying message stating that the players would not participate in another football game until then-President Tim Wolfe resigned from his post. The rhetoric surrounding the racially charged events and their subsequent responses, especially that of the football team, received national attention and media coverage. Following President Wolfe's resignation, the football team was applauded on campus and on national media outlets for their use of resistance in accomplishing tangible action in response to weeks of student outcry.

In this chapter, I plan to argue for the importance of studying resistance movements. More particularly, I will explore the role of resistance movements at college campuses and the ways in which college campuses allow for resistance movements to flourish and gain traction. In terms of recent events, I will also take time to outline the ways in which severe racial discrimination within a post-racial political landscape has led to a resurgence in awareness of race issues. In order to investigate these concepts, I will analyze the social media post composed by the University of Missouri football team in 2014 in response to a number of racially-charged

events on the campus directed at black students. The events that took place on the campus of the University of Missouri will be used in order to explore the football team's act of resistance in the landscape of the larger Mizzou protests occurring at the time and possibly shed light on other college resistance movements, as well as the influence of athletics on university policy and its role as a source of capital.

Resistance Movements

Black Americans have been forming coalitions of resistance since the first import of Africans into North America (Mullin, 1995). As long as black lives have been exploited within the confines of the continental United States, these oppressed individuals have expressed opposition and attempted to form resistance clusters in order to meet two ends: one, to keep alive a hope or energy within a largely defeatist environment, and two, to strive for change that would alter their reality. An important aspect of this framework of resistance is the notion that not all resistance movements strive for a change in policy or legislation. Without any sort of sense of resistance within these populations, the already unbearable circumstances of living in these conditions become bleak and all-encompassing. Borrowing a Nietzschean tool for surviving in oppressive conditions, an escape remains viable in this dreary reality through even the smallest forms of resistance (Nietzsche, 1910). From the early 18th century to today, the form of resistance plays just as important a role in terms of impact on the oppressed community than the impact it has on altering the group's ability to cope and process their existence. Understanding the influence of resistance in existing as a black person in the United States is crucial moving forward in order to keep in mind the constant struggle by which many black Americans live.

The length of time that resistance has played a role in living in America as a black man or woman is impactful because of the innate nature of finding manners in which to resist, but as the

mistreatment of black Americans has achieved more and more media coverage and outcry, it is apparent that resistance is seen within the black community as imperative, not a request (Stack, 1975). Resistance is a vital tool in the process of improving the power discrepancies between a public and the elite by whom their livelihood is infringed. While the process of improving living conditions is sought after throughout the history of black resistance, resistance is a key step to becoming black in America (Baldwin, 1963). With this in mind, the presence of resistance in issues of civil rights and racial equality becomes a crucial tool to improving the living conditions of black Americans.

For black Americans, even behaviors and traditions that are isolated from deliberate oppression can show traces of resistance. Biko (1978) explores the process of black consciousness and its battles with oppressive forces in society, and in particular, the concept of double consciousness, or simultaneously existing as a black woman or man in a country of freedom as well as a black woman or man in a land of white superiority. One is inherently in opposition with the other, leaving black Americans with very little room to exist in removed manner from the oppressive forces at play. Biko additionally adds that even actions that do not deliberately resist these forces are rooted in oppression because of the all-encompassing influence of white superiority. Whether directly pushing back or not, American progress is rooted in oppression and resistance, and the implication put forth by scholars that even the least politically or socially active members of the black community portray forms of resistance, even subconsciously, helps lend urgency to the study of this force in American society, and helps to place justification behind the aims of this analysis.

Activism on College Campuses

In 1638, students at Harvard University protested the administration's use of brute force and poor quality of food in an attempt to improve the living conditions of students (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970). In 1766, students at Harvard University yet again staged a protest, this time against the administration on the quality of butter being served in their dining halls. Known now as The Butter Rebellion, students caused such a disturbance that it took an address by the British colonial administrator of New Jersey and Massachusetts, Sir Francis Bernard, to calm down the violent and insubordinate crowd (Morrison, 1936). Student uprisings became more prominent in the United States from 1770 to 1860, accumulating in "a rising curve of collective student disorder" (Allmendinger, 1973). To put it plainly, activism has existed on college campuses in America since before the formation of the United States itself.

Student bodies at numerous American universities and colleges have served as a source of major demonstrations in the name of policy disputes, general living conditions, and greater social debates. Van Dyke (2003) claims that college provides young Americans with their first tangible taste of collective action, and therefore offers students with the enticing allure of simultaneously demonstrating individual principals within the confines of group communalism. While young people are placed in large group scenarios throughout their teenage years, such as high school, religious organizations, and employment, the process of applying to and attending a university or college evokes a period of individual development for the individual in terms of their social agency. Furthermore, the long tradition of activism on university campuses is not lost on young people entering their college career, and the legacy of forming coalitions for a greater good, or even in opposition to a mere inconvenience, becomes a point of pride for many of those attending an institution of higher education.

Similarly, black college students utilize activism and the ease of assembly on a college campus in order to address necessary contentions to their livelihood on both the grounds of the university and the nation as a whole. While historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) offer black students an extended sense of freedom and representation, predominately white institutions (PWIs) place black students in a more difficult position to fulfil the academic and personal exploration that students seek from an institution of higher education (Sedlacek, 1999). Coupled with the already present struggles of being black in America outside of a confined social space like a college or university, conditions that fail to acknowledge issues of race such as institutional representation or academic resources make activism a virtual necessity. Just as the country fails black Americans in ensuring them the comforts of living in a democratic society, college campuses often fail in representing minority populations at PWIs, forcing black students to fight for their equality, even while venturing on an intense academic and intellectual endeavor.

Recent Awareness of Racial Injustices

An increased awareness of racial injustices has risen steadily since the 2012 shooting death of teenager Trayvon Martin (Lee, 2012). As injustices embedded in the black American experience become salient for privileged populations in the country, cases of racial discrimination have received a larger amount of coverage in the news media, as well as digital social interactions such as Twitter and Facebook. Although cases that receive the most attention are often instances of a loss of life, the increased coverage of racial discrimination has led to significant changes in policy, particularly in the realm of police enforcement.

Baltimore and Chicago have been thoroughly investigated by the Department of Justice for their race-related actions and reactions of their police forces (Department of Justice, 2016,

2017). In the Baltimore investigation specifically, officials concluded that the issues of targeting black citizens for traffic violations and overall crime suspicions had permeated into the *zeitgeist* of elected representatives of the city. In doing so, the investigation determined that there was tangible evidence that the same mindset behind targeting black individuals for issues of crime had been adopted for issues of policymaking and procedural frameworks of several elements of life in the city. Through this analysis, a tangible connection between the livelihood and treatment of black individuals and unjust governance had been established.

Despite stemming from acts of violence against black Americans, the investigation allows for issues of race to be viewed as influential to the environments in which black men and women are expected to function normally. Followed a year later with its report on Chicago, the Department of Justice's findings on the state of black citizens in these cities concluded what many had been saying for years and decades: black lives were being manipulated and unfairly violated at the social and political level in both direct and indirect manners. Long before the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin in 2012, black Americans had systematically been oppressed and abused in manners immeasurable and insurmountable.

Establishing this point for the purpose of this thesis is important due to the time period in which my analysis will take place. Despite these Department of Justice investigations taking place in the two years preceding the events on the campus of the University of Missouri, the issues covered in the Department of Justice analyses had been playing out for decades, and if not for an increased awareness in the violent killings of unarmed black men and women, the issues may not have permeated the national news circuits. The loss of life in the case of many black Americans is a tragedy in its own right, but seeing as the coverage has led to an increased public and mediated consciousness, analyzing issues of this topic will help to possibly explain the ways

in which we can move forward with tangible plans for action in order to reverse centuries of hardships and injustice towards black American citizens.

Justification of the Thesis

The loss of American lives aside, the mistreatment of an American citizen should be of concern to every American citizen. The differences which separate the oppressed and the oppressor may be slight, but the practices by which oppressive forces exert their privilege and power can be used against anyone should the situation arise. Saving the particular aspects of this event for the literature review, I would like to make clear now that this subject matter is worth studying and analyzing because despite the journey for equality and liberty being a long, treacherous push against the forces which dictate reality in America, it is a journey forward. Even in moments, or years, of seemingly stagnant policy change or public attention, any and all efforts made in the name of social justice for all people of the United States is important, necessary, and required in order to ensure the framework of our nation transcends pages of a document and manifests itself as a lived experience. I attempt to amplify the concerns of the students at the University of Missouri at the time of these events because I believe scholarship has a vital role to play in the progression of the livelihood of American citizens. The rights of every woman and man in America are not being met with equal concern, and it is with a passionate ferocity that I will examine the ways in which the football team of the University of Missouri utilized and accomplished the resignation of President Tim Wolfe due to a lackluster response to racial injustice on their campus, all the while exposing deeper forces that proved immovable and irreversible in order for their endeavor to be realized.

In this thesis, I will examine the social media post by the University of Missouri football team in response to months of outcry against racially-charged instances of violence and

aggression, and the ways in which the rhetoric of the team's photograph and accompanying comments regarding the matter played a role in the ousting of former President of the University Tim Wolfe. By laying out the framework behind the First Amendment, specifically the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly, the events surrounding the history of the University of Missouri, the events surrounding the Missouri football boycott that took place between 2014 and 2015, the historicity behind the election of President Barack Obama and the emergence of a post-racial American ideology, backlash to post-racial life in America, and finally, the history and role resistance movements in higher education, I will analyze the effectiveness of the rhetoric behind the team's message, as well as its implications for race and representation in America utilizing a Gramscian rhetorical framework. First, let us examine the theoretical and academic findings of these issues in order to define and deliberately cement the terms and ideas behind the issues present within this topic.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will first introduce the core principals of the First Amendment, specifically the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly, in order to contextualize the rationale behind looking at the events on the campus of the University of Missouri. Next, I will examine the events surrounding the history of the University of Missouri as it pertains to issues of race, followed by a summary of the events surrounding the Missouri football boycott that took place between 2014 and 2015. Then, I will explore the historicity behind the election of President Barack Obama and the emergence of a post-racial American ideology, backlash to post-racial life in America, and finally, the history and role resistance movements in higher education. Throughout this progression of literature, I intend to establish the groundwork for my investigation into the Missouri football team's boycott of games pending a resignation from then-President Tim Wolfe. The following is a comprehensive look at the literature behind my thesis topic, and information and events pertaining to the study of the livelihood of black Americans and their experiences. I wish to begin with an overview of the University of Missouri as it pertains to issues of race since its founding.

The First Amendment

Discourse in the United States is rooted in the First Amendment. Where some countries may attempt to limit the ways in which citizens can express themselves, America structured its law of the land around making sure those rights for citizens in a democracy are protected and exalted in social and civic life. Baker (1997) states that the theoretical framework of the United States has become a consciousness for its citizens because of the constitutional outlines of the First Amendment, specifically its focus on the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly. These two freedoms are essential to resistance movements, and are the main components of the

success of the football boycott at the University of Missouri. I will outline each of these freedoms as defined in the Constitution in order to lay out the context of how the events at the University of Missouri were possible.

Freedom of Speech

The freedom of speech, as outlined in the First Amendment, allows individuals a voice in civic and social life. While everyone can hold an opinion, the freedom of speech allows citizens of the United States the ability to create change through dialogue and critique of the laws, policies, and rhetoric surrounding their civil rights. The Constitution's First Amendment states the following:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances (U.S. Const. art. 1, sec. 1).

Baker (1997) notes that the freedom of speech allows individuals to make their opinions available to the public for debate, and without the freedom to discuss these varying opinions in public, ideologies would segment into social groups where progress would not be made in their critique of policy or policymakers. Karst (1975) notes that the freedom of speech helps to create equality in the right of expression, meaning that the Constitution itself supports and protects an individual's right to dissent. Included in the right to speak out against policies or laws is the protection of individuals to form groups to resist policy and political ideologies, known as the freedom of assembly.

Freedom of Assembly

As addressed in the U.S. Constitution, Article. 1, Section. 1, a group of concerned citizens has the right to assemble peacefully to protest or demonstrate against an aspect of civic or social life. The freedom of assembly has played an integral part in major improvements in the lives of Americans, including abolition, the unionization of workers, and women's suffrage (Rishe, 1965). Daniels (2010) adds that the right to assemble has been considered a human right since the Magna Carta, and has played an important role in the lives of citizens within a democracy for hundreds of years. The freedom to assemble is often a freedom that is not necessarily as discussed by policymakers and politicians as the freedom of speech or press because the freedom to assemble often results in protests against, and in opposition to, governments and leads to disruptions in everyday life within towns, cities, and states (Inazu, 2010). Both the freedom of speech and the freedom to assemble are rights that have been used extensively in resistance movements, and their role in college resistance movements helps to contextualize the events that occurred at the University of Missouri in 2015.

First Amendment and College Resistance

Freedom of speech and the freedom to assemble have been the constitutional basis for all demonstrations and protests that have taken place on campuses across the United States. Astin (1968) references that many students upon first arriving on a college or university campus feel a strong affiliation to the idea of the institution, and less of an affiliation with the professors and administration themselves. Lowe (2007) adds that the student body at a university or college often feels a sense of safety and protection within the confines of their campus, deriving from the understanding that the campus is their space to act freely as students of the institution as well as citizens of the United States. Flanagan and Levine (2010) attribute the newly achieved freedoms

that stem from a university or college -- such as independence in living and classroom environments, less oversight from parental or authority figures, and a large population of individuals in a similar age group -- as catalysts for college students becoming more aware of the issues around them. At the very least, these new environments invite reflection and critical thinking, prompting many young adults who attend higher education institutions to become active in campus or local governments, take interest in policies that may affect the town or city in which they study, and through interactions with others, find that assembling to fight for change in a policy or rule that hinders this new freedom is a beneficial activity.

Freedom of speech also allows college students to express themselves in a way that can evoke change. O'Neil (1997) argues that classes at colleges and universities are much more conversational than classes at the high school level. The process of discussing class content or current events in a classroom setting helps to instill a sense of importance to students' voices that allows them more confidence to speak their minds. The classroom setting, like college campuses, simultaneously offers students a safe environment where they can feel free to speak, as well as the incentive to do so through an emphasis on critical thinking as a means to achieve a good grade in classes and apply class concepts to the real world (Martin, 2003). The traditionally liberal environments in which universities and colleges operate also invites students to express concerns or criticisms for their experiences at an institution of higher education. The reach of free speech on college campuses is defined through a few key constitutional elements. Universities use "free speech zones" as a means for open conversation and the distribution of literature that allow students and community members a place to freely share their ideas and beliefs. In *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* (1988), the Supreme Court ruled that free speech was limited in a classroom setting when discourse threatens "legitimate pedagogical

concerns” (p. 14). The decision ruled that while K-12 students were limited in their freedom of speech, college students as adults were provided spaces for the free expression of their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Movements like the Free Speech movement at UC Berkeley have developed a sense of responsibility within these educational environments that enlists students to stand up and speak out against issues concerning student life, policy issues, and overall concerns that may threaten their newfound freedoms and responsibilities (Peters, 2010). Universities across the United States have been hotbeds for resistance movements utilizing the freedom of speech and the freedom to assemble, and the University of Missouri’s history with student resistance helps to contextualize the events that occurred in 2015 regarding the football team’s boycott. Next, I will explore the history of issues of race and the University of Missouri as they pertain to student resistance movements on college campuses.

University of Missouri and the Racial Divide

The University of Missouri was founded in 1839 and has served as the state’s largest institution of higher education, boasting a collection of over 300 majors in 18 colleges (University of Missouri, 2017). Like many Midwestern universities, the early years of the University of Missouri consisted primarily of white residents from its nearby geographical area. Initially, black Americans were barred from enrolling in the university, and would be for another 220 years (Loupe, 1989). Loupe (1989) notes that as the school’s enrollment grew, so did the university’s interest in recruiting new populations of students into their institution, resulting in programs aimed at recruiting students from China, India, and the Philippines before the turn of the 20th century. The color barrier at the University of Missouri was challenged in 1939 by Lucile Bluford, a graduate student seeking admission into the School of Journalism, the nation’s oldest program for journalists. Edmondson and Perry Jr. (2008) write that the issue would

emerge into the public eye thanks to the influential Lloyd Gaines Supreme Court decision put forth by the NAACP to challenge *Plessy V. Ferguson*'s "separate but equal" doctrine that happened around the same time. Lloyd Gaines, a prospective student of law, was denied entry into the University of Missouri School of Law for being black. Thanks to the NAACP and its resources, a lawsuit was filed and resulted in the ruling that Gaines must be enrolled in the School, or be admitted to a newly created, separate school of law for black students (Bluford, 1959). The impact of the ruling was limited, but the conclusion made in the case would allow for the famous *Brown V. Board of Education* that ended segregation in public schools. Most notably, the *Gaines* ruling would provide black students with hope for continuing their education thanks to an established principal of the equality of education. Like many rulings on racial equality, however, the positive impact would be slow and staggered.

Another decade would pass before black students would be admitted to the University of Missouri. Despite being allowed to take classes at the university, black students found resources and representation limited, and racism to be a defining force in their college experience (Loupe, 1989). Nash and Silverman (2015) note that purges against prospective minority students that began in the 1940s occurred while the Lucile Bluford case was gaining traction. The University of Missouri would do little to combat issues of racism and discrimination in the decades to follow, and even rulings on the equality of education would find little light in the wake of white backlash at the university (Edmondson & Perry, 2015). Ritter (2013) notes that the area surrounding the University of Missouri also played a role in the school's racial policies and discriminatory environment. Columbia, Missouri, the town in which the University of Missouri's main campus is located, is a mid-sized city surrounded by smaller, rural towns. Housing and jobs had very racial implications in Missouri during the 1960s and 1970s, especially since black

Americans were finding it harder to find adequate housing in the cities and suburbs, as well as well-paying, living-wage jobs. A growing sense of impatience was growing in black communities for change, leading to an increase in resistance movements between 1960 and 1980, which eventually slowed by the growing trend of conservatism in the Reagan era (Ritter, 2013).

While many issues of race and equality that took place on the campus of the University of Missouri mirrored national sentiments and trends, Missouri was always a hotbed for racial division. Rost (2017) explains that while national trends often play a role in racism and discrimination, Missouri has been exceptionally affected by racism since the arrival of the Ku Klux Klan in 1921. Utilizing St. Louis as a sort of Midwestern mecca, white supremacists and neo-Nazis often collaborate and then fan out into the rural areas to implement discriminatory practices. Mills (2017) notes that for many black citizens of Missouri, especially within the St. Louis and Boone counties, racism is less an outrageous, outdated influencer, and more of a mainstay of policy and social practices in the area. As explored in the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown, numerous citizens of Ferguson, Missouri were far less shocked than those following the story on national news outlets, because black lives in Missouri are largely accepted as expendable and flexible to the interests of its white residents (Mills, 2017). Ferguson, as it turned out, was not too different than many cities in America, and it was the outcry following the shooting death of Michael Brown that would begin the national movements of resistance that would lead to the 2015 Missouri football boycott.

The University of Missouri, like many college campuses, was no stranger to protests before the 2015 football team boycott, but the catalytic nature of Ferguson – a unique historical moment that galvanizes advocates for social change (Darsey, 2009) – and the cries of resistance emulated through its coverage found a large number of black Americans questioning their place

in their communities. In the next section, I will break down the months leading up to the Missouri football boycott and the climate of the campus surrounding these events.

Racial Unrest at the University of Missouri, 2014-2015

The University of Missouri students and faculty that have gone on record about the incidents leading up to the resignation of President Tim Wolfe have argued that the climate of the campus changed, like many places around the country, after the fatal 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, a town two hours away from the university's main campus in Columbia, Missouri (Epstein & Kisska-Schulze, 2016). Occurring just days before students arrived back on campus for the Fall semester, and inciting national attention and emotion, troubling events formed a cloud over the school as the University of Missouri began its new academic year under a cloud of tension. While a large number of students were affected by the Ferguson incident, the campus itself recently experienced its own racially charged incident, albeit non-violent. In 2010, two white students dropped cotton balls in front of the university's black culture center, in reference to the picking of cotton by slaves, resulting in their arrest on a Class D felony hate crime (Heavin, 2010). Eventually sentenced to 80 hours of community service and two years of unsupervised probation, the perpetrators were punished, but many students, faculty, and surrounding community members felt the situation lacked any substantial response in terms of repairing campus morale. Now, four years later, students and faculty arrived to campus under the shadow of a national debate on racism.

Black students at the University of Missouri reported, at least initially, no increased amount of racist interactions and altercations than any other year in the fall of 2014. In no way were racist events not present; as previously noted, racial slurs and hateful language were present on the campus of the University of Missouri since its founding. Despite the looming tension from

the Ferguson shooting, the impact of the death of Michael Brown and its subsequent attention seemed to create dialogues around racism, not any particular spike in hate crimes or the targeting of black students. Fortunato, Gigliotti, and Ruben (2017) note, however, that a rise in reported racist interactions occurred near the end of the year. As conversations about race and the events in Ferguson increased in hostility and emotion over the course of the academic year, more and more black students began experiencing racism on campus, including racial slurs and threats. The concerns were brought to the attention of the administration, yet little was done outside of meetings and townhall-style question sessions to address the increase in racist activity on campus (Epstein & Kisska-Schulze, 2016).

As students continued to express concern over an increase in racist outbursts and interactions against black students on campus, the first few months of 2015 went by relatively calmly, until a number of problems caused tangible damage and fear among the students at the university. The rise in racist issues on campus achieved national attention on April 9th and 10th, following the discovery of swastikas and racial slurs written in human feces on the bathroom wall of a dormitory (Epstein & Kisska-Schulze, 2016). Following the arrest of Bradley Becker, the perpetrator of the bathroom graffiti, Becker expressed that his actions were done randomly, and not influenced by campus tensions or racist beliefs. The campus experienced a few months of relatively small demonstrations, advocating for the end of racism on campus and demanding a comprehensive plan from the administration. In August, graduate assistants protesting the end of health care subsidies joined forces with Jonathan Butler, who had protested at Ferguson as well as organized resistance movements on campus to combat the rise in racist behavior (Gilbert, 2016). Despite receiving their health care subsidies for which they protested, graduate students

would pledge their voices and help the black students at the University of Missouri in order to continue to push the administration to listen more closely to the concerns of students.

Following a racist event targeting the student body president of Missouri, as well as a rally of well over 100 people in opposition to the administration's slow response to issues of race on campus, the university implemented training on inclusion and discrimination to begin the following year (Desnoyer & Alexander, 2017). In October, during the university's homecoming parade, President Tim Wolfe was approached about his plan for solving the discrimination that was occurring at Missouri, and seemed to laugh off questions and ignore students, as bystanders began clashing with student protesters, invoking no real response from Wolfe or other members of the administration who were present at the parade. Gilbert (2016) writes that students participating in recent resistance demonstrations organized into what they named "Concerned Student 1950," named for the year the university began admitting black students. Concerned Student 1950 also demanded a formal apology from President Wolfe for his lack of care and perceived neglect of students at the parade; they also demanded his resignation for his lack of concern for the black students.

In the same week Concerned Student 1950 (CS1950) demanded President Wolfe's resignation, another swastika was drawn on the walls of a dormitory bathroom, and Wolfe met with the group in a private meeting to discuss solutions (Gilbert, 2016). Arriving at no agreement, Jonathan Butler, the student who joined graduate students and black students earlier in the year, announced a hunger strike until President Wolfe resigned, or was forced out by the Board of Curators. In a letter to the board, Butler stated that the rise in hate speech and actions were staggering, and that the lack of adequate response from Wolfe was unacceptable (Kovaks, 2015). Beginning on November 2nd, Butler initiated his hunger strike, as CS1950 staged a

campus walkout to demand the immediate resignation of President Wolfe. Nearly a month after the homecoming parade, Wolfe posted an apology, stating that he was confused by the events at the parade and taken off guard. Later that same day. When approached by protesters outside his home, Wolfe stated that systematic oppression on campus was occurring “because [black students] don’t believe that [they] have the equal opportunity for success” (Gutierrez, 2015, 4). Feeling as if President Tim Wolfe was victim-blaming, CS1950 argued that more voices needed to speak out against the president in order to prompt his resignation. Less than 24 hours later, the Missouri football team issued its statement of resistance, accompanied by a provocative photograph. The day after President Wolfe’s comments on institutional racism on campus and CS1950’s call for more voices to speak out in favor of his resignation, 32 black players on the Missouri football team were photographed linking arms along with this statement:

The athletes of color on the University of Missouri football team truly believe ‘injustice Anywhere is a threat to Justice Everywhere’ We will no longer participate in any football related activities until President Tim Wolfe resigns or is removed due to his negligence toward marginalized students’ experiences. WE ARE UNITED!!!! (1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015)

The photograph depicts the black players on the Mizzou football team standing together with their arms linked. Every player’s eyes are staring into the camera, and each individual is standing straight with a stoic, defiant look on their face. Many are dressed in athletic leisure wear, with nearly half of them wearing Missouri-related clothing. The photograph, in accordance with the accompanying tweet, depicts strong men standing tall in the face of pressure. The statement received national attention, paving the way for President Wolfe’s resignation two days later. A number of concerns arose for the university upon the refusal to participate in football activities, including financial, contractual, and legal issues that threatened the university’s status as a

Division I athletic program (Gilbert, 2016). All in all, the football team's defiance made a statement loud enough that the administration could not ignore.

All of these events were occurring in the wake of a resurgence of attention towards the role of race in social injustice. The increase in public awareness of racially-charged issues in policing helped to expose the notion of a post-racial society to be false. In the next section, I will explore the emergence of post-racial ideology in the wake of the election of President Barack Obama, as well as the backlash behind post-racial ideology.

Post-Racialism

The Rise of Post-Racialism

The notion of a post-racial America began introducing itself into political discourse as early as the 1970s, yet truly came to fruition following the announcement of then-Senator Barack Obama's entrance into the 2008 presidential election (Bell, 2009). Post-racialism in many aspects of American culture is a theory rooted in the conquest of denial, a means to transcend a racist history with a colorblindness that, rhetorically, seeks to deny the existence of current transgressions. While the effects of racial discrimination may still ruminate in some aspects of society, the concept of post-racialism emerged being labeled "post-racialism" throughout the 1990s as historians and scholars began to investigate the ways in which race, despite falling out of national attention at the level of the civil rights movement, was still playing a role in the subordination of black Americans despite an ideological attempt by policymakers to move past race as a political influencer (Bell, 1992). The academic work that went into investigating the permanence of race in the United States discovered what many Americans already knew: that race was still a factor in the lives of black men and women in a variety of ways.

As coverage of Barack Obama in the Democratic primaries began to increase for the 2008 Presidential election, pundits and thinkers on both sides of the American political spectrum began to discuss Obama's blackness. Between Obama's mannerisms and self-representation, voters and journalists alike noted that his talking points and political thinking were not rooted in his race, but rather in ideology (Walters, 2007). The role Obama's race played in his politics did not go unmentioned, but played a more supplementary role to his political ideologies on social and economic issues. The break from race and political ideology as synonymous was a unique paradigm shift that was presented in part because of Obama's ability to retain his authenticity as a politician and as a black man simultaneously (Augoustinos & De Garis, 2012). Politicians like Jesse Jackson, Colin Powell, and Condoleezza Rice had often been criticized for either the prominence of their blackness in their political ideology or the lack thereof, whereas Obama began to gain attention in the mainstream media as a figure who could maintain both roles with which voters would associate him (Schneider & Bos, 2011). While voters and journalists would push back and argue he was either not representative enough of black Americans or too closely associated with his race as a guide for his political agenda, Obama as a presidential candidate was the closest potential black Commander in Chief America had seen at that point in history (Lewis-Beck & Tien, 2008).

Upon winning the Democratic Party's nomination for president, the prospect of a black president became more real than ever before. Conversations began to dominate political commentary on whether or not the election of a black man as president would have an effect on the role of race in policymaking and the public. As the party who had put forth a black candidate for president, Democrats began arguing that the election of Barack Obama would point to the eradication of race as a major step in the fight for racial equality, and in many senses point

towards a post-racial society (Wise, 2010). Post-racial neo-liberalism evolved out of strategy to keep the racist history of the United States in the past. Since the 1970s, districts that held a black majority of voters placed their political support behind Democratic candidates, and as redistricting aimed to keep black majority districts together, the Democratic Party began to utilize these districts by composing messages that placed issues faced in black communities within their talking points (Grofman, Griffin, & Glazer, 1992). Not only were very few of the issues mentioned during campaign season brought to the table upon a candidate's election, but the trend also led many black Americans to believe the Democratic Party was representative of their needs and concerns due to the options at hand. In comparison, the Democratic Party was more favorable to black communities than the Republican Party, but still failed to acknowledge the necessity for policies that improved the living conditions of predominately black districts.

While the Democratic Party made some attempts at creating policies to assist black communities, the Republican Party had done far less, creating policies that were perceived to hurt black communities, or at the very least pay little mind to the concerns of black Americans (Perryman, 2004). The prospect of a black president meant that policies aimed at leveling the playing field for black Americans would become obsolete, and led to calls of no longer linking policy decisions based on race since if a black man can become president, no obstacles prevented a black man or woman from achieving the same successes (Ledwidge, Verney, & Parmar, 2013). As previously mentioned, Obama's fused political identity that allowed him to be a race-neutral president also fueled calls from the Republican Party for a post-racial approach to politics. While some baselessly argued that Obama still favored black interests over the interest of the American public as a whole, his racial neutrality caused Republicans to argue that he too was moving past race, meaning the country should follow suit and forego specifically crafted

legislation that aimed to equal the playing field for black Americans and other minority populations (Rich, 2013).

As both parties began to incorporate post-racial ideology into their party's platforms and policy strategies, the notion became even more cemented in the minds of American voters when Barack Obama was elected President of the United States. Campaigning on promises of change and hope, the election of President Obama was a victory in a long fight for racial equality in law and representation. The overwhelming view that somehow race was no longer a factor in the lives of black Americans, however, was shortsighted, and many at the time were quick to argue as such (Lum, 2009). The public largely took the idea of post-racialism and ran with it, taking for granted the magnitude of the election of a black President in the United States and in doing so abandoning the truth behind the role of race in America (Lopez, 2010). In Obama's conquest to bring a nation together behind the concepts of change and hope, the President minimized the issues of the present with the promise of a better future, and by failing to fully acknowledge the role race still played in issues of civil rights in America, the backlash behind post-racialism would build up and manifest itself in a widespread movement for the acknowledgement of the negative impact race plays in American life (Cho, 2008). Obama's election was monumental, but the concept of post-racialism failed to accurately depict the role race played in a society where despite a black President, decades-old issues still negatively impacted Americans in their daily lives. Next, I will explore the backlash behind post-racialism.

Backlash to Post-Racialism

The backlash to post-racialism would incite the events at the University of Missouri in 2015 through a response to the shortcomings of the ideology that race was no longer a factor in the United States. In 2012, the first major pushback on post-racial ideology occurred following

the shooting death of Trayvon Martin. As Lee (2012) notes, the implicit role that race played in the death of Trayvon Martin, as well as the role race played in the public and judicial discourse following the tragedy, became a major event across America that dispelled notions of a post-racial United States. The way in which the media covered Trayvon Martin led to a public conversation on what it means to be black in America, as well as the ways in which black Americans have to self-monitor in order to function within a society that paints them as the Other (Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). The conversation reached its peak when President Obama stated that Trayvon Martin could have been him when he was younger, arguing that color can dictate how people treat black men and women rather than their character (Cohen, 2013). The discourse around Trayvon Martin continued to grow as the media covered more and more perceived wrongful deaths of black men and women that were killed for issues that were perceived to be racially charged. The deaths of Jordan Davis, Renisha McBride, Eric Garner and John Crawford would push this discourse to the top of national headlines and spark conversations on how race was still very much a factor in American life (Hodges, 2015).

The next killing that would spark outrage would occur near the University of Missouri in Ferguson, Missouri. Michael Brown was killed while unarmed, and the reaction in Ferguson would lead to a declaration of emergency in Missouri as the anger and frustration surrounding the past two years of perceived wrongful black deaths in the supposed age of post-racialism came to its breaking point (Opatow, 2016). Some students involved in the events on the campus of the University of Missouri participated in these protests, and the mobilization and passion behind the demonstrations against police brutality in the case of Michael Brown would carry over, like the deaths before Brown, into the spirit of the protests of Mizzou. Followed by the deaths of Laquan McDonald and Tamir Rice, the slew of perceived wrongful deaths of black

Americans would not only spark the events on the campus of the University of Missouri, but also help to break down the façade of post-racialism in America. The anger surrounding the demonstrations in Ferguson derived from the notion that somehow things had changed for black Americans upon the election of President Obama. In fact, Bonilla and Rosa (2015) note that the citizens of Ferguson experienced the same discrimination for decades, and as news spread of the events surrounding the death of Michael Brown, black Americans across the country felt the strain on the community in Ferguson and related to the sense of helplessness and lack of resolve from an Obama campaign that was supposedly deeply rooted in change (Kochel, 2014).

The events surrounding the death of Trayvon Martin and subsequent tragedies helped to break down the ideology of post-racialism, and sparked the events surrounding protests on the campus of the University of Missouri in 2014 and 2015. Resistance following these killings often bring about conflict and tension. Needless to say, protests occurring at Missouri in opposition of racial inequality were riddled with emotionally charged calls for change. In order to better understand the role of resistance movements on college campuses, the next section will explore the rise of college resistance movements and the role of resistance movements for black college students.

Resistance Movements on College Campuses

The Rise of College Resistance

University and college campuses have served as a hotbed for resistance movements and activism for students of all races. Weiland, Guzman, and O'Meara (2013) state that since the dawn of the 20th century, campus protests and demonstrations have served two purposes: one, to address a high stakes issue that is external to campus life in a comfortable, familiar space, and two, to address specific issues about the representation and experience of a student on that

specific campus. Zimmerman (2016) notes that campus-specific issues resulting in student demonstrations at that campus can spread into larger movements that become an issue or point of interest for other universities, especially when an event has implications for more than one population of students. The increased awareness of these issues thanks in part to social media and technological advances will be discussed later in the chapter, but in the 1960s, a similar, significant spike in awareness was occurring due to the prevalence of television news and the increased coverage of major university demonstrations taking place across the United States (Taylor & Gunby, 2016). With more televisions in homes than ever before, as well as a limited number of channels from which viewers could choose, primetime news broadcasts in both local and national markets were having an impact on families at home, as well as the protests that were being viewed. Not only were more people becoming aware of college resistance movements, but the protests and demonstrations themselves were also now becoming nationally-covered issues. The 1960s were already a tense time in terms of resistance thanks to the Vietnam War, an increasingly large counterculture fraught by the way in which the past two decades had played out, and the civil rights movement that gained traction across the United States (Horowitz, 1988).

The response to an increase in campus protest movements was indicative of the divide between social movements in America at the time. The counterculture, largely comprised of youth and minority groups seeking change in their neighborhoods, and idealistically, the country, would clash with older, conservative-minded individuals whose ideologies flourished under order and control (Young, Pinkerton, & Dodds, 2014). The most notable of college campus resistance movements took place on the campus of the University of California-Berkeley from 1964-1965. Cohen (2015) writes that civil rights activists began to notice that issues surrounding the civil rights protests around the country were largely hushed by faculty in order to satisfy the

“loyalty oath” that stated paid teachers by the university would be subject to dismissal should their conduct or rhetoric be inflammatory or controversial. Sit-ins began to take place, and students of all races and genders began a push for increased equality and more political freedom on the campus. After nearly six months of resistance from the student body, the university administration established revised provisional rules for political activity, leading to a major victory by college students conducting a resistance movement.

For the first time since the beginning of the civil rights movement, tactics popularized by black resistance movements were being implemented into demonstrations on a college campus (UC Berkeley, 2017). Subsequent protests would happen at UC-Berkeley and many other institutions around the country, but most of these protests were taking place at predominately white institutions (PWIs). In order to understand the full effect of the Missouri football boycott, the influence of black students in these collegiate protests must be examined.

PWIs, HBCUs, and Black Leadership in Campus Resistance

As previously mentioned, a PWI is an institution that has a student body of at least 50% white men and women (Brown & Dancy, 1966). Kelly, Segoshi, Adams, & Raines (2017) note that the term PWI is in at least some way a response to the concept of a historically black college or university (HBCU), which operate, or at one time operated, predominately as an institution for black students. HBCUs served as a channel for black higher education during a time when black students were not being admitted to traditional universities since academic segregation was written into their admissions charters. Evans, Evans and Evans (2002) point out that despite how most HBCUs were founded to counter issues of racism in higher education, many of these institutions still exist today as safe havens for black students despite a decrease in the prevalence of admissions discrimination in PWIs. Law no longer permits an institution of higher learning

from denying a black student due to their race, but HBCUs are still largely seen as the best fit for many black students since heavily discriminatory environments still exist outside of their campuses. HBCUs did not function solely as spaces for racial liberation. Richardson and Harris III (2004) point out that HBCUs were initially established to satisfy the 14th Amendment and calls for an equal opportunity for black Americans in higher education. Although their creation was a means of accommodating Supreme Court rulings, the environment at HBCUs eventually became one of empowerment. Because of policy changes, black students may attend universities that once sought to bar them from receiving a degree; yet, these universities are PWIs, and often hinder the experience of black students in both direct and indirect ways.

In many cases, inclusion, tolerance and diversity have not been pillars of institutions of higher education until recently. Karkouti (2016) notes that President Kennedy's 1961 Executive Order 10925 established the first legal obligation for universities to provide education for black Americans. Lewis (2004) adds that while discrimination was meant to be addressed by this executive order, it also hoped to integrate black students into PWIs in order to create diverse learning environments, which in theory would be beneficial to all students. Less than a decade later, attacks on affirmative action at college campuses came to the U.S. Supreme Court's attention in *The Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, in which a white student claimed his denial from medical school was because of affirmative action's racial quotas (Karkouti, 2016). Harper, Patton, and Wooden (2009) add that the outcome of this case led to the removal of demographic quotas, and in doing so, made it more difficult to find a way to implement diversity initiatives from a point of constitutionality.

Affirmative action was yet again another accommodation for racism and discrimination that received scrutiny from those who created the issue of academic inequality in the first place.

As black students began to integrate into PWIs, the role of HBCUs was not diminished, and in fact, offered a stress-free environment in which students could avoid the drama occurring at PWIs around affirmative action (Abdul-Alim, 2016). The high volume of black students entering PWIs after the passing of Executive Order 10925, however, led to new concerns.

Underrepresentation was not new to black Americans in the 1960s, but in a learning environment, a lack of inclusion often leads to disassociation and devolved attitudes toward the academic and administrative aspects of a university or college (Gardner Jr., Barrett, & Pearson, 2016). The feeling of isolation as young individuals enter college is often a product of their newfound freedom. For those who travel to a new town or city to attend a university, the feeling of isolation and disassociation goes beyond a color barrier (Knutson & Wosidlo, 2014). That being said, for black students entering PWIs that represent little of their culture or beliefs, the feeling of isolation can grow deeper and cause further apathy. In addition to underrepresentation, mistreatment or backlash also occurred in the aftershock of affirmative action, and led to similar feelings of fear and desire for avoidance as was felt a few years earlier during the desegregation of public schools (Lutz, Hassouneh, Akeroyd, & Beckett (2013). As seen throughout history, black students would find forms of resistance to be liberating and necessary for their survival in PWIs, and slowly began to root their presence at PWIs within organizations of resistance, such as student chapters of the NAACP or black student unions. From the successes of student resistance movements in the 1960s and the ongoing push for civil rights occurring every day around them, black students in the 1960s would find resistance movements to be incredibly beneficial in terms of results (Freeman, 1999).

The Role of Social Media in Modern Campus Resistance Movements

Social media have changed the ways in which people communicate with one another about political and social issues. On college campuses, the spirit of engagement and activism have translated well in the social media sphere, allowing large groups to mobilize quickly thanks to platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Macafee and De Simone (2012) find that an increase in activism in young people in the United States seems directly tied to the ease in which issues can reach individuals on social media, and then mobilize and schedule demonstrations and marches as a result of the same media outlets. In many ways, information and news seek out social media users, thanks to social media analytics and the aims many outlets take at hyper-localizing content in order to provide users with the most user-specific experience in such large digital environments (Mackay, 2017). For social media users in college, an urgent issue of controversy present on their campus will be appear on their Facebook timeline and Twitter feed.

Participation in resistance movements on college campuses in the last ten years have relied heavily on the mobilization and outreach tools of social media. Chan (2017) notes that core components of resistance movements derive from the ability to inform people of an issue as well as ways they can resist, and then provide the public with a space for dialogue and interaction. Social media sites do all of this on a single platform that many college students, even the least politically aware or active, understand thanks to a growing dependency on social media for information, news, and socialization (Rodriguez, 2012). A strong familiarity with social media has allowed college students over the last decade to utilize the digital landscape as a tool for the benefit of improving campus communities. Although protests and resistance movements have been present on college campuses for centuries, social media are changing the way students think about these issues and as well as their role in them. Boyce (2017) notes that crowd

learning, or the process of interacting with others on social media to learn, share, and absorb information and ideas, has played a large role in being able to provide students with a catalyst for creating resistance movements. In many ways, crowd learning has developed from classroom settings along with the ways in which ideas are shared in everyday life. Due to the nature of controversial topics, sharing and discussing ideas about the things that are perceived to matter most to us often evokes passionate responses. If a social media outlet is providing information to a large group of individuals about something that matters to them, those reading the information will be incentivized to participate, whether to satisfy feelings of inclusion or to address a need of participating in something that matters to them (Boyce, 2017). Students understand the prospects of social media as tools for mobilization and support, and have made it a necessary step in creating and operating resistance movements on college campuses.

In particular, black American college students have found social media to be exemplary tools for resistance movements regarding national and campus concerns. Reynolds and Mayweather (2017) note that black students at a particular institution, Eastern Michigan University, utilize social media as a way to share problematic experiences, educate one another, and support each other as minority students at a PWI. Resistance movements across the United States often gain traction through the use of hashtags or social media posts as a way to connect hundreds of thousands of users to a single problem or issue. As of late, the hashtag “#BlackLivesMatter” has been widely circulated, resulting in an increased understanding of the meaning of the resistance movement and its concerns (Bradley, 2017). The concerns of black students at PWIs -- an environment that may challenge feelings of inclusion for minority students -- are regarded as safe in social media environments, due to the support offered to black students from one another. The assembly of black students at PWIs is not new in the social media age;

however, when coupled with social media, it allows further outreach and discussion to take place on what it means to feel like a minority in the higher education environment. Social media, in many ways, have become crucial to black resistance movements on college campuses. At the same time, the toxicity of what is commonly referred to as “Black Twitter” often results in a detour from the communicative advantages of social media, and veers more toward a tribalistic rejection of all outside ideas and beliefs (Sharma, 2013). Zompetti (2015) notes that the division of ideas into coalitions of like-minded individuals thwarts public discourse and fails to allow for adequate discussions of policy changes.

The majority of research concerning social media use by black resistance movements has taken place at PWIs, due to the increased sentiments of Otherness and discrimination. Leath and Chavous (2017) note that black students at PWIs are almost inherently thrown into situations in which resistance movements are necessary to their sanity on a campus with very little representation for them. Despite black students almost universally feeling somewhat excluded at PWIs, some fail to find connections to other minority students in class or in extracurricular student organizations. Social media have allowed black students who are not necessarily heavily involved in their institution to find outlets for their frustrations and concerns. Brooms, Goodman, and Clark (2015) note that engaging black students at a PWI can be difficult, even for other black students. The process of segmenting individuals who feel left out or underrepresented can be damaging to the point that even other disjoined members of a university’s population can find it difficult or nearly impossible to connect with these students face-to-face. Engaging black students at PWIs leads to a sense of increased self-empowerment and provides students with positive role models who have already experienced a few years in this discriminatory environment (Brooms, Goodman, & Clark, 2015).

Social media also have played a role in the spread of false information and amplification of like-minded individuals leading to problematic influences on reality. Hildebrand, Häubl, Herrmann, & Landwehr (2013) note that social media often present individuals with two realities: one, that the user creates with other individuals working in that space, and two, the altered reality coming from critiques that go unchallenged in a very one-sided environment, in many cases framing the issue as if there is not a viable opposition. Because of the warping of information in unchecked social media landscapes, social media can only function so far as a tool for education due to the lack of policing the factual base of comments or posts made public, often in environments that only harbor one side of an issue (Selwyn, 2012). Despite these limitations, the ways in which individuals can mobilize and share information and ideas on social media platforms plays a large part in the mobilization of campus resistance movements.

For those already disposed to avoid socialization on campus, social media and digital platforms allow for a safer introduction to discussing concerns and problems rather than joining a resistance group or student union on campus. Attending a meeting is much more intimidating than investigating a hashtag or reading through a thread of messages regarding black identity at a PWI, and these digital outlets allow for more opportunities for black students to be connected to each other. Because the process of resistance is crucial for surviving in discriminatory environments, social media ensure that every individual concerned with their representation or status on campus can have a method to vent, or at the very least, view the concerns of classmates and understand that they are not the only ones who feel uncertain about their place at their college or university. In the next chapter, I will explore the environment and events around the 2015 Missouri football team boycott, as well as the ways in which the movement solidified the oppressed state of the black students on campus. I will also introduce the Gramscian rhetorical

framework with which I will explore the events on campus, and the football team's photograph and social media post central to my investigation. With these, I intend on laying out the core aspects of my thesis, and the ways in which I will analyze its rhetorical impact on post-racialism and college activism.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

In this chapter, I intend on introducing and specifying the method with which I will analyze the 2015 Missouri football team's social media post and accompanying photograph. My analysis will consist primarily of a Gramscian rhetorical framework, stemming from Stewart Hall's crucial introduction of using Gramscian Marxism to analyze the rhetoric surrounding race and hegemony. In this chapter, I intend on providing a framework of Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity as they pertain to the University of Missouri's football boycott. Additionally, I will explicitly define the parameters of my analysis and specifically explain the ways in which these concepts will be used in the next chapter of my paper. Next, I will introduce my text, and elaborate on why I believe it is important in the investigation of the 2015 Missouri football boycott. First, I will outline Gramsci rhetorical theory and the concepts of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity.

Gramsci

Antonio Gramsci was a member of parliament in Italy during the country's fascist regime in the mid-twentieth century (Gramsci, 1948; Hoare & Smith, 1999). Born into poverty and stricken with poor health, much of Gramsci's early life was spent trying to stay alive. When turned on to politics by an older brother, Gramsci began educating himself in socialist texts and nationalism. As formal studies continuously were delayed due to the need to make wages for his family, continuing health concerns, and an overall lack of wealth needed to attend a legitimate university, Gramsci found himself surrounded with exceedingly high academic abilities and little to no resources to help him achieve success. Upon receiving a scholarship to attend the university, he worked in journalism, where he would find an interest in language and rhetoric (Gramsci, 1948). While working a factory job in Turin shortly after his job in journalism,

Gramsci experienced the plight of the modern working class firsthand, and after advocating for factory councils, a sort of union for factory workers, the socialist party in Italy became fond of his ideas and passion for the oppressed. As he befriended many political and philosophical thinkers around him, he began to climb the ranks in the Communist Party of Italy. As he rose to the head of the Communist Party of Italy (PCI), fascist Prime Minister of Italy Benito Mussolini began a new practice of rounding up communists and imprisoning them, leading to Gramsci's incarceration (Hoare & Smith, 1999). Gramsci also conversed with Vladimir Lenin at meetings about communist uprisings, and as he investigated the revolution in Russia further, he became aware of the classism centered around the reformation of social order. His experiences with Lenin helped to further his ideas about hegemony and the subaltern, primarily with the idea that oppressed groups are faced with social constraints in multiple facets of life, not just class or economic status (Briziarelli and Karikari, 2016).

Despite passing away in prison at the age of 46, Gramsci's ideological contributions to Marxism were staggering, primarily deriving from one major work. While in prison, Gramsci wrote a collection of analyses later known as the *Prison Notebooks* regarding the state of fascism in Italy, the promise of communism and socialist ideals, and most importantly, the need to adapt Marxist philosophy to areas outside of the economy, primarily focusing on social determinism and hegemonic forces in relation to subaltern populations (Gramsci, 1948). In the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci introduces key concepts that would later shape neo-Marxism and the Western implementation of socialist thought and policy. Three core concepts to Gramsci's works are hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity. These three concepts will play an integral part in my analysis of the 2015 University of Missouri football boycott, so I will take time to define them as Gramsci did in his writings, as well as introduce the ways in which scholars have

subsequently furthered his concepts in order to specifically outline the method with which my topic will be analyzed.

Hegemony

The term hegemony was not entirely Gramsci's creation, however, the idea of hegemony and what it means in terms of power structures in a capitalist or industrial society owes its framework to Gramsci. Communists like Vladimir Lenin used the term hegemony to indicate the presence of a power over working class citizens by the bourgeoisie or those who owned the means of production (Anderson, 1976). For traditional Marxists, hegemony was a direct power over one's labor-power, or ability to translate their labor and work into a profit or capital that could be used for food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities (Marx & Engels, 1902).

Hegemony in Gramsci's works largely operates under this same idea; however, the word hegemony is not simply the act of exerting power or oppression over one's labor-power. For Gramsci, hegemony was not strictly a matter of one's labor, but also of one's social fabric.

For the purposes of this paper, Gramsci's definition of hegemony is useful, as it means "direct domination...which the dominant group exercises throughout society on the other" (Gramsci, 1948, p. 145). Briziarelli and Karikari (2016) note that a crucial step in the process of hegemony is the acceptance by the dominated group of their subordinated status. Despite being presented oppressive social and cultural policies and mandates, subaltern populations must accept their status as the lesser group in order for hegemony to occur and operate. While accepting their status means they are aware that another social group is in control of their status and narrative, the process of one group holding power over another is not necessarily an evil relationship. For example, children accept their parents or guardian's authority in order for the adult/child relationship to function in the best interest of both the grown up and the kid. In this

example, the adult ensures the safety of the child, and the child receives care and protection. The child, however, is incapable of taking care of itself; oppressed social groups are not incapable of autonomy, and it is from this contention that the issue of oppression derives. Elite groups will recognize that subaltern groups limit their power, so they will attempt to control them; and with the group's consent, they will receive the unchallenged power they seek. If the subaltern group does not concede their autonomy, then a struggle will ensue between the two groups. Gramsci (1948) argues that in their concession, the subaltern group does not accept the oppressive nature of the social situation, but rather accepts their status with the goal of replacing the hegemonic structures with a socially positive, or non-coercive, hegemony. Furthermore, the output of the subaltern group, whether it be of economic, cultural, or social value, can be adopted by the elite class and commodified into a product that helps contribute economic resources to the ruling class. In Gramsci (1948), as well as from the exemplar work on the topic of commodifying the body by Sharp (2000), commodification extends itself past the monetarization of goods and services and becomes a way for an oppressive class to reap rewards off of subordinate class groups.

Gramsci's expansion of hegemony from strictly economic oppression to include the marginalization of various social identities is crucial to understanding the extent to which hegemonic forces play a role in issues of race. Stuart Hall's work on Gramscian rhetoric will be pivotal for my method in this paper, and helps to expand Gramsci's definition of hegemony into the social sphere of race. Hall (1986) elaborates on the notion that Gramsci did not necessarily intend his works to be general, meaning they were not to be read as a synthesis of neo-Marxist philosophy. Gramsci's writings on hegemony, however, are to be seen as a way of interpreting the process of oppression once a dominant group has taken control over political and social

institutions, and halts subordinate groups from operating beyond the confines of their dictated social status. Hegemony is also an influential force for establishing historic moments in a society, and the ways in which events are framed by hegemonic structures will be further explained in my discussion on Gramsci's concept of historicity. For now, it is important to note that collective will, on behalf of the oppressive group or oppressed group, is necessary for moments of resistance, and "does not guarantee the outcome of specific struggles" (Hall, 1986, 15).

Another important distinction about Gramsci's definition of hegemony is that it is not unidimensional. Hall (1986) also notes that hegemony "represents a degree of mastery over a whole series of different and positions at once" (p. 15). In the case of Gramsci's fascist Italy, there was no single social class or population being targeted by the hegemon; a number of groups who were in opposition to Mussolini's policies faced cultural marginalization. Even in a single population of oppressed people, their economic, religious, racial, political, and labor status were under attack in various ways. Leadership of the dominant group over the oppressed group thrives by means of a multi-faceted presence, often overwhelming the subordinate group who lacks an organized plan of resistance (Hunn, Guy, & Mangliitz, 2006). In periods of hegemonic dominance, groups in positions of power must understand their dominance and utilize it to achieve power, and Gramsci explicitly makes this distinction in order to introduce another contention to the classical definition of hegemony.

For Gramsci, hegemony is inherently tied to the period of time when it takes place. Gramsci specifies that the dominant class at the time, whether it be the wealthy elite or the governing body of a nation, need not be in complete agreement concerning the direction of the group. Rather, Gramsci notes that the ruling class need only a select few determined to

undermine a subordinate group in order to achieve hegemony (Hall, 1986). Whether it be financial, social, or labor capital, only a leading group of the dominant class is required to create a hegemonic bloc. Gramsci's commentary on a select few members of a dominant class being able to control entire populations may be in line with concepts introduced in the classical definition of hegemony. Gramsci extends this commentary, however, when stating that social incentives exist for members of the elite social groups to either support the hegemonic processes or ignore them, with the outcomes of hegemony benefiting them either way (Hall, 1986). Because the select motivated class may vary during each historical moment, Gramsci's concept of hegemony stresses the power of the ruling and elite class bend the will of the subordinate class. The sheer power of the elite class limits the subordinate groups, such that they are silenced and their social mobility is halted, often distracting and undermining them beyond the means of change. While resistance offers these discriminated groups a chance to fight back, the more power that a ruling class has, the less likely resistance will have any material impact. Gramsci refers to the subordinate groups within hegemony as the subaltern, due to their inability to form their own collective capable of autonomous social power (Prakash, 1994). The subaltern is created by a virtually impermeable ruling class that allows little room for a successful uprising. Subaltern groups can utilize one another in the creation of coalitions with other oppressed groups in order to deconstruct the "common sense" dynamic of hegemonic power. (Gramsci, 1948). The "common sense" of hegemonic relationships exists as the unquestioned cultural reality that is believed to be the environment in which a society exists (Crehan, 2016). While seemingly true and immovable, the narratives behind "common sense" hegemonic structures can be deconstructed through the creation of counter-narratives that penetrate the reality of the subaltern. Over time, counternarratives can erode hegemonic cultural assumptions of the elite

(Zompetti, 2012). By joining with other groups oppressed by the elite class, subaltern populations position themselves in order to engage in resistance when the time comes.

Hegemonic structures exist in periods of time, and in the same way, their weaknesses develop in time as well, leading to moments when coalitions may resist the hegemonic forces in society and move to change towards cultural transformation, or the removal of the oppressive elite group from complete power (Gramsci, 1948). The subaltern social groups and their affiliation to hegemony are the next set of ideas and terms that are crucial to understanding my method of analyzing the Gramscian rhetorical framework of the 2015 Missouri football boycott.

The Subaltern

In Gramsci's seminal work, the *Prison Notebooks*, the interchangeability of the terms "subordinate" and "subaltern" are noted as being unremarkable (Gramsci, 1948). A striking difference, however, is in Gramsci's use of the term subaltern as a group status. Gramsci's discussions on hegemony are riddled with language pointing toward the processes occurring as a moment in history, despite being a recurring moment during various times in various places. Just as hegemony must arrive in a moment built by a dominant class having complete control of a subordinate group, Gramsci's writings seem to point toward the subordinate group becoming, a historical bloc, as the subaltern. Gramsci (1948) points to the function of the subaltern in terms of political and social freedom and power as being dominated to the point that they are largely unable to unify and maintain autonomy from the dominant class. Their autonomy and ability to challenge hegemony is daunting and may seem impossible, but during moments of the hegemony's weakness, subaltern resistance is possible. For the purposes of this paper, I will define the subaltern, using Gramsci's analyses as support, as a subordinate group's

transformation from social or political minority to a controlled and disarrayed population through the process of hegemony (Gramsci, 1948).

A few points to make about the subaltern are largely derived from Gramsci himself in his discussion on the history of subaltern social groups. Largely comprised of Italian examples, Gramsci notes a few aspects of the subaltern that contribute to their lack of autonomy and unity. First and foremost, any study or analysis of the subaltern is difficult since a subaltern group lacks control over the writing of their activity and history (Gramsci, 1948). In most cases, the subaltern is subject to a frame within which the dominant class view cultural practices and any ideas, beliefs or activities emanating from the subaltern. Subaltern groups exist “on the margins of history,” often taken prisoners by the ruling class in terms of deciding to what extent their beliefs and actions will be reflected in society (Spivak, 2001). By seizing virtually complete control, the dominant group forces the subaltern into alienation, including oppressed institutions, vocations, and social circles (Gramsci, 1948). Whereas hegemony requires only a portion of the ruling class to achieve domination, all subaltern groups become victims to the oppressive nature of hegemony, even if certain populations within the subaltern are not directly targeted and even if such oppression varies by degree from one subaltern group to another. For example, the relative oppression of poor white families may differ from the degree of oppression faced by black lesbian women, yet both subaltern groups are victims of the oppressive conditions imposed by hegemony. Gramsci (1948) offers the example that any economic or social issue that may affect a portion of the subaltern directly can often have negative, indirect impacts on other members of the subaltern just by association. In theory, an attack on one social minority will negatively affect the ability for other social minorities to achieve autonomy, and any act of oppression against minority populations helps to actualize the hegemonic structures in that society. In a related way,

groups in the “middle” of the social and cultural terrain, which Gramsci calls the “gelatinous middle” – like today’s “middle class” – are also impacted by the relations of subaltern groups (Gramsci, 1948, p. 237-238).

For the purposes of using the subaltern in my analysis of the 2015 Missouri football boycott, Gramsci’s traditional use of the subaltern as the transition from limited minority to controlled population will be applied. The purpose of mentioning the further applications of the subaltern is to identify the fact that the subaltern can create both alienation and assimilation, so long as the subaltern group is being controlled by the dominant group.

The subaltern emerges from the process of hegemony, yet the ways in which the two develop between a ruling class and subordinate class depend on many variables. The demographics and characteristics of the groups involved, as well as the time in which the interaction takes place play a role in the status of the subaltern. Gramsci’s explanation behind the timing of hegemony and the emergence of the subaltern occurs within the concept of historicity, and is necessary to the method I will use to analyze the University of Missouri football boycott.

Historicity

Gramsci’s emphasis on the timing in which hegemony happens points to the importance of historicity in the establishment of the control and dominance of one social group over the other. The ways in which history is written can often silence entire periods of resistance or an entire group altogether. Gramsci (1948) writes that if history exists along an equilibrium, hegemonic forces attempt to disrupt the balance in order to take control over the ways in which actions and events will be viewed. Historicity, in Gramsci’s work, refers to the process of retelling events of the past in a particular way that places an emphasis on that time period (Patnaik, 2012). When hegemony inserts judgment on what is significant and what is not, past

events and people can be manipulated to fit the needs of a particular group. The process of historicity can often expose weaknesses in arguments, as well as the source of particular biases and beliefs. This means, of course, that we cannot explore or analyze the social relations of any group – hegemonic or subaltern – without understanding the historicity of the group.

For the purposes of this paper, historicity will be defined nearly identically to Gramsci's view of the term. Historicity is the process by which a person or group of people place significance on an event or period of time in order to justify added attention or consideration (Gramsci, 1948, Patnaik, 2012). Much of Gramsci's work on the ideas of hegemony and the subaltern focus on periods of time in which these forces were most evident or influential. By signifying particular times that hegemony was most visible, power is being placed in those events and time periods in order to signify the processes of hegemony, and by doing this, Gramsci argues that a particular period of time can be pivotal in the development of hegemony and the ways in which it affects social groups (Carlucci, 2013). The process of historicity is transformative in terms of placing events of the past into analyses taking place in the present, often to make judgments and theories on the future or forces that may influence the future (Green, 2011). Gramsci's analysis of Italian history as a means to define and apply hegemony points to the ways in which historical reviews of particular time periods using a set of guiding principles or social theories can help to expose underlying processes at play. In Gramsci's case, the process of Mussolini's political allies taking over power and manipulating the working class of Italy all occurred at a time in which power became available at the very moment Mussolini's political group mobilized, allowing hegemony to be analyzed by reviewing the people involved and the timing at which the social groups are being impacted.

Modern Applications

The Gramscian tradition of using history to critique institutions with the framework of hegemony and the subaltern is popular among scholars as a method for examining the rhetoric during key periods of time. Historicity plays a role in policy shaping, news framing, and public opinion (Merli, 2013). The ways in which political and social events are categorized in the public often find their categorization from historicity. Furthermore, the process of translating these events in history, along with their analysis and reflection, and in order to make claims about the future and theories behind the ways in which social groups interact, is inherently embedded in modern discourse of political and social interest (Glasius, 2012). More specifically, Gramsci's use of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity have been applied to a number of areas, including race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and organizational social groups (Carley, 2013). More particularly, Gramsci has been utilized in the practice of communication scholarship, and highlighted for its translatability to the process of rhetorical criticism. Hall (1973) explains the benefits of using Gramsci in his discussion on encoding and decoding media messages. The model argues that when a media message is created, the author must form its message in order to be received in a certain way, considering the audience and the time at which the message will be received. The receiver, on the other hand, is expected to decode the message and identify the ways in which the authors intended the message to be received, while also interpreting the meaning of the message from their perspective. Considering Gramsci's process of breaking down the historicity of hegemonic moments in history, Gramscian theory fits well into the process of rhetorical criticism. Zompetti (1997) also conceptualizes the role of Gramsci in rhetorical criticism by outlining the self-reflexivity scholars utilize while analyzing rhetorical situations. In order to critically deconstruct the events and ideas around hegemonic moments in

history, the process of analyzing language and actions occurs from the perspective of those involved in the historical moment and in the eyes of the critic themselves. Because rhetorical criticism requires the critic to use their own understanding of the situation to make a judgment on the rhetorical impact of a text, scholars utilizing rhetorical criticism in their work are well-advised to work in Gramscian theory into their analyses in order to engage self-reflexively and contribute to social change.

For the purposes of this paper, Gramscian rhetorical analysis seems fitting for two main reasons. First and foremost, Hall (1986) lays out the ways in which Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity can be applied to issues of race. By applying a historical analysis of hegemonic structures that have negatively impacted black people across the world, Hall is able to theorize that racism as a social phenomenon fundamentally occurs in a manner that coincides with Gramsci's notions of hegemony and the subaltern (Hall, 1986; Carley, 2013). In the application of the Gramscian framework of hegemony to race, scholars are able to explain the history behind the racialization of cultural aspects, as well as the patterns in which power is exerted over non-white populations (Carley, 2013).

In context of this paper, Hall's (1986) translation of hegemony, the subaltern, and his application of historicity to issues of race allow scholars to analyze racial conflicts in terms of how they shift the equilibrium of power against non-white populations. In my analysis of the 2015 Missouri football boycott, I intend to use these definitions and frameworks of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity to break down the events leading up to and surrounding my text in order to better understand the impact the team's social media post and photograph had on the racial climate at the university.

Conclusion

I will use a Gramscian rhetorical perspective to analyze the University of Missouri's football team's statement and related photograph. This text represents an essential moment of resistance that led to the resignation of President Tim Wolfe, and in its success, reveals aspects of hegemony, the role of the subaltern, and the importance of historicity in ways that are both beneficial and detrimental to the goals of CS1950 and the black students at the University of Missouri. Given its national coverage and attention, as well as the catalytic timing in Wolfe's resignation, I intend to analyze the football team's tweet and photograph as crucial parts of the resistance movement on the campus of the University of Missouri, and as a crucial example of the power that resistance on college campuses plays in issues of race and equality. While the events in Ferguson are vastly different than the campus events at Mizzou, both show the backlash to post-racial social frameworks, and the ways in which post-racialism inaccurately portrays the experiences of black Americans post-2007. Through its language and visuals, the football team's social media post provides an example of how black Americans can engage in resistance to hegemonic control

In this chapter, I intended to explain the method with which I will analyze the 2015 Missouri football boycott, detailing the guiding principles of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity that I will utilize for my analysis. In the next chapter, I intend on analyzing the rhetorical impact of the team's social media post by discussing the ways in which hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity are present in both the textual post and the photograph, and interpret what these concepts mean in terms of the resistance movement's goal of furthering the status of black students on campus. The chapter will focus simultaneously on the textual post and the photograph, and break down the presence of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity in the

social media post and what they mean in terms of the impact of the resistance movement in the landscape of the racially charged events at the University of Missouri from 2014-2015. By identifying the presence of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity surrounding the football team's social media post, I will explain the impact of the football team's contribution to the resistance movement and understanding of the dismantling of the post-racial ideology, and shed light on the ways in which Gramsci can be useful in understanding issues of oppression between social groups and finding ways in which inequality can be combatted.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will analyze the tweet and accompanying photograph posted on Twitter by the University of Missouri's football team when they expressed their protest to participating in athletic events until the resignation of then-President Tim Wolfe. I will analyze this tweet using the three themes described in the previous chapter: hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity. For referential purposes, I will redefine the terms operationally for this paper. Hegemony, in Gramsci's own words, is the existence of "direct domination...which the dominant group exercises throughout society on the other" (Gramsci, 1948, p. 145). The role of the minority student population in the context of the hegemonic structure of the University of Missouri is what Gramsci (1948) refers to as the subaltern. I have defined the subaltern in my own words, with Gramsci providing theoretical support, as a subordinate group's transformation from social or political minority to a controlled and disarrayed population through the process of hegemony (Gramsci, 1948). Historicity, in conjunction with Gramsci (1948) and Pataik (2012) will be discussed as the process by which a person or group of people place significance on an event or period of time in order to justify added attention or consideration. Following a discussion of these three concepts, I will briefly analyze the role of post-racialism within the tweet and photograph, leading into a concluding section that will transition into my next chapter. With historicity and the subaltern being contextualized by the process of hegemony, I will begin the chapter by analyzing the presence of hegemony at the University of Missouri in 2014-2015.

Hegemony

#ConcernedStudent1950, the group central to the resistance movement on the campus of the University of Missouri, actively protested the administration's lack of response to student concerns months before the football team tweeted their intentions to forfeit games in lieu of Tim

Wolfe's resiliency to vacate the presidency. Attached to the tweet and its picture, the football team provided the preliminary statement: "We're black. Black is powerful. Our struggle may look different, but we are all #ConcernedStudent1950" (@1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015). In this preliminary statement, the football team is specifically noting that they are not necessarily in the same position as the general population of minority students. Their struggles as football players at an NCAA Division I university in the highly competitive Big 10 football conference are not the same as minority students simply and solely attending the school for an education. The reasoning behind their presence at the university is not one of a strictly educational nature: football players attend to simultaneously serve as students and high profile athletes. College football allows young athletes to receive discounted or free tuition, while also functioning as university representatives in the area of sport. Differentiating themselves from the minority student population played a crucial role in the outcome of their act of resistance, as well as their acknowledgment that they are black and powerful.

In the statement provided with the photograph in the tweet, the protesting players refer to themselves as "athletes of color," which presents a different message than "black and powerful" (@1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015). The tweet reads as follows:

The athletes of color on the University of Missouri football team truly believe 'injustice Anywhere is a threat to Justice Everywhere' We will no longer participate in any football related activities until President Tim Wolfe resigns or is removed due to his negligence toward marginalized students' experiences. WE ARE UNITED!!!! (1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015)

By utilizing the identity of persons of color, the athletes send a message of inclusion to the larger, minority population of the University of Missouri, while also utilizing their identity as a form of defensiveness against stereotyping and prejudice (Andemeskel, King, Wallace, Monteiro, & Ben-Zeev, 2017). The identity of a person of color, in terms of situations in which

individuals are self-identifying, is often one of explanation or elaboration on their role or status in a given situation (Story, 2017). Rather than specifically signify specific races, persons of color utilize the signifier as a means of inclusion for all non-white individuals. In other words, individuals who identify themselves through their race are often using their identity to contextualize their place in the larger culture or society. Two simultaneous statements are occurring in the team's commentary: one for the #ConcernedStudent1950 activists and one for the administration and national audience, including the media and citizens following the events on campus around the country. The concise sentence structure of the preliminary statement, as well as the inclusion of the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement, help to create a powerful, assertive message in relation to pride in their race, and make it clear that their elevated status on campus differs them from the student body as a whole, but does not disqualify them from the concerns of the student populace. Their elevated status as student athletes does not eliminate them from feeling the negative impact of racism on campus. While they may be privileged in their status to the university, a racist freshman in the dorms would still likely just see them as black, removing any benefits they had from their athletic role at Mizzou. The tweet makes a broader appeal to the administration and American public that, as representatives of the university's minority population and football team, the issues facing the student body are too remarkable to be ignored. The tweet also lacks the preliminary statement's assertiveness and is comprised in a way that makes the team sound much more professional and less emotionally driven.

Hegemony, as Gramsci (1948) argues, occurs when one social group dominates the other and the subordinate group is aware of, and accepts, its submissive role. The tweet acknowledges the hegemonic power structure at the University of Missouri directly through the recognition of

its participation in athletic events as a crucial factor in the administration's attention to the situation. Briziarelli and Karikari (2016) further Gramsci's work by noting that without the consent of the subordinate group, hegemony collapses and the dominant social group fails to exert its control over the subordinate group. Through their refusal to participate in athletic events until the removal of President Wolfe, the team breaks the hegemonic bond between the athletes of the University of Missouri and its administration, and is able to make a substantial request with a high likelihood that the administration will take note. In their preliminary statement, the Mizzou football team also contextualizes the role they play in the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement by noting that the problems with which they grapple may be different from the larger, minority populace of the University of Missouri; but, it is a struggle nonetheless. By separating themselves from the minority student body, the Missouri football team achieves two things. One, full acknowledgement of their elevated role on campus allows them to define a path that will lead to the change they cannot achieve simply as minority students, and two, it allows them to take the lead on continuing the push for President Wolfe's resignation by raising the stakes for the administration in lieu of their responsiveness.

Later in the chapter, I will address the details of these two achievements, and the ways in which they impacted the overall impact of the Missouri football boycott in regard to the ideology of post-racialism, but I would like to briefly mention here that the preliminary statement and the tweet combine into a larger message that acknowledges that the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement was not making enough progress for the administration to act on the concerns of minority students alone. "Black is powerful" is a statement that incites passion and energy, but as far as the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement was concerned, race had not been proven to be a powerful trigger, by itself, for administrative responsiveness at the time of the football team's

announcement. The preliminary statement was directed more toward the student body and was framed in a way that states black is powerful, whereas, in the case of the University of Missouri football team, black is powerful when black students have something else to offer. In this case, the added influence of the black athletes came from the prestige of college athletics at a Division I university. The tweet itself, directed more toward the administration and public, is void of powerful language, and only makes reference to the student body's concerns, not their joint role as athletes and students.

The tweet and preliminary statement make it clear that the football team's absence from athletic participation was of interest to the university, and the rhetoric behind the messages framed the protest as a withdrawal of a commodity, which in this case is athletic participation that attracts millions of dollars in revenue. As referenced by Sharp (2000), commodification of the body, or in this case the athletic ability of the athletes, occurs when a subordinate group is being hegemonically oppressed by an elite class that dictates their reality by means of economic exploitation. The team's elevated status and use of that status to demand President Wolfe's resignation forces the athletes to acknowledge that their concerns as students are far less important than their labor-capital. In traditional Marxist terms, the athlete's labor-capital is their worth as a laborer as it equates to the value that labor has for material conditions, such as food, shelter, and clothing. Gramscian hegemony translates needs past the purely material and adapts them to what Gramsci refers to as a social fabric (Gramsci, 1948). The need of the football team and #ConcernedStudent1950 movement, in a hegemonic sense, was a response from the university that minority student concerns for safety and inclusion mattered to the administration. Because of the administration's lack of apparent strict concern for the minority student population, the football team was able to use their elevated status to triggered the

administration's response. The football team's utilization of their athletic influence in order to achieve the interests of minority students is an example of the flaws of post-racialism. Black students who have worked for certain privileges that stem from athletic participation are forced to abandon their earned status in order to highlight the concerns of minority students in a culture that prioritizes revenue and economic incentives over the concerns of black students. Post-racialism would imply that race would not impact the response of the administration, yet the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement was unable to achieve their goals without the impact of withholding athletic participation, an end that could not occur without the help of a more valued social group within the university. These themes will be further explored later in the chapter, but by laying out the framework of the football team's combined message within the context of the preliminary statement and tweet coexisting within the rhetorical situation of the boycott, I believe the theme of hegemony can be explored further, especially in the football team's ability to snap the hegemonic bond between students and the administration.

The football team's photograph helps to display where hegemony began to break in the relationship between the university and the black athletes. The stoic faces of the athletes as they link arms helps to support the claim that hegemony can only exist while the subordinate group is in compliance. The photograph shows strength, cohesiveness, and resilience, all of which are not compatible with hegemonic domination since the subaltern in this case are acting in defiance, not consent. The presence of these traits within in the photograph points toward what Gramsci (1948) refers to as the specific moment as a sign of collective will against the oppressive group, and while it may not guarantee the positive outcome of specific struggles, it does point toward the prospect of real change. Durrheim, Greener, and Whitehead (2015) add that the imagery of race online is often redefined by racist or discriminatory terms, but the photograph provided by

the football team is a largely positive one, with very little to criticize in the realm of race and power. In all, the photograph is essential to the destruction of the hegemonic relationship between the athletes and the administration. For the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement, a powerful image was much needed after months of non-responsiveness from the administration.

The breakdown of hegemony on the campus of the University of Missouri was slowly building thanks to resistance from #ConcernedStudent1950, but the football team's ability to use their elevated status to block the direct domination was required for a hegemonic relationship. The football team's social position on campus, combined with the strength displayed in the imagery of the accompanying photograph, helps to not only attack the hegemonic structure of the university, but also inserts race into the situation in a way that presented it as a point of pride rather than a condition under which they are institutionally oppressed. Despite being proud of their blackness, the athlete's role as football players is the deciding factor in the hegemonic clash of racial oppression. While their elevated status allows them to operate in a manner that can draw attention to the concerns of the minority student body, the influence through which they gain the decisive attention for change is not derived from their role as minority students. By emphasizing their blackness in the preliminary statement that was directed more toward the student body, and spending more time emphasizing their role as athletes in the tweet aimed to send a message to the administration, the football team recognizes that their hegemonic position as minority students leaves them little to no social mobility. By transcending the part of their identity that is trapped in the hegemonic structure of the university, the football team is able to maneuver out of the oppressive climate at the university and achieve goals that the single identity of a minority college student could not at Mizzou. Hegemony, in Gramsci's framework, serves to uphold oppressive relationships so long as the subordinate group is actively allowing themselves to be

oppressed (Gramsci, 1948). Through their joint identity of black students and college athletes, the football players break the hegemonic structure of the university, allowing for the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement's goals to be achieved. Drawing from the presence of hegemony in the Missouri football team's tweet, I will now lay out the role of the subaltern in the football team's involvement in the ousting of Tim Wolfe.

The Subaltern

The oppressive state in which the minority student body found themselves was riddled with characteristics that Gramsci (1948) discusses in his theoretical formulations regarding the subaltern. The subaltern, often interchanged as a subordinate population, is used to describe the social group upon which hegemony has tightened its oppressive forces. Gramsci notes in his *Prison Notebooks* that the single differential in his theoretical approach to developing hegemony is that for a subordinate group to become the subaltern, the group must arrive at a moment when they are generally unable to force the dominant group to loosen their grip on their social, economic, and institutional subjugation (Gramsci, 1948). The inability to unite different social groups, or even internally to among its own members, is the defining characteristic of the subaltern. The movement to force the resignation of Tim Wolfe was already showing signs of overcoming the subaltern when minority students were able to join together with graduate students in order to increase the volume of criticisms toward the administration. Despite the bonding with graduate students and other students who began to support the movement who may not have been directly impacted, the subaltern of the campus were still unable to make a sufficient case to invoke a response from the administration that went beyond a simple statement noting the concerns of the students.

Although the athletes of the Mizzou football team who participated in the boycott were black, their preliminary statement notes that their role as athletes places them in a different social group. Sinclair and Bennett III (2015) have found in their research on black athletes that their position in regard to the social and cultural hierarchy of colleges and universities is often higher than their non-athletic participating black peers as well as white students who do not participate in athletics. Their status as black students places them within the subaltern; using their role as black students alone would not increase #ConcernedStudent1950's chances of achieving the change they were seeking. Gramsci (1948) mentions how the subaltern often experience periods of reformation in order to increase the chances of breaking hegemonic oppression. Depending on historical events and social influences, the subaltern, as well as the elite, experience periods of strength and weakness that determine their influence. In the case of the Missouri football boycott, the football team's abstinence from athletic participation came at a particular time when the repercussions for forfeiting a football game would have been detrimental to the university's economic interests. Tracy and Southall (2015) reported, in conjunction with sources at the University of Missouri as well as the NCAA, that the university stood to lose around \$1 million if the team did not participate in the upcoming game against BYU the following Saturday. With that much money at stake, a closed meeting of the board agreed it was an easy decision to reform its stance over the student protests in situations of the subaltern challenging the dominant group (Tracy & Southall, 2015).

After months of social immobility in the wake of a nonresponsive administration, the Missouri football team was able to push the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement's goals and concerns to a point where the administration could no longer continue its course of intransigence. In the construction of the preliminary statement guiding the tweet and the tweet itself, the role of

the subaltern is evident. In the preliminary statement, the football team's direct reference to their concerns as being different from those of the larger minority student body acknowledges that their varied status as black students as well as athletes will be used in order to achieve the subaltern's goals (@1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015). The proclamation that "black is powerful" also attempts to connect the athletes to their subaltern status by attributing their influence to their blackness, despite the fact that their role as athletes is the position with which they will gain the administration's attention. The power lies within their athletic status, not in their race, which has been oppressed and void of influence due to hegemonic processes.. Through the construction of their tweet, which has been referenced throughout this paper as the message directed more toward the administration itself, they frame their status as "athletes of color" standing up for "marginalized students' experiences" (@1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015).

By separating their proclaimed status as athletes from their concurrent status as black students, the subaltern is able to threaten the hegemonic structure of the university by a simple allocation of identities to targeted audiences for whom their messages will be most beneficial. The subaltern, represented by the concerns and actions of the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement, is stuck within the confines of the hegemony established by the administration through a pattern of seemingly unconcerned responses to student concerns of racism and discriminatory behavior. By applying their status as athletes, and the responsibilities that accompany their athletic role in the university, to the resistance occurring within the subaltern, the once seemingly impermeable hegemony on campus is weakened. The breaking of the hegemonic structure of the university may have occurred after months of resistance from the #ConcernedStudent1950 activists, but no momentum was building from changes in the administration's response. With this in mind, the football team's use of their athletic status in the

university as a means to achieve the goals of the subaltern can be viewed as the only way in which the goals of #ConcernedStudent1950 could have been achieved.

The importance of the football team's dual identity in the subaltern's ability to achieve a breakdown of the hegemony on campus can be supported through two trends in the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement up until their involvement. First, the continuously hollow responses from the administration, void of any real proposed policy change or plan of action in relation to the student's demands, showed no signs of miraculously developing into a moment in which the concerns of the subaltern would be addressed. Second, the concerns of the minority population of the student body, despite cultural norms and appropriateness, were seen by university officials as not necessarily being the responsibility of the administration. Racial epithets, no matter how grotesque and appalling, are not completely preventable no matter how strict a campus' code of conduct may be. The lack of responsiveness from the administration, which in a variety of ways is also troublesome, points to the possibility that no real answer could have come from the university's leadership that would have adequately met all demands from #ConcernedStudent1950. Without a meaningful solution to individual racial transgressions of each and every student, the administration might have been in a bind between its lack of resources to fix the problem and a lack of actionable reasons to address the complaints of students. In a telling email leaked after his resignation, Tim Wolfe refers to the situation's impact as an attack on the University of Missouri, not the well-being of students (Hack, 2016). Thus, the university president, and by extension we can assume the rest of the administration, was more concerned with the university's image than it was the feelings and security of its students. Even if the university's administration, and Wolfe in particular, had very little power to control the behaviors and actions of its student body, the response to the impact of said behaviors and

actions was one of seemingly little concern, and it takes no stretch of the imagination to understand why students were upset by apathetic responses from a man who spoke of his resignation as a display of love for the university (Hack, 2016).

As the subaltern, the student body of a large public university is incredibly difficult to corral into a single cause for outrage and action. The administration's slow response to the cries of students is cemented by the unlikely prospect of a student body, or a significant enough portion of one, joining together to pose a serious threat to the status of board members, chancellors, and even university presidents. Gramsci (1948) postulates that the subaltern exists as its namesake so long as the subordinate social group or groups cannot mobilize in unity, or cannot collect enough social or labor capital to challenge the hegemonic structure of the relationship. #ConcernedStudent1950 did not possess the necessary solidarity or capital to threaten the administration at Mizzou or to pose a challenge to the university hegemony. The Missouri football team, however, in its ability to exist in the subaltern and also initiate pressure against the hegemonic oppressor, helped to transcend the restrictions of the subaltern and break free from direct domination. The tweet providing the demand of Wolfe's resignation, in its emphasis of the influence of athletics on the university's interests, allows the subaltern to succeed in breaking from its confines. The photograph also plays a positive role in attacking the limits of the subaltern and pushing the struggle past hegemonic limitations.

As discussed in the last section, the photograph attached with the tweet succeeds in showing the strength of the team, as well as their cohesiveness. While these traits help to inspire #ConcernedStudent1950, they also show the administration that the team is confident in their power against the administration. The power, in this case, and in contrast with the preliminary statement directed toward the students, is in their role as athletes. Their place in the subaltern is

not permanent; dual identities allow them to stay mobile in the confines of the hegemonic structure of the university. They exist, because of their ability to reap the rewards of their athletic status and move beyond their race, as traces of the subaltern.

In the photograph, they look defiant, and even without knowing they were football players acting upon their elevated importance to the university, there is a power to their posture and facial expressions that insinuates that they will not be denied their voice. The confidence they have in themselves comes from the knowledge that they have a tangible threat to pose against the administration, but the strength they find is in the role they play for #ConcernedStudent1950. Despite their ability to transition from the subaltern to achieve increased influence over the hegemonic structure of the university, they can still experience the oppression inflicted upon the subaltern because when their status is either removed from them or unrecognized by members of the power class, they are easily placed back into the subaltern as any other member of the subordinate class. While their ability to transcend the subaltern is beneficial, their power is only effective while it still has momentum; and, in the middle of a football season for a Division I program, the photograph, like their tweet and preliminary statement, resonate sounds of resistance of which the administration was afraid. The fear, a combination of financial and public pressure, was enough to lead to the resignation of the university president. Courage, as portrayed in the team's photograph, mixed with a power unassociated with other members of the subaltern, was too much to ignore, and helped the subaltern to break from their immovable social position at the university.

Although #ConcernedStudent1950 was unable to spur the change simply as minority students concerned for their inclusion, safety, and well-being, the movement is strengthened by the inclusion of the football team. By joining the movement and utilizing their name in their

statement, the football players add to #ConcernedStudent1950 and their goals, rather than redirect attention away from them and their lack of successes. The players in the photograph are still members of the subaltern, and as long as their role in society can still be diluted by their race despite their accomplishments as athletes, the administration's lack of an adequate reaction to racism on campus poses a threat to the black athletes as well. After all, racial epithets written in human feces applies to the black football players too because they are, after all, black and not just athletes. Rather than abandon their blackness, they use it in conjunction with their status as athletes to transfer their influence on the university into a demand for actual change in the wake of discrimination and campus uncertainty. The combination of their identities allows them to fight for change against the things that threaten who they are by utilizing what they mean to the university as an influence on the administration's attention toward the troublesome events occurring on their campus.

The subaltern is not often able to join together for a push against hegemonic structures within an environment of social or class struggle. By stepping outside of the subaltern and utilizing a role given to them by the group in power, the Missouri football team loosens the grip the administration has on the minority student body. The timing of their entrance into the clash between the administration and #ConcernedStudent1950 can help to explain Gramsci's concept of historicity; and, even in their language utilized in their tweet, the football team's message can point to the importance of using historicity and the hegemonic clashes of the past in order to push the subaltern past the blockade of elite groups' stranglehold on oppressed populations.

Historicity

Gramsci conceptualizes historicity as the role history plays in the establishment of hegemonic power structures within society, and the ways in which history is emphasized for

rhetorical power. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci explains historicity to be a manner through which “critical reflection” can take place to account for rhetorical significance (Gramsci, 1948, 624). For the Missouri football team, history constantly proved that the university for which they took the field was reactionary in its responses to the well-being of minority students. Before formally entering the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement as a team, the students who began the university’s protest group named their formation after the year black students were admitted to Missouri as a way of emphasizing that the university was far from progressive in their treatment of racial issues, especially toward black students. As mentioned in Chapter Two, international students from China, India, and the Philippines became Mizzou Tigers decades before black students (Loupe, 1989). Historicity helps analyze the meaning behind the naming of the student protest group as a constant reminder that race has a troubled past at the University of Missouri, and by forcing others to recall that troubled past every time they read headlines or watch news reports about the students’ resistance. The emphasis on the University of Missouri’s past served as a critique of the administration’s slow response from the onset of organized student protests, and in many ways served as a way in which themes and the rhetoric of past racial struggles on campus and in the U.S. could be utilized in order to strengthen the voices of the students at Missouri in 2015. The football team’s tweet referred to a historical movement in its use of a quote from one of the most prolific voices in resistance of racial discrimination. Additionally, the preliminary statement accompanying the tweet and the photograph used language that had been emphasized in some of the civil right movement’s most powerful moments.

The preliminary statement given by the football team proclaimed that “black is powerful” (@1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015). Language emphasizing the power of black men and women was first operationalized in 1966 as a means by which black Americans could mobilize and “close

ranks” (Hamilton and Ture, 1967). Although the idea of black power, or the process of achieving sociopolitical or economic power for black people was used as a phrase, civil rights leaders saw black power as a rallying cry for highlighting the ways in which black Americans could achieve power in their communities, as well as manifest power in environments seeking to thwart their social mobility. Since this mantra was a key rhetorical tool for civil rights leaders in the second half of the 1960s, the Missouri football team’s invocation of the phrase harkens back to a time when black Americans were standing up against discrimination and racism, and it allows that spirit to be highlighted as a means of contextualizing the black football player’s goals and role in the events on campus.

Gramsci’s conceptualization of historicity allows rhetorical and social critics to identify historical significance in the rhetoric utilized in hegemonic struggles (Gramsci, 1948). For example, the football team did not need to say that, like in 1964, they were working for black power in all aspects of campus life at Mizzou. Grondin (1997) notes that historicity lives in the language of political and philosophical importance. Invoking language from an important, historical time to utilize as meaningful rhetoric in the present is a process by which the words themselves build the context, rather than the rhetor deliberately laying the groundwork for the historical moment they wish to transport into the psyche of their present-day audience. The football team’s concise statement of “black is powerful” allows them to place the themes, achievements, and impact of the black power mentality that rose out of the 1960s into the movement they are now supporting. Historicity allows the football team to impact their audience who, in the case of the preliminary statement, was the student body, and rhetorically charge their statement with language that empowered black activists before them.

The football team's tweet also utilized historicity in order to rhetorically charge their commentary to the university's administration with powerful language from the past. In the tweet, the football team uses the quote "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (@1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015). The quote is attributed to Martin Luther King Jr. in his Letter from Birmingham Jail (King, 1963). King, a prolific figure in the civil rights movement, was, and is, nearly universally known in America as a civil rights leader. Jones (2011) reports that a Gallup poll in 1966 found that 68% of the sample had a negative opinion of King, as opposed to a Gallup poll in 2011 where 94% of the respondents had a favorable impression of him. As seen in Jones (2011), the popularity of King has risen after his death, and his speeches, writings, and ideas have permeated mainstream culture and become natural citations for those involved in modern day civil rights struggles. Bostdorff and Goldzwig (2005) note that for white Americans, King has become the figurehead for all race-related issues and movements that came out of the 20th century. Other prominent figures have been lost in the collective white consciousness due to King's accessible rhetoric, including videos and audio recordings of his emphatic speeches. White appropriation of King's works have diluted some of King's actual positions, often in the process of white politicians and figureheads using King's words and ideas as support for their own policies, often when they clash with King's actual advocated positions (Bostdorff and Goldzwig, 2005).

Nevertheless, white Americans know Martin Luther King Jr. and his role in American history, and the football team's use of one of his most famous quotes in their message that was directed toward the administration and American public was key in rhetorically defining their resistance against the university. King's influence on popular American culture brings the football team's message into a realm of political activism against racial discrimination, and by

attributing their thoughts and actions to a frame of mind similar to King, they align their cause with the numerous movements in the 1960s civil rights struggle. By using King, a well-known figure from the era, the team maximizes the likelihood that its audience will understand, and be sympathetic to, their concerns. Just as Gramsci (1948) mentions that history offers the rhetor guiding principles to their ideas and commentaries, the football team establishes their message as a means of contextualizing their concerns and placing their actions within the confines of King's important work and words. By doing so, the football team brings King's popularity and poise to their movement, strengthening their calls for Wolfe's resignation by aligning their cause with that of the activist groups in the 1960s. Furthermore, by utilizing the rhetoric of a figure well-known to white Americans and individuals with little knowledge or interest in racial discrimination and civil rights activism, casual audiences following the events at the University of Missouri are given some context for the students' concerns. Overall, the use of King's quote in their tweet allows the football team to shape their statement with the words of a man who is perceived to be highly credible and honored in American culture.

Lastly, historicity is present within the team's photograph that accompanies their tweet. In the photograph, the team is linking their arms with stoic facial expression, making a clear message that the team is confident and united. Tukachinsky, Mastro and Yarchi (2015) write that the images of minority leaders of change often help to influence the outcome of the events for which they are politically and socially active. In the case of figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama, images of them giving speeches or when they are present at various locations of significance often inspire, influence, and interact with the issues present today. Mastro (2015) notes that various postures and facial expressions have been attributed to black Americans in opposition of hegemonic structures, dating back as far as Antebellum. Stoicism is a

lasting expression in photographs of black Americans popularized in the media, including slaves, freedom riders, and Ferguson protestors (Mastro, 2015). According to Berger (2011), another theme in photographs of black Americans throughout history shows them with defiant, strong postures where men and women are standing up straight to represent their resiliency and strength. Lastly, the linking of arms is often perceived to be a symbol of a joint effort to resist or push against hegemonic powers (Berger, 2011). All of these traits present in the photograph of the black athletes harkens back to moments in history when black Americans were defiant of the oppressions they experienced. As recently as Ferguson, black men and women protesting police violence stood tall, arm in arm, ready to fight for equality in their community. The remnants of imagery produced through photographs of black Americans in historical contexts that take place under the presence of discrimination and prejudice helps to reignite the emotion behind some of the country's largest battles for equality. The manner in which the students were photographed took these things into consideration, seeing as they are present throughout historic photographs of black resistance. Historicity allows the critic to call back and signify moments of historical significance in order to the strategies of social movements taking place years, decades, and even centuries later.

At the heart of all of these issues of hegemony at the campus of the University of Missouri is race, and as discussed earlier in the review of literature, the election of President Barack Obama brought a conversation on race to the forefront of many various news outlets, as well as discourse between American citizens. The election of a black president stimulated many to wonder if racism would be a thing of the past, and as briefly discussed, innocent black men and women who had been killed by the police began to unravel that narrative. Just months before the events on the campus of Mizzou, Ferguson ignited a nationwide conversation on race in the

United States; and, while it was clear that race still had an impact on equality in America, I would like to take a look at the ways in which hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity contribute to disproving post-racialism as a social ideology, at least in the context of the resistance struggles at the University of Missouri in 2014-2015.

Post-Racialism

For the purposes of digging deeply into analyzing post-racialism's role in the Missouri football team's tweet, I will recall the preliminary statement and the tweet itself in its entirety, rather than referencing portions of it. Starting with the preliminary statement, the football team's declaration to the student body was "We're black. Black is powerful. Our struggle may look different, but we are all #ConcernedStudent1950" (@1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015). To the students involved in #ConcernedStudent1950, the University of Missouri had not moved past race, let alone the country. Minority students lived rooms away from racist individuals who utilized racial epithets and symbols as a means of intimidation and targeting. The University of Missouri, who in the past had been less than proactive about their response to issues of race and representation, had for all intents and purposes ignored the students' concerns following these events on campus. The administration's figurehead, President Tim Wolfe, had grown angry and frustrated with students voicing their concern of safety and inclusion for the minority student body. For the Missouri football team's black athletes, these were their concerns as well. As noted in their preliminary statement, their role on campus was not limited to their race. As Sinclair and Bennett III (2015) found, black athletes find themselves in an elevated status from the non-athletes of all races. Nevertheless, they are black men at a university that is failing to ensure safety and security to its minority students. Therefore, they chose to place their acknowledgment of their elevated

status in the preliminary text after they state what truly matters to them in the context of the campus' tensions: they are black.

Race and Power

The team's proclamation that "black is powerful" serves as a poignant statement on the role of race and power. In terms of Gramsci (1948) and the construction of hegemonic power structures, #ConcernedStudent1950 and the Missouri football players see a direct correlation between the fact that they are advocating for the rights of minority students and the lack of attentiveness they are receiving from the administration. In Gramscian terms, the subaltern is powerless against the elite by which their reality is dictated. The football team states in contrast to the hegemony on campus that black is powerful, rather than black being the defining characteristic of what classifies them into the subaltern. In other words, their rhetorical proclamation that "black is powerful" serves to discursively reorient the hegemony-subaltern relationship. In the administration's lack of actionable solutions to campus race issues and the football's stance that black is powerful, all hegemonic relations between the student body and the administration are outlined by race. At the University of Missouri, the role of power is dictated by the hegemonic structure built around the minority student body's ability to feel represented by the administration. Judging strictly off of the hegemonic climate of the university, no reliable argument could be made that being black, or a member of any racial minority group, would be powerful given the lackluster reaction from President Wolfe. The role of race in the football team's challenge of power does not derive from being black, but who they are as black men.

As black athletes at the University of Missouri, the football team has power from being athletically gifted enough to participate at such a competitive level of collegiate sports. While their athletic ability was not contingent on their race, their self-identification as black means all

parts of who they are can be attributed to the talents and abilities of a black man. By attributing their strength to their identity as black, they in turn allow their race to become powerful. While the minority student body may find a similar strength in their abilities and talents, the University of Missouri, like many Division I programs, celebrates athletic ability at an almost monumental level. The university builds multimillion dollar stadiums, receives payment to allow smaller universities to play their team, and even funds the educations of many athletes all because athletics are a large influencer at prestigious programs. Because the football team at the University of Missouri was largely comprised of black athletes, and those athletes took offense to the lackadaisical response from the administration to campus race issues, the football players became even more powerful than they already were as Division I athletes. As simultaneously identified as college athletes and black students, any threats posed to their identities as black means that they could use their influence and power as college athletes to inform the ways in which they protect their identity as black. Therefore, when they state that “black is powerful,” the players refer to the things that black people can accomplish, and the ways in which they contribute to institutions and communities despite being consistently overlooked and mistreated.

Race mattered in 2015 in the United States, despite Obama’s presidency. Even the name #ConcernedStudent1950 is named for the year of admission for black students at Mizzou. Post-racialism and its claims that race is no longer a factor in sociopolitical matters cannot account for the lifeless responses from Tim Wolfe and the administration at Missouri, nor can it account for the ways in which black students were able to use their influence to protect transgressions against them for being of a particular race. In the team’s preliminary statement, which was meant as a message to the student body, the team is distinguishing themselves from the student body because they know that their influence comes from their role as athletes. That being said, their

identity as black students is perceived to be under attack, so by acknowledging that they are in a different position, the team notes that they are black and powerful; and, through their role as athletes, they will help bring the change that #ConceredStudent1950 is seeking. Shortly after the football team announced their intent to boycott athletic participation, President Wolfe announced his resignation. The power needed to reverse the hegemonic inequality on the campus of Mizzou was held by black athletes. Although the power over the university resided in their identity as athletes, the football players were also black, and their pride in their race in the face of racism and prejudice helped to motivate them to use their elevated status to break down hegemony present on the campus.

Because the power balance in the campus hegemony was rooted in race as an impact on social interactions and transgressions, post-racialism as an ideology fails to fulfill its promise of a United States void of racism. As long as hegemonic power imbalances are centered in race as a factor in oppression, post-racialism cannot be satisfied. Because of the deeply rooted inequalities centered around race in America, one would be hard pressed to believe that post-racialism would ever be achieved.

Race and Representation

In the football team's tweet, the athletes wrote:

The athletes of color on the University of Missouri football team truly believe 'injustice Anywhere is a threat to Justice Everywhere' We will no longer participate in any football related activities until President Tim Wolfe resigns or is removed due to his negligence toward marginalized students' experiences. WE ARE UNITED!!!! (1Sherrils_2MIZZ, 2015)

The football team directly charges President Tim Wolfe with negligence due to the lack of an effective response to the racist events happening on campus. Gramsci (1948) notes that the concerns of the subaltern fail to resonate with the ruling class because the status of the subaltern

matters very little to the elite class so long as they are obedient. Because the minority student body offers very little to the university other than tuition and possibly increasing diversity statistics, the administration's incentive for troubling themselves with minority students' concerns offers very little payoff. The feeling of negligence led minority students to publically protest and form #ConcernedStudent1950, and by the time the football team involved itself in the matter, no real answer had been given to the students' concerns. An issue raised by #ConcernedStudent1950 was that the safety and inclusion of minority students on campus was being threatened, and although the university is meant to concern itself with the well-being of all students, a lack of response to minority students alludes to America's history of ignoring the needs of non-white citizens. Historicity allows for rhetorical and social critics to utilize history to place emphasis on an event in order help explain its success. By utilizing a quote from Martin Luther King Jr., as well as charging President Wolfe with negligence toward minority students' concerns, a history at both the University of Missouri and the country as a whole is brought to the forefront of discourse surrounding the events at Mizzou.

The University of Missouri largely ignored issues of race throughout the 20th century, and for most of American history, black Americans have lacked representation as citizens in defense of their Constitutional rights. Thanks to the 1st Amendment, citizens have the freedom to voice their concerns and assemble in order to push for their rights and representation. While Mizzou did not publically attempt to thwart the students' freedom of speech or assembly, their responses to the assembly of #ConcernedStudent1950 was one of apathy. Rather than attempt to meet with students at these events and begin a dialogue, generic statements were offered that attempted to ensure students that the administration was investigating certain incidents. While that answer may have sufficed for the first week or two, President Wolfe's inability to show concern for the

students furthered minority students' feelings of abandonment by those who are meant to ensure and open and welcoming environment. The optics of the president of a major institution showing little regard for minority students is incredibly damaging for Mizzou. The ideology of post-racialism would imply that race should not play a role in social issues, and the administration's lack of adequate response to student concerns, as previously stated, may have been due to a lack of ability to make a tangible change. The concern of the students shifted to anger, however, following President's Wolfe's dismissal of students asking to comment on the campus' climate at the Homecoming parade in October of 2015 (Desnoyer & Alexander, 2017). Because racial epithets were still plaguing the campus living spaces, and the administration failed to see this as an issue of campus culture, the administration deferred to view the event as an isolated incident. By ignoring the issue, it grew into a major concern for students on campus, even those who were not minorities. By failing to protect the representation of minority students on campus, the University of Missouri's administration turned a mess into a disaster, allowing for further controversy.

The Decline of Post-Racial Ideology

The backlash to the university's reaction to concerns of minority students helped to fuel dialogues about racist institutions, allowing for further criticisms of post-racialism. In many ways, the Ferguson tragedy sparked the energy behind the #ConcernedStudent1950 protests, and given the proximity between Ferguson and Mizzou's campus, much attention focused on Missouri and its issues of race. The events in Missouri between 2014 and 2015 pointed toward race as a major role in social issues. In mainstream news, race was a major topic of concern dating back to the killing of Trayvon Martin. The events on the campus of the University of Missouri may not have been deadly, but the racial transgressions to which students were

subjected in the campus living spaces, as well as the trauma of asking for assistance with issues of racism and receiving no help from the school's administration, damaged the minority student body's emotional and physical well-being. The fear of living on a campus where concerns of safety and well-being go unanswered fosters an impossible environment for learning, damaging the very nature of higher education institutions. As the killings of innocent black men and women began to tally up, the argument that race is irrelevant in American society began to decline; and, in its decline, the students at Missouri were even more inclined to fight for their right to a safe learning environment. An unintended consequence of postulating the ideology of post-racialism was that its tenets were so inaccurate, those most effected by racism and discrimination turned their frustration about claims of a so-called "colorblind" country toward emphasizing the issues taking place in their communities. The University of Missouri's events between 2014 and 2015 are a great example of this, and the impact of the Missouri football boycott on the dismantling of post-racialism will be explored in the next chapter.

Summary

The events on Mizzou's campus were riddled with issues concerning race, and following a turbulent year in national race relations after Ferguson, the football team's entrance into the battle between the administration and #ConcernedStudent1950 became the catalyst for Tim Wolfe's removal from office. The team's ability to use their elevated status as college athletes to inform transgressions against their simultaneous identity as black students allowed them to transcend the hegemonic structures of the campus and break down the oppressive nature of the university. The team's tweet challenged hegemonic powers on the campus by taking the influence of black athletes and using it as a lever in order to achieve action on behalf of the administration. While #ConcernedStudent1950 challenged this power imbalance for quite some

time, the minority student body posed a very small threat to the university's normal functions. With nearly \$1 million dollars at stake if the football team failed to play in its upcoming game, the football team's tweet demanding Tim Wolfe's resignation became a credible threat that the administration was unable to ignore. The subaltern student body was trapped within the confines of the administration's conscious choice to offer empty responses to the concerns of minority students, but thanks to a portion of the subaltern— the football team — who was able to transcend hegemonic oppression, the administration's power was weakened. By viewing historicity as a way in which the athletes inserted themselves into greater, historical moments of activism, the team's rhetoric harkened back to moments in history that many Americans attribute to fights for civil rights and the improvement of society. The history of America's treatment of race issues is even more troubling than the University of Missouri's, and by utilizing language that emphasizes the strength it takes to fight for the rights of the subaltern, the football team was able to contextualize their struggle in a familiar way that attempted to increase the chance of effectiveness.

This chapter's goal was to analyze the rhetorical significance of the football team's tweets. The themes of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity are key to conducting a Gramscian rhetorical analysis. By analyzing these themes within the team's tweet, the meaning of the team's language and argument for Tim Wolfe's resignation have been explored so that, in the next chapter, I can argue for why this matters in the context of deconstructing the post-racial ideology. I previewed some of the themes surrounding post-racialism in order to contextualize the next chapter, as well as connect the ways in which Gramscian concepts are relevant to post-racialism and the growing backlash it has experienced since 2012. In the next chapter, I will summarize my findings in order to argue for the importance of this rhetorical analysis, as well as

address limitations and the ways in which this analysis can impact the study of race and hegemony. Lastly, I will provide a final argument for the effectiveness of the football team's resistance and place this paper in the context of public discourse surrounding race in America, as well as scholarship furthering the reach of Gramsci's theories, including the implications of applying Gramsci to modern social issues, as discussed by Hall (1986) and Zompetti (1997).

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will provide a final argument for the effectiveness of the football team's resistance and place this paper in the context of public discourse surrounding race in America. Additionally, I will explore how my paper relates to the scholarship that extends Gramsci's theories, including the implications of applying Gramsci to modern social issues, as discussed by Hall (1986) and Zompetti (1997). I also intend on arguing for rhetorical analysis as a means of identifying and understanding hegemony as a means of addressing issues of race. Primarily, my final chapter discusses how my findings from the University of Missouri's football players boycott furthers Gramscian rhetorical criticism, as well as extends investigations into the concept of post-racialism.

The University of Missouri Football Boycott and Post-Racialism

Since the election of Barack Obama, post-racialism has altered racial discourse and the ways in which racial discrimination are discussed (Anderson, 2017). Rather than discussing the ways in which race negatively affects millions of Americans and their ability to find work, adequate living spaces, and sufficient education, pundits and politicians began to question whether race still played a role in social and civic life under a black President. As high profile killings of Trayvon Martin and countless others emerged in the national media landscape, discussions of a post-racial America began to receive pushback. Despite a black president being in the Oval Office, new insights into the daily oppression of black Americans were inflating already understood discrepancies between the experience of white men and women and their black counterparts. Police brutality and difficulties ensuring stable and sufficient housing were already aspects of life that disproportionately impacted black Americans, yet still found ways to devolve into worse conditions for black Americans throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The election

of a man with a darker skin tone would not reverse these realities overnight, but politicians and commentators argued it was a sign of general improvement. Rather than specifying what strides were made by the election of a black President, other than the obvious revelation of Obama being the first black man elected to the office, post-racialism's criers were quick to point out that things were much better than they once (and actually) were.

The largest downfall in post-racialism's framework is the notion that improvement indicates eradication. In other words, the election of a black President indicates that anything is possible for black Americans given the right circumstances and some grit. The circumstances, however, happened to be all of the aspects of American life that had proven evasive to black Americans thanks to policies aimed at doing so, including adequate income, proper education, and access to affordable, safe housing. By post-racialism's parameters, the things that allow a black person to become President, are the things that decades of policies have made the most difficult for black Americans to achieve. The larger, more sweeping social issues aside, attention toward the needs of black Americans have largely been pushed away as well. Even in the wake of the Trayvon Martin killing, calls for protecting the "stand your ground" laws were overshadowing calls to protect Americans like Martin whose lives were being framed as disposable in favor of protection of the 2nd Amendment (Follman & Williams, 2013); Kaduce & Davis, 2013).

Improvements in representation and equality in the black community do not mean that either are completely solved, even if the highest office in the United States is held by a black man. Arguments that Obama serves as an example that all black Americans could follow suffer from the same limitations previously discussed. The manner through which Barack Obama navigated higher education, state government, national government, and then the presidency was

not one that a large majority of black Americans experience. The fact of the matter is Barack Obama did not accomplish what he did because he was black; his familial, social and economic class, his education, and his traversing of the American political ranks were not triumphs of race but of economic concerns. While his race did allow for the Democratic Party to tout a successful, sophisticated black candidate who had won people over as a Senator, the privileges from which Obama benefited allowed him a path to the Oval Office. For the Missouri football players who participated in the boycott in 2015, a similar story rings true. The manner in which the administration responded and reacted to minority students' concerns of inclusion and general safety does not lend itself to an argument for the football team's success as a victory determined by racial influence. The football team's success is defined by another phenomenon in America's racial climate entirely.

The success of the Missouri football team's boycott was handed to them in the form of Tim Wolfe's resignation, which on paper is exactly what they sought to achieve as described in their statement on Twitter. In terms of hegemonic systems, however, Gramscian subaltern roles would indicate that the method by which they achieved their success was also a glaring indictment of their oppression. Due to the administration's lack of a tangible response before the football team's boycott, President Wolfe and the University's board did not make their decision by arriving at the conclusion that the administration had failed its minority students. In a similar fashion, the football team cannot claim victory through the power they attribute to their race. The administration, facing millions of dollars in lost revenue from a source into which they had poured hundreds of millions of dollars, acted in response to the economic pressure of the situation, not the racial or social factors. Therefore, the football team succeeded as commodities of the university, not as powerful black students as their messages suggest. Their bodies and

athletic abilities have been turned into a source of economic revenue for the university, and while their resistance is rooted in their perceived strength as black students, the commodification of their athletic ability is the determinant in their movement's success. With these realities in mind, a sound argument can be made that if minority students continued to protest and speak out against the administration, they would continue to go without a response or a subjectively adequate solution. The catalyst to the campus' hostile climate was the football team's boycott, but not the black football players. Rather, the interest they represented and the game through which they made their educational institution impressive amounts of revenue provided catalytic energy for the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement. As Gramsci (1948) states, the subaltern does not achieve its status until it is conscious of its oppression from the elite class. The question then becomes whether or not the football team's role in the matter is truly a hegemonic victory over the oppressor or a subconscious acceptance that the concerns of black students are not enough of an argument for Missouri's board to respond to anxieties occurring on their campus.

Given the University's history outlined in Chapter Two, Mizzou's lack of concern for the comfort and security of its minority students would not be historically significant. The argument that a flagship university's board would have no interest in the well-being of its students is unfounded and naïve. Rather, the notion that an indifference toward the status of minority students after centuries of placing minority concerns behind the *status quo* of local, state, and national attitudes, a lack of responsiveness to black inequality is much more plausible. At a university with a history of taking an uninterested stance toward the representation of black students, it would not take a conscious effort to undermine #ConcernedStudent1950 and their demands. Neville, Gallardo, and Sue (2016) have published work finding that institutional racism does not need to exist in policy alone, but rather survives as a psyche or organizational

philosophy unintentionally. Without measures in place to counter these embedded ruminations of discrimination, as well as a desire to enforce policies aimed at doing so, a history of underrepresentation pours over into the present. Although the University of Missouri's administration claimed it responded in all the ways it tangibly could, the attitudes displayed by President Wolfe and other members of the board toward the concerns of minority students indicate that an institutional lack of concern for criticisms from non-white students, and possibly students in general, may have determined their idleness. Although universities and colleges in the United States have desegregated, Dowd and Bensimon (2015) note that universities with a history of racial discrimination have continued to struggle with valuing diversity, at the very least, to the standards of laws such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The University of Missouri struggled with racial representation and equality in 1955 just as it did in 2015, and a continued incompetence in regard to the well-being of minority students is too strong of an institutional plague to insist that the board's support of Tim Wolfe's resignation, and the president's decision itself, were made as an attempt to right the wrongs in the administration's decisions throughout the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement and the events through which it was created.

The University of Missouri insisted on President Tim Wolfe's resignation because of the economic losses they stood to lose due to an inactive Division I football team. The football team's boycott of athletic participation pending the resignation of Wolfe was in support of the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement and the lack of adequate action in the wake of racially charged incidents on the campus in 2014 and 2015. Despite the University's emphasis of economic concerns over those of the minority student body, the football team's goals were achieved, and served as the catalyst for the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement's most

significant achievement throughout its resistance movement. While hegemonic processes were at play in the struggle between the athletes, the football team's achievements were not totally rooted in an overthrow of the oppressive elite. Because their status as athletes, and not as black students, was the determining factor in Tim Wolfe's decision to resign, the football team's status as members of the subaltern were cemented. Collegiate athletes enjoy an elevated status on their campuses thanks to the mass amounts of money involved in college sports, and especially in Division I programs (Sinclair and Bennett III, 2015). The university's continued lack of adequate responses to the concerns of minority students point toward the football team's status as politically and economically powerful athletes, not their proclamation that black is powerful. The football team's race, which they hold to be the source of their power, is deemed powerless through the administration's disregard for the concerns of minority students. Additionally, the University of Missouri's swift action following the threat of lost revenue from the football team's inactivity shows the priorities held by the institution. Because the team's athletic status, and in actuality their role as economic commodities to the University, served as the determinant in President Tim Wolfe's resignation, their status as athletes proved to be influential while their role as black members of the subaltern was cemented.

The football team's articulated status and insistence that their successes were due to their blackness cannot go unnoted. The fact of the matter is that the athletes who imposed the resignation of a flagship university were black. The influence behind Wolfe's resignation was void of a desire to act in support of racial equality and representation, but the athletes that posed an economic threat to the University of Missouri were black. The race of the football players may not have been the reason the President Wolfe resigned, but because the team accentuated their race in the context of the situation and attributed it to their successes, the aspect of race

plays a significant role in hegemonic conflict taking place on campus. Despite their blackness not being the reason their resistance was rewarded, the football team's act of defiance was rooted in their passion for the equality and representation of black students at Missouri and black Americans everywhere.

The inherent presence of race throughout the entire conflict between the University of Missouri and the school's administration indicates the falsehood of a post-racial America. Following a turbulent summer in Ferguson, Missouri, and a difficult few years involving black Americans killed in police-related shootings, the students of the University of Missouri involved in the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement were met with the same inequality that took over the national news landscape since 2011. Reports from Ferguson residents echoed the voices of community members of victims in high profile deaths of black Americans; the America of 2014 was still plagued by racial issues that activists fought in 1964. The conversations surrounding Ferguson often had more to do with economic injustices than racial issues, and many locals conflated both as one singular issue. National conversations about issues within populations often fail to separate economic and racial issues into two aspects of a community's experience. For Mizzou students, however, racial epithets in the dorms are a clear message of hate. The presence of racial aggression on the campus, as well as the national conversation on whether or not black lives were at risk simply for living in their communities, lends itself to a multifaceted argument against a post-racial America. The conversation surrounding Ferguson and other high profile deaths often criticized America for its continuous ignorance toward the racial inequalities in the United States. Given the attention and clout surrounding the debate on black lives in America, the political rhetoric in the United States after Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of George Zimmerman emphasized the damage that occurs when race is pushed aside or ignored.

Backlash to post-racialism hopefully leads to more adequate representation of black Americans, and the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement and the Missouri football team boycott represented the ways in which criticisms of post-racialism can develop into larger movements aimed at improving racial equality.

In my research and analysis for this paper, I began with the works of Antonio Gramsci, and modern works utilizing his theories, primarily Hall (1986) and Zompetti (1997). Next, I would like to briefly discuss the ways in which my investigation contributes to the work done in Gramscian rhetorical analysis.

Gramscian Critical Theory and Race

Gramsci (1948) served as the framework for my rhetorical criticism, and Hall (1986) conceptualized the ways in which Marx's economism, despite Marx's insistence otherwise, could lend itself to issues of social structures. Hall (1986) allows the rich body of Gramsci's works on hegemony to be applied to issues of race, and maps the best ways in which they can be utilized. Overall, Hall argues that Gramsci takes the principles of inequality central to Marx's theory and his notions of social relations relating to economics, but also embodies aspects that are specifically related to the social aspects of class and power. Additionally, Hall notes that hegemony does not take place in one aspect of social life alone. For example, hegemony does not exist as an economic or cultural function of power alone. Hegemony, in a historically specific manner, occurs momentarily as a function of power in society. Because society is multifaceted, concerned with economics, politics, and culture, neo-Marxist criticism, in Hall's eyes, must concern itself with social issues in addition to just economics. In doing so, a more accurate investigation may occur that lends itself to the inner-workings of inequality and power. Zompetti (1997) also helped dictate the path I would take in structuring my paper. Gramscian rhetorical

theory forces the critic to be self-reflexive. For example, while researching and constructing arguments for this paper, I analyzed the events of the Missouri football boycott as a singular event as well as a cultural reflection of the backlash to post-racialism's in society. In particular, Gramsci's theories to lead rhetorical critics in investigations centered on cultural or social power inequalities. Gramsci's use of self-reflexive social analysis allows for communication and rhetoric to take center stage while investigating the ways in which language and classical rhetoric play a role in modern social issues.

My goal for this paper was to exemplify the ways in which Gramsci's theories of hegemony, the subaltern, and historicity were useful for evaluating the success of the University of Missouri football team's boycott of athletic activity. A Gramscian rhetorical analysis allowed me to dig deeply into the intersection of power inequalities and race, and served as a unique method through which an argument for the success of the team's boycott could be made. In the post-Obama era, the theory of post-racialism is disassembling as issues surrounding black representation and quality of life are brought to light through racially charged crimes that receive national news coverage. As the backlash to post-racialism increases Americans' passion for resisting the institutions that uphold policies of inequality, instances of resistance like the University of Missouri football boycott allow scholars and the public alike to witness the power of resistance. Through Gramscian rhetorical analysis, the language and messages central to these acts of resistance illuminate the role of hegemony and the establishment of the subaltern, and equips the rhetorical critic with the concept of historicity to position the messages within greater historical contexts.

Racism has plagued the United States since its inception, and notions of a post-racial America following the election of Barack Obama have deteriorated in the wake of high profile,

racially charged events. The unjust killings of black Americans all across the country have dominated national news coverage, and following the events in Ferguson, Missouri, activists pushed back harder than ever against the notion that race was no longer relevant in contemporary America. In the University of Missouri's football boycott, the backlash to post-racialism is evident, and the actions of the football players who risked their elevated status earned through years of dedication helped lead to material action in response to events that challenged the safety and well-being of minority students. Hegemonic processes limited the voices of black students at Mizzou, but by utilizing their athletic accomplishments as leverage, in the words of the football team, black remained powerful. Being black in America and being faced with daily inequalities may still not be enough of a determinant to invoke proactive change for an increase in racial equality and representation, but the accomplishments of black Americans are vast, despite these institutional and systematic roadblocks. The rhetoric central to movements of resistance will continue to illuminate the ways in which language and its meanings matter to issues of power inequality, and scholars involved in critical theory must continue to investigate these instances of resistance in order to continue to develop the understanding of hegemony. Through a continued focus on understanding the rhetoric of inequality, rhetorical critics stand a fighting chance at identifying crucial aspects of successful resistance movements, and, as a result, they can assist in the fight for progress that the United States desperately needs.

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