

BLACK BODIES IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE DOOR: MATERIAL RHETORIC AND
STUDENT ACTIVISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

by

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ABSTRACT

Racial inequality has been a longstanding issue for Black students and Black people at The University of Alabama. Black student activists have used various tactics throughout history to close the racial divide at The University of Alabama. Autherine Lucy, Black sorority recruits during the fall of 2013, sparking the march "The Final Stand", and "We Are Done" activists have all broken major barriers at the University. Though their aim at equality was similar, the approaches were different. In order to understand the impact Black bodies have made on the campus of The University of Alabama, this thesis applies theories of material rhetoric to each of the three protest movements. Finally, this thesis uncovers crucial implications that shape how the Black body ultimately fits within dissenting spaces.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Black bodies across the nation and at The University of Alabama who continuously occupy spaces where they are rejected. My Black body would not be allowed to attend The University of Alabama without your courage, strength, and perseverance in making me belong in the White spaces that have rejected my existence.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WAD	We Are Done
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the slaves who were robbed of their freedom and still deprived of the recognition you deserve for building The University of Alabama, thank you for allowing me to use your shoulders to rise. To Black campus integrators, thank you for walking down the streets of this campus even though your presence could have gotten you killed. Your strength has allowed thousands of Black students, like myself, to flourish at UA.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On February 3, 1956, Autherine Lucy became the first African-American student admitted into The University of Alabama. Her aspirations were simple: attend The University of Alabama, major in education, and graduate. However, the day she stepped foot on campus, her presence made the ground shake. White students rejected the site of Lucy at their all-white university. Lucy explained:

I was met with hateful stares...As I sat down...several students moved away.' That night 1,000 students marched on the home of President Oliver Cromwell Carmichael. They sang Dixie, shouted, 'To hell with Autherine!' and 'Keep 'Bama white!' Another group of mobsters set a Ku Klux-style cross on fire in front of Dean William Adams' house ('Education: Alabama's Scandal', 1956).

February 6, 1956 would become one of the most devastating days of Autherine Lucy's life. Rioting White students and citizens threatened to kill her and attempted to attack her (Caro, 2002). These anti-integration demonstrations were so dangerous, it forced The University of Alabama to suspend Lucy for her safety. The University of Alabama was not ready for a Black body to be in a traditionally White space. Though these rioters openly rejected Autherine Lucy's presence, the NAACP filed a lawsuit against The University of Alabama, ultimately leading to Lucy's reinstatement. Unfortunately, The University of Alabama later expelled Lucy.

Nearly fifty years after Autherine Lucy became the first Black student to enroll at the University, Black bodies at the University continue to face rejection. In the fall of 2013, segregation was highlighted in a new arena: the University's Panhellenic Greek system, comprising of eighteen "traditionally white" sororities. Previous efforts to break the color line

failed, but the issue exploded in 2013. Despite having a 4.3 high school GPA, many accolades, and a prestigious family background, Black sorority recruit Kennedy Cobb was rejected from every Panhellenic sorority at The University of Alabama on the basis of race. Cobb's rejection led to mass outcry by students and faculty for integration. Sorority members spoke out against the events that took place during their bidding process, highlighting racism, especially from club alumni members who "are big \$\$\$ providers...I mean 'decision makers'" (Scherker, 2013).

Panhellenic member Kirkland Back explained:

This past year, a black girl ended up in the Rush-to-Pledge room...Someone messed up and seated her in the wrong spot ... so you can imagine the sad hilarity of watching a bunch of really privileged white girls freaking out. They were like, 'Oh, my God, oh, my God, oh, my God! What are we going to do? She can't think we actually like her!' So they were like, 'Nobody talk to her. ... She's gotta know that she's not welcome. She's gotta know this isn't going to work out' (Webley, 2014).

Panhellenic sorority members and alumni made it clear that Black bodies were rejected in their White spaces.

However, these sentiments were not collective opinion. The courage of select sorority members, coupled with supportive students, staff, and faculty members ultimately led to "The Final Stand" protest on September 18, 2013. Students marched from Amelia-Gorgas library to the steps of Rose Administration to protest racism and discrimination plaguing the Greek system (Watkins, 2013). By naming the protest "The Final Stand" and intentionally making their presence known at the steps of Rose Administration, protesters used their bodies, words, and outrage to remind The University of Alabama that denying Black women the right to join the Panhellenic Greek system recreated Governor George Wallace's 1963 stand in the schoolhouse door that blocked Black student enrollment. Despite integrating the University's classrooms, students and faculty made it clear that racism and segregation had not ended; it only relocated.

Although the Greek system was able to gradually integrate through efforts from student activists, racism and inequality on campus continue to flourish. Just two years after “The Final Stand”, student activism resurfaced at The University of Alabama. In November of 2015, student activist organization “We Are Done” was introduced.

Outraged by the racial climate in the nation and the injustices that students across the country experienced at predominantly White institutions, “We Are Done” launched itself on the campus of The University of Alabama to demand change in many areas of campus. The group made its presence known on Facebook, separately releasing photographs of eleven demands throughout the evening. Their demands were long but simple. A few included creating a division of diversity on campus, removing the name of white supremacists on buildings or erecting historical markers, increasing funding for student organizations, providing funding for the alumni network, increasing Black faculty and staff members and their funding, and recognizing the existence of “The Machine”, while taking steps to bring it above ground (Elkin, 2015).

The day following its social media announcement, “We Are Done” rallied with over 150 students and faculty members, marching to demand change. “The We are Done demonstration on Thursday morning began outside Foster Auditorium, the spot made famous by the successful integration of the university more than 50 years ago in the face of segregationist Gov. George Wallace’s ‘Stand in the Schoolhouse Door’” (Writer, 2015). Students stopped traffic on University Boulevard, marching to Amelia-Gorgas Library. The protest ended with student speakers addressing issues including “The Machine”, racism, and sexual assault. This particular movement has continued to be recognized by campus through their fight for change. Petitions, videos, and collaborative efforts have continued to date. This group continues to use their presence, strategic location, public memory, and social protest tactics to foster change.

This thesis examines the impact that Black bodies and spaces have made on racial justice social protest movements at The University of Alabama. The role of students, from Autherine Lucy to contemporary movements demanding social and racial change leads me to ask the following research question: How has material rhetoric, including bodies and spaces, shaped racial justice social protest movements at The University of Alabama?

The coming chapters of this thesis work to answer this research question. Chapter two examines scholarly literature starting with a theoretical lens of material rhetoric and approaches to social movement rhetoric, body rhetoric, and collective memory. Chapter three examines Autherine Lucy's integration efforts and "The Final Stand". Next, chapter four focuses on the "We Are Done" movement. Finally, chapter five ends with conclusions to the study along with implications. Throughout these chapters I weave my personal experiences as a Black woman and student activist. These foreground the ways Black bodies are implicated and invested in these spaces and efforts.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL LENSES

When I stepped foot on the campus of The University of Alabama, I knew my experience would be memorable. Why? I wasn't sure yet, I just knew it would be. As a high school student who went to a predominately White school in the Birmingham-Metropolitan Area, I thought I knew what to expect: sly comments from my classmates when we talked about race, weird glances, and White students trying to get away with saying the word nigger. Half of my graduating class went to Alabama for college, so I thought to myself that this experience wouldn't be much different, but still memorable. A few weeks into acclimating myself on campus, I understood exactly why. When I heard about the noose from pissed off college students about Obama's reelection from Black students, saw the racist chalk on the ground about Obama, and got called a nigger by the White boys in their extra-large pickup trucks in the dark night, and the quiet but constant conversations about "The Machine" it hit me: my career would be memorable because I would be reminded of why my Black body did not belong. This was a college experience any Black person would never forget.¹

Material rhetoric is not limited to one meaning for scholars of communication. The term was originally introduced by rhetorical scholar Michael McGee in the 1980s, who believed rhetoric should be viewed as an object. He explained, "the whole of rhetoric is 'material' by measure of humans experiencing of it, not by virtue of our ability to continue touching it after it

¹ Passages in italics represent personal narrative from my own experiences at The University of Alabama.

is gone. Rhetoric is ‘object’ because of its pragmatic presence, our inability safely to ignore it at the moment of its impact” (as quoted in Biesecker & Lucaites, 2009, p. 23). He believed rhetoric should be analyzed as material, as it is “peculiar as an element of rhetoric because it survives and records the moment of experience” (as quoted in Biesecker & Lucaites, 2009, p. 23), thus introducing materiality in the field of Communication Studies.

Many rhetorical scholars later furthered this perspective, but the interpretation of material rhetoric varied. Scholars such as Dana Cloud take a Marxist perspective, interjecting that lived experiences dictate how the world is viewed. She explains “critical scholars are trying to navigate safe passage by way of a particular theoretical hypothesis: the materiality of discourse, or the idea that discourse itself is influential... (including the lived experience of work, pleasure, pain, and hunger)” (1994, p.141-142). Her interpretation allows disenfranchised groups to share their lived experiences, instead of through traditional means of discourse, where the powerful speak for the powerless. There are a number of ways to examine material rhetoric, from bodies, sites, objects, and even symbols, which allow for scholars to reveal unjust conditions (White-Farham, 2013). This framework allows me to examine the lived experiences of Black bodies at The University of Alabama, guiding my method and analysis of this thesis.

Material Approaches to Social Movement Rhetoric

In the decades following the turbulent social movements for Civil Rights, women’s rights, LGBT rights and others, the field of Communication Studies debated about viewing social movement rhetoric as a new form of rhetoric. The primary issue for many scholars has been the difference in traditional persuasive appeal and social movement studies. David Zarefsky has consistently questioned how social movement rhetoric is different from traditional forms of persuasion. He noted:

...what the rhetorical dimensions of these movements have in common and whether any features set them apart from other cases of persuasion. The profusion of studies makes the uniqueness issue salient. The issue, in short, is whether movements comprise a distinct rhetorical genre, either in the sense that they have a unique form or in the sense that they arise in a unique type of situation (Zarefsky, 1980, p. 137-138).

For Zarefsky, studying rhetoric produced by a social change effort gives insight to the historical era that produced the discourse.

On the contrary, other scholars have viewed social movement rhetoric as a new form of rhetoric that depends highly on the cause and actors of a movement, deviating from traditional means of persuasion. Foundational scholar on social movements, Leland Griffin, was one of many who attempted to bring the discipline as a focal point for scholars of communication.

Griffin explained:

historical movement has occurred when, at some time in the past: 1. men have become dissatisfied with some aspect of their environment; 2. they desire change---social, economic, political, religious, intellectual, or otherwise---and desiring change, they make efforts to alter their environment; 3. eventually, their efforts result in some degree of success or failure (1952, p. 10).

Social protest movements have experienced a shift in paradigm, moving issues from one-dimensional to multidimensional. Rhetorical scholar, Richard Gregg (1971) noted:

The rhetoric of protest would “logically” seem to be aimed at those in power or positions of authority who appear responsible for the conditions being protested. The usual view of rhetorical communication expects the entreaties, appeals, arguments, and exhortations of those asking for change to speak somehow to the basic reasoning and feeling capacities of those in authority. But contemporary public protest does not make this kind of appeal. Rather than raise a few specific issues which might be dealt with by programmatic changes or legislation, spokesmen for protest movements thrust forward a host of issues or demands. In many cases the demands go beyond the power of the authorities to act... (p.73).

This shift in paradigm has led to debates among scholars on the overall purpose

movements have and the quandaries they attempt to address. Gregg argues that leaders of protest movements have an “ego-functional”, purpose, seeking for self-affirmation. Gregg explained, the “primary appeal of the rhetoric of protest is to the protestors themselves, who feel the need for psychological refurbishing and affirmation” (1971, p.74). Many scholars as important agree upon affirmation because “nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (Taylor, 1994, p. 98). However, theorists such as Nancy Fraser disagree that affirmation or ego-functioning goals are the sole purposes of these movements. Instead, movements seek to solve inequality in areas beyond affirmation. Fraser highlights that movements operate on advocacy for redistribution, recognition, transformation, and affirmation, depending on the injustice faced by the people (1998). Fraser’s distinctions allow for a transformed focus on material rhetoric.

Fraser’s Four-Part Scheme of Materiality & Change: Method for Analysis

Redistribution and recognition are dependent on the nature of inequality addressed. For example, socioeconomic and political-economic injustice involves material redistribution because “economic injustice is political – [calling for an] economic restructuring of some sort. This might involve redistributing income, re-organizing the division of labor, subjecting investment to democratic decision making, or transforming other basic economic structure” (Fraser, 1998, p. 15). On the contrary, recognition calls for a societal, symbolic change instead of a small distribution of wealth. Additionally, affirmation and transformation account for intersectionality by attempting to combat the inefficiencies of redistribution and recognition. Initially, affirmation seeks to affirm and accept the differences of marginalized groups. Instead of ignoring or rejecting difference, affirmation highlights and recognizes difference. However, transformative remedies seek to attack material socioeconomic and political-economic injustices

through the entire system. Fraser explained, “Transformative remedies reduce social inequality without, however, creating stigmatized classes of vulnerable people perceived as beneficiaries of special largesse. They tend therefore to promote reciprocity and solidarity in the relations of recognition. Thus, an approach aimed at redressing injustices of distribution can help redress (some) injustices of recognition as well” (1998, p. 26). Mapping social change rhetoric onto Fraser’s theories allows us to recognize material impacts of rhetorical tactics, such as student activism for racial justice.

Body Rhetoric

Scholars needed analytical frames that moved beyond the traditional forms of rhetorical studies that focused on the speaker and their intended audiences. The “critical turn” in rhetoric allowed scholars to make this shift in their approach. Cloud noted, “a more radical shift is evident, away from structuralist and realist ways of thinking. On this view, discourse not only influences material reality, it is that reality. All relations, economic, political, or ideological, are symbolic in nature. This view tends toward relativism” (1994, p. 142). This progressive approach allowed scholars to focus on impact beyond the words of the speaker and their intended audiences, but also ignored groups, lived experiences, material rhetoric, and the overall impact these new forms of discourse create for rhetorical scholarship. By straying away from traditional means, scholars have now been granted the ability to examine material rhetoric, which would have been disregarded under a traditional lens.

Rhetoric has paid closer attention to the impact bodies have made when occupying certain spaces. In the past, scholars have focused rhetorical scholarship on texts, speakers, and traditional modes on scrutinizing rhetoric. This traditional approach has begun to take a shift, as “material, nonliterate practices and realities-most notably, the body, flesh, blood, and bones, and

how all the material trappings of the physical are fashioned by literate practices- should come under rhetorical scrutiny” (Selzer & Crowley, 1999, p.10). White-Farnham wrote, “...material rhetoric in an analytical sense offers interpretations of objects, bodies, and symbols to resist conventional attitudes and bring attention to marginalized populations and unjust conditions” (2013, p. 475). Bodies have a unique ability to create a rhetorical situation based on their presence. Bodies and the spaces they occupy have brought “body rhetoric” or “rhetoric of the body” to the forefront of research. Butterworth (2008) noted, “The body holds the potential to constitute public arguments and affect social attitudes. If we are to think of the body as a vehicle for rhetorical performance, then we must come to terms with the discursive constraints that constitute bodies in public life” (p. 261-262).

Traditionally, bodies have been labeled based on their roles in society. One typical example is the female body. Olsen (2002) explained, “Our culture seems to do its most rigorous policing around the boundaries of the sexed body to maintain a rigid distinction between male and female” (p. 183). Historically the female body has been categorized as feminine, and therefore unable to execute certain tasks or be granted certain privileges. Society has witnessed this through voter suppression, military enlistment policies, and rape culture. Rhetorical scholar Kevin Deluca focused his 1999 study “Unruly Arguments” how contemporary activist groups such as ACT UP and Queer Nation have been valued in rejecting traditional structures of protest, highlight the importance of bodies in spaces of rhetorical discourse. He explained that the body is used to introduce arguments into the public sphere (1999). However, this is not limited to the female body, as marginalized groups have also suffered from the powerful policing their bodies. One group, in particular, is the student body.

The Student “Body” as Social Movement Tactic

Students have been at the forefront of using their bodies for justice effort, rejecting traditional modes of social justice and activism. With much discontent for traditional protest movements, the status quo of the nation, and activism efforts, Black students highlighted the presence of student protesters during the Civil Rights Movement during their fight for racial equality. Rhoads (2016) noted, “black students in particular played a pivotal role in shaping campus activism” (p. 191). Black students were, “a new generation of activist, goaded by frustration with the lack of progress for black Americans in the rural south and the urban north and the perceived failure of established movement organizations and leaders to bring about real and lasting changes” (Stewart, 1997, p. 434). These tactics included boycotts, sit-ins, the birth of organizations like the Black Panther Parties, and during extreme cases, obstruction. For example, Ritchie wrote: “Richmond, 1960. There were the colored students in coats, white shirts, ties, and one of them was reading Goethe and one was taking notes from a biology text. And here on the sidewalk outside was a gang of white boys come to heckle, a ragtail rabble...grinning fit to kill...” (1970, p.23). These Black bodies disrupted White spaces, causing White bodies to physically retaliate.

During the mid-1960s, the actions of Black student Civil Rights Movement activists shaped future for Berkeley student activism (Ritchie, 1970). Perhaps one of the most common acts of student protest was the Free Speech Movement, credited to Mario Savio at the University of California at Berkeley. Landau (2014) described:

...there was a “vast throng of 3,000 students” that “engulfed [the] police car in which Jack Weinberg was being held” ...“Students either laid or sat down around the car. They refused to move. ... [Mario] Savio and many others climbed on top of the car and gave speeches...The next morning the area looked like a campsite, filled with sleeping bags, blanket... (p. 599).

Students at UC Berkeley were no longer just students; they were activists who sparked change on their campuses by using nontraditional measures of activism. Though UC Berkeley students receive credit for the Free Speech Movement, student-led protest movements have made a significant shift in the way social protest has been viewed in the past. Both student activist at UC Berkeley and Black students during the Civil Rights movement used the power of their bodies in particular spaces. Regardless if their bodies were welcomed, they contradicted the spaces they occupied, making bold political statements through their presence, contributing to a shift in focusing on the power of the body.

Black students have experienced even more significant focus on bodies in their activism efforts. When Black bodies are placed in repudiating locations, a large message is formed that sends a political message. McKerrow explained, the body can be used as a mechanism “to enact political change” (Angus & Langsdorf, 1993, p. 54), but also as a tool to disrupt power dynamics. Though Black bodies have not traditionally been given the platform to make political statements, there has been a substantial shift over the past decades. In the past, using the body as an act of defiance was a death sentence for slaves, typically resulting in beatings and lynchings. During the shift in political and social atmosphere in the early 1900s, Blacks protested, though the fear of backlash had not disappeared. The Civil Rights Movement was perhaps one of the most distinct movements in history when the Black body became a political statement. Blacks used their presence during marches, sit-ins, and classrooms, to make political statements that advocated for social change. They even removed their bodies from some locations during boycotts to make political messages. Perhaps the most common example of the Black body as political was at sit-ins. Ritchie (1970) explained:

Greensboro, 1960. Surrounded by a large crowd of white high school toughs dressed in black leather jackets and carrying Confederate flags, a

group of integrated students sat-in at the Kress lunch counter. The students were very well dressed, many in suits and ties and several carried Bibles. While the young whites taunted, snarled and jeered, the students remained silent, poised, determined (p. 22).

Black students used their bodies to disrupt the societal norm of segregation. Protestors were met with strong backlash, as Whites rejected their presence and their political statements. White bodies have also been used as countermovements to reject Blacks through means of intimidation, violence, and segregation. By creating an exclusive space that resists Black bodies and responding with mass mobs, White bodies create a strong backlash.

Black bodies have been subject to material rhetorics throughout US history, almost exclusively as an extension of oppressive social and political systems. Whites controlled Black bodies through slavery, educational advancement, Jim Crow, rape, and systemic inequality. When bodies stop performing how society has historically imposed, oppressors see it as resistance, making bodies a symbolic and literal form of protest and persuasion.

Reading Bodies as Material Rhetoric: Method for Analysis

Although the impact body rhetoric makes can be seen when negative results arise once certain spaces are occupied, scholars explain that rhetoric of the body makes the most profound statement when it challenges social norms. Butterworth noted that this occurs through rhetorical presence, embodied performance, and challenging spatial boundaries (2008). Howard University students in the 1930s-1940s executed these challenges. These students who were members of the Howard University Chapter of the NAACP protested a White only dining area by using their presence as a form of rebellion. Poch (2015) elaborated:

They were promptly denied service but, rather than leave; they sat at tables with empty cafeteria trays. Fully prepared, the students took out academic work they had packed and proceeded to study.... Police were summoned, but given the peaceful nature of the protest and the fact that no laws were broken, they left the students alone. After two days of protest by Howard students and significant

loss of profit, the cafeteria's owner commenced service to black patrons. The removal of Jim Crow restrictions from a private place of business through direct action was a remarkable accomplishment for the student leaders and the Howard University NAACP chapter (p. 228).

Rhetorical presence occurs after an audience has focused on a specific argument or perspective, which sets the stage for the significant rhetorical action to happen. The restaurant created a dynamic that was anti-Black, and therefore anti-Black bodies. Any Black body in a racially segregated space, regardless if it were a Black body drinking from a White water fountain, a Black body sitting at the front of a bus, or even a Black body holding hands with a White body, would all cause backlash due to societal structure. In this case, Black bodies were prohibited from White establishments, setting the stage for the significant rhetorical action to occur.

Second, embodied performance occurs when a physical body acts as the rhetorical tool highlighting and challenging problematic norms. Howard University students carefully picked a location where their presence would challenge racial structures. By placing Black bodies at a White only section of an establishment automatically challenged the culture of racial division. Howard students engage in embodied performance because their bodies were the rhetorical tools being used to problematize the norms of the racial culture. In essence, they placed their bodies in the presence of White rejecters. It was not their clothing, political views, or socioeconomic status that was problematic for storeowners, but the mere presence of Black bodies in a White establishment.

Finally, challenging spatial boundaries occurs when the performer takes immediate reaction. In this case, both the students and restaurant owners took immediate reaction. The students continued to enter the restaurant in groups, making their presence and intent clear. They did not stop until the owner commenced service to the students. The store owner also challenged

the social boundaries that students created by calling the police to have the students removed. Though unsuccessful, owners rejected the presence of the Black body until he had no other choice. Bodies have made significant contributions to the way scholars view protest movements and social protest rhetoric collectively. However, the places in which these bodies occupy creates a new layer to material rhetoric. The bodies and spaces all contribute to public memory.

Memory Studies and Collective Memory

Classical rhetorical scholars viewed memory as one of the rhetorical canons that elevated speaker's ability to persuade an audience. Rhetorical scholar Kendall Phillips wrote, “speakers were trained in the arts of memorizing speeches and other information to make their oratory more effective. More broadly, the artifacts that promote a shared sense of the past have an obvious persuasive capacity and, in this way, can be seen as rhetorical” (2010, p. 209). Though the act of committing texts to memory is beneficial for strong persuasive appeal, the idea of “public memory” has made its way to communication scholarship. “Memory exists in the world rather than in a person's head, and so is embodied in different cultural forms” (Zelizer, 1995, p. 232). Essentially, memory is not only the thoughts of individuals or the ways in which they persuade audiences; memory is an expressive form of rhetoric. Memory is a symbolic action that allows individuals to exercise influence (Schulz & Reyes, 2008). Carole Blair noted, “It is problematic to treat rhetoric as if it were exclusively or essentially symbolic or meaningful... We must ask not just what a text means, but more generally what it does” (as quoted in Selzer & Crowley, 1999, p. 19, 23).

Memory is not limited to one form of discourse, as scholars have continued to focus on a number of memory types including: public memory, collective memory, and critical memory. Collective memory is understood to be the ways in which groups remember a particular site,

event, or discourse as a whole. This is different from personal memory, which refers to how the individual remembers an event:

Remembering becomes implicated in a range of other activities having as much to do with identity formation, power and authority, cultural norms, and social interaction... Its full understanding thus requires an appropriation of memory as social, cultural, and political action at its broadest level (Zelizer, 1995, p. 214).

Collective Memory: Method for Analysis

Collective memory has played a major role in how individuals address and remember societal concerns of the past and the present. Collective memory is visible in society's ways of recalling and honoring historical events, speeches, monuments, and sites. Sites of memory hold a different importance to collective memory, as they “comprise sites of struggle and contestation about contemporary politics and national identity” (Hoerl, 2012, p. 180). As it relates to social protest movements, these sites help the people revisit the past and acknowledge the historical significance of those movements, coupled with the desire for present or future change. Activists use these sites as fragments to further their message, voicing the importance of recognition and societal improvement. McGee wrote, “the speech is only a featured part of an arrangement that includes all facts, events, texts and stylized expressions deemed useful in explaining its influence and exposing its meaning” (as quoted in Lucaites, Condit, & Caudill, 1999, p. 70). The site adds a new layer to social protest movements because they include historical element audiences can understand, making the message more powerful. By understanding the historical relevance these sites hold and adding this to the present socio-political atmosphere, memory sites create a clearer understanding for individuals.

In addition to using collective memory sites to advance a message, movement leaders have also pushed for certain sites to be included in collective memory to honor and recognize the

past. Hegemonic powers have the ability to deem sites significant, perpetuating a power structure that ignores the histories of marginalized communities, thus continuing to suppress the voices of minorities. Hoerl (2012) argues that selective memory practices have devastating consequences because they perpetuate political hegemony, reinforcing inequality (p. 180). Since collective memory shapes how society views past events, it can affirm or ignore the past, shape the future, influence the way society views or treats groups of people, and dictate to the changes leaders are willing to make. Hoerl gives the example of civil rights sites. Because many sites either do not exist that should rightfully be observed, or minimize the importance of the locations, these collective memory locations (or the lack thereof), “simplify, distort, and ignore important racial justice struggles in US history” (Hoerl, 2012, p. 181). By using collective memory sites as material rhetoric, activists use the past to advocate for political and social change, while emphasizing the importance of acknowledgment.

Methodological Approaches

In addition to the lenses provided by Fraser’s system of transformation and affirmation, Butterworth’s three elements of body rhetoric, and the tools of collective memory analysis, for further methodological guidance I rely on McKerrow’s “critical praxis”. McKerrow’s “critique of domination” allows me to assess the dominating and oppressive powers of The University of Alabama, as well as activists’ use of Black bodies to achieve racial justice. His critique of domination sees power (or those with power) as oppressive (McKerrow, 1989). McKerrow (1989) outlines three criteria for this method: defining the object of the study, defining what one should look for when executing the critique, and defining the roles that individuals play in the critical stand.

First, McKerrow interjects that the critic is not confined to critiquing the speaker and the speech, “but is rather seeking to ‘invent’ the object of critique for of the varying ways in which symbols influence people” (1989, p. 257). Therefore, the critic has the ability to understand “how the discourse operates within a broader context is also an option for critic” (McKerrow, 1989, p. 257). This thesis examines events surrounding each outlined protest movement and the influences Black bodies have made as a form of protest. Next, I focus on material rhetoric and collective memory when executing McKerrow’s critique. Body rhetoric is examined through Butterworth’s model of rhetorical presence, embodied performance, and challenging boundaries. Fraser’s framework for social movements examines affirmation, transformation, redistribution, and recognition. Last, Hoerl’s collective memory examination through existing and non-existing sites at The University of Alabama. Finally, my analysis examines the roles of Autherine Lucy, Black sorority recruits, “The Final Stand” activists, and WAD activists throughout the racial justice social protest movements at the University.

McKerrow (1989) highlights eight rules of critical rhetoric: (1) It is a practice, not a method, (2) The discourse of power is material (3) Rhetoric is doxastic rather than epistemological (4) Naming is the central act in nominalist rhetoric (5) Influence is not causality (6) Absence is as important as presence (7) Fragments are potentially polysemic (8) Criticism is a performance (p. 258-259). These rules allow me to focus on each movement through a framework furthering material rhetoric and how both the powerful and the powerless function within that realm. Rules one, two, three, six, and eight are most useful for my analysis. Rules one, two, and three highlight that critical rhetoric is based in the lived experiences of the people. These experiences shape rhetoric, not formulation. Rule six explains the importance of absence, as it highlights broader societal structures and power dynamics and how exclusion, or

absence, causes major backlash. It also allows for protest and rebellion. Rule eight explains how performance is a part of critique. McKerrow's critical praxis puts into practice the impact of Black bodies in rejecting spaces. Black bodies criticize segregation and racism at the University by performativity protesting and rejecting societal boundaries. I particularly use this observation when interjecting my own examples of performance through personal narrative experiences.

CHAPTER 3

BODY RHETORIC, AUTHERINE LUCY AND “THE FINAL STAND”

This chapter focuses on the use of Black student bodies as material and political activism at The University of Alabama. I apply Michael Butterworth’s three tenets of body rhetoric to two events: Autherine Lucy’s integration efforts and “The Final Stand” student activism efforts at The University of Alabama. To do so, I examined eight days of newspaper articles from the *Tuscaloosa News* between the dates of January 31, 1956, a few days before her first day of school, and then February 7, 1956, the day after her last day on campus. This specific date range examines Lucy’s time on campus.

“The Final Stand” evaluation focuses on the discrimination and segregation during the 2013 Panhellenic rush event, using recognition as a lens of analysis. To do so, I collected news articles from newspaper *The Crimson White* between the dates of September 11, 2013, the initial day sorority integration issues came to surface in University press and September 19, 2013, the day following the campus integration demonstration, “The Final Stand”. Additionally, I used online released interviews with Black sorority recruits who were initially rejected from Panhellenic sororities during the 2013 rush.

Autherine Lucy’s Integration Efforts

As a high school student attending to a predominately White school in the Birmingham-Metropolitan Area, I thought I knew what to expect at The University of Alabama. A few weeks into acclimating myself on campus, I understood that my experience would be worse. My roommates asked me if I heard about the noose on the Quad from Obama’s reelection, saw the

racist chalk on the ground about Obama, and heard plenty of conversations about “The Machine”.

As I walked alone in the dark night, going back to my dorm room in Ridgecrest East, I didn't expect to hear the word “nigger” being screamed at me from White male students in a large pickup truck. That had never happened to be so blatantly. I had experienced subtle racism on many occasions, but to hear the words being shouted at me, I didn't know how to respond. I thought to myself “should I just keep walking to my room or turn around and shout back?” Though giving those men a piece of my mind felt like the right thing to do, it definitely wouldn't have been the smart thing to do. So I walked a little faster. I knew I was almost home, and retaliating with my words could have cost me more than a temporary uncomfortable situation. It could have been a deadly one. These experiences reminded of why my Black body did not belong. This was a college experience any Black person would never forget.

Butterworth explained rhetorical presence as an effect, focusing the audience on specific arguments and perspectives, centering the attention on a significant action that in turn causes backlash. Autherine Lucy's integration was indeed a necessary rhetorical action that caused an extreme backlash by her White counterparts, even before she made her way on campus. Her initial first day of school was on February 3, 1956, but the eruption of dissent occurred days prior. On January 31, 1956, *Tuscaloosa News* reported, “One of the Negro women seeking admission to the University today received by registered mail a letter informing her she ‘will be accorded the right to enroll and to pursue courses’ at the school” (“No Word Yet,” 1956, p.1). This article became a major announcement that Lucy gained admittance to The University of Alabama. But before Lucy could physically make her presence known, anti-integrationist made their sentiments clear. They did not want her to attend.

As Lucy's first day of class began to approach quickly, the rejection of her presence started to reveal itself. Students began displaying their disapproval to Lucy becoming a student at The University of Alabama through scare tactics and entry refusal. The day before Lucy was set to enroll, anti-integrationist lit crosses with blazing fire. "University officials maintained the tight-lipped 'no comment' line they have followed throughout the legal battle of two Negro women to gain admittance to the school" ("Four Crosses Are Burned", 1956, p.1). The rejection of Lucy and Black integration through cross burnings became a fear tactic, commonly used by White supremacy organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan. Whites made it clear that it was not Lucy that was the problem, but her Black body in an exclusively White space. Anti-integrationist rebelled against desegregation and any person or entity that supported or enabled it.

On the same day, Lucy battled the University's blatant refusal to allow her inhabitation of the residence halls. The traditionally White space of the female dormitory became compromised when Lucy was accepted, creating a new battle for her lodging and safety. *Tuscaloosa News* reporter Bill Gibb noted that Lucy was determined to fight for her space, although the Board of Trustees directed the University to deny her of the space (1956, February 1, p.1). White students gave their opinion, one stating "I don't like it and there plenty more of us who don't" (Gibb, 1956, February 1, p.1). Before Lucy could attend her first class, campus tension formed swiftly. Lucy's integration served as a rhetorical gesture, unleashing backlash from University students and the community.

In addition to Lucy's rhetorical presence, her body was used to problematize norm, as explained through Butterworth's framework. Once Lucy's physical presence was asserted on the campus of The University of Alabama, her body began completely problematizing norms because it was unheard of for Black women to attend a four-year predominately White

university, especially The University of Alabama. It rhetorically caused backlash against the University's social structure of segregation and racism, all supported by the cultural norms of the Jim Crow Era. The rhetoric used by the *Tuscaloosa News* made this undoubtable, explaining, "Autherine Lucy, Negro student whose presence at the University of Alabama has sparked riots over the past four days, slipped out of Graves Hall under Highway Patrol protection...while an angry mob milled around the building" (Gibb & Smith, 1956, p.1). White students were willing to attack Lucy to keep her Black body away from campus.

The pictures reinforced a chilling reality for Black students attempting to gain admission to the University because White protesters rioted to prevent desegregation. On February 7, 1956, their last official day of protests, students rallied in large numbers as a symbol of unity against Lucy and their preference for maintaining the status quo of racism. One of the most visible forms was the flying of the Confederate Flag. From a literal standpoint, the flag is known to represent pride for those living in the South, but from a symbolic point of view, it reminds audiences of White racism and anti-blackness. Coupling these meanings with the atmosphere of the 1950s during Lucy's integration, this is an explicit representation of White backlash and revolt to Lucy's Black body integrating a White campus. This symbol epitomizes Butterworth's tenet of embodied performance, making the body the focal point of argument and scrutiny. It was not Lucy as an individual who caused the riots, but her Black body. It could have been any Black body trying to integrate the University; Whites would have responded in the same manner.

Butterworth's framework asserts that the actors whose mobility is limited by social norms must challenge boundaries. Ultimately, the performer must challenge societal structures through action or reaction. Despite the backlash, Lucy continued challenge spatial boundaries until the University became too dangerous. She responded to the racial structures that kept Blacks out of

The University of Alabama with both immediate and gradual reaction, even after she was forced to leave the University. For example, when the University denied Lucy housing, her attorneys and she both opposed these boundaries that denied Black bodies dormitory stay. Although these efforts ultimately failed, they still challenged the University and Board of Trustees in a legal manner. Lucy “stayed almost an hour in the office of Dean Healy. When they left, Miss Lucy told reporters she was ‘determined not only to enroll in the University but to live on its campus’” (Gibb, 1956, February 1, p.1). This statement challenged the superiority of Whiteness, which was punishable by death to Whites. Just six months before, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Black boy was murdered for allegedly whistling at a White woman. This direct statement could have gotten Lucy killed, but she challenged societal norms by responding to White critics and continued to work at integration efforts. Lucy’s responses did not stop with controversial media engagement. Her legal team worked to challenge the University's policy through the courts. Lawyers took action by talking with Lucy’s federal judge, seeking to receive a court order to grant her access to room and board (Gibb, 1956, February 2, p.1). Although these attempts were unsuccessful, Lucy still responded to the broken system.

These immediate actions contributed to Lucy challenging spatial boundaries challenging societal norms did not end when she was expelled. In 1988, her presence was reintroduced when The University of Alabama lifted her expulsion, allowing Lucy to receive her master’s degree in education. At this moment, Lucy’s story became a part of University history. She earned an endowed scholarship in her name and received recognition at Foster Auditorium and at the Malone-Hood Plaza. The University tried its best to erase Lucy’s existence during her time on campus through inciting violence and expulsion. These attempts failed, as she successfully challenged the boundaries denying her the right to an education.

“The Final Stand”

Khortlan told me her story one evening over the phone about The Final Stand that sounded something like this: I woke up feeling jittery and nervous about my speech. I was more nervous about getting pepper sprayed or tear gassed by the police. But Steven (my boyfriend) promised to stay at arm’s length if things got too dangerous. My butterflies also started to fly in unison when I said prayers to God the night before and the day of. We all arrived in front of Gorgas and I saw familiar and unfamiliar faces. It was energizing to see a lot White people, yet surprising too. I was disappointed that the support system I called didn’t show up. The humidity hit my face and the bull horns hit my ears. I started walking to Rose Administration with the sea of bodies, and running my speech through my head. I had no idea the administration would be there. Judy Bonner, Mark Nelson, and a few others peeking through their curtains. As I looked out the crowd, I raised my voice so everyone would hear my message...I didn’t really care if they agreed. Bonner’s arms latched on to me for her photo opt.

The power of body rhetoric is clear through the integration efforts of Autherine Lucy, as she highlighted racial structures and fought against them simply by occupying White spaces. However, body rhetoric has proven itself powerful to conjure support from outside groups because it allows others to see injustice. This is best illuminated through “The Final Stand” at The University of Alabama.

“The Final Stand” refers to events in the fall of 2013 that focused on segregation and the Panhellenic Greek Council. The University of Alabama’s Panhellenic Greek Council is comprised of eighteen White dominated sororities who have existed on campus since the early 1900s. These sororities have established group recognition through their membership numbers and alumni support system. Though their national chapters proclaim a nondiscriminatory

environment, The University of Alabama is one of the most discriminatory campuses for undergraduate sorority hopefuls. As reported by the University's student paper, Tuscaloosa native Carla Ferguson became the first black woman to pledge a traditionally white Panhellenic sorority through formal recruitment when, in 2003, she accepted a bid to Gamma Phi Beta. She remains the only black woman to have pledged through the formal recruitment process (Crain & Ford, 2013, p.9). The legacy of a traditionally White exclusive space did not prevent hopeful Black interests to begin using their presence to challenge University norms. This section will discuss body rhetoric during the 2013 sorority recruitment and its shift to recognition efforts.

Rush and Recruitment

Initially, rhetorical presence occurred the moment Black sorority recruits' attempted to join White sororities, creating extreme backlash amongst White sorority undergraduate and alumni members. Their bodies did not belong in the traditionally White space. Journalists covering the events noted the impact of Black bodies in Panhellenic houses:

Like other black women before them, these two students tried to break what remains an almost impenetrable color barrier. Fifty years after Vivian Malone and James Hood became the first black students to desegregate The University of Alabama, there remains one last bastion of segregation on campus: The UA Greek system is still almost completely divided along racial lines (Crain & Ford, 2013, p.3).

Though Panhellenic Greek organizations were able to mask their racist practices in the past, this event revealed the color barriers. The pending reality of adding these women into a traditionally White space caused backlash, prompting alumni and undergraduate members to voice their sentiments and dictate to protocol. For example, a Chi Omega's rush advisor Emily Jamison reportedly influenced a Black recruit to be dropped during the rush process (Crain & Ford, 2013, p.9). The presence of Black recruits in a segregated institution was a significant event leading to backlash.

Although many alumni members rejected the thought of integration, these sentiments did not apply to all undergraduate members. A few White undergraduate sorority members openly rejected the segregation within their organizations and advocated for integration. Though noble, these members also possessed problematic viewpoints, tokenizing Black women by advocating for those who looked the best on paper with high scholastics and community engagement, even though many of their White recruits who received admittance did not have the same credentials. “By any measure, this candidate was what most universities would consider a prime recruit for any organization, sorority or otherwise. She had a 4.3 GPA in high school, was salutatorian of her graduating class and comes from a family with deep roots in local and state public service and a direct link to The University of Alabama” (Crain & Ford, 2013, p.3). Though still ultimately rejected, these women were forced to work twice as hard before the conversation of integration could even be provoked in White sorority houses.

Next, Black sorority recruits embrace embodied performance by asserting their stories in spaces where they traditionally did not belong and understanding that their rejection boiled down to their race. Chrystall Stallworth a recruit who had a 4.3 high school GPA and many accolades, revealed to the media:

‘When I got on campus, I started noticing when I would see all the girls in sororities, there were no minorities, or if there were, maybe a few Asian women,’ ... ‘I probably wouldn't have even noticed if I didn't have a best friend who is in a sorority at the University of Oklahoma. Her sorority is so diverse. ... That was the point I realized, *Whoa, people still do see race here*” (Webley, 2014). She spoke openly about her experiences and attitude before and after the recruitment process. Stallworth continued to *Marie Claire* magazine, “‘I tried to make myself the all-around college candidate’ ... ‘Trying to meet these people and be like, 'This is who I am’ (Webley, 2014).

Her honest assertion to the media completely problematized the norm of silence by exposing racism within the Panhellenic system.

Stallworth was not the only qualified candidate. Kennedy Cobb, a Black woman who was a Tuscaloosa, Alabama native, was perhaps one of the most qualified recruits to join, even amongst her White counterparts. Cobb not only held a 4.3 GPA, but had clout from her family's prestigious background. Webley (2014) wrote, "her step-grandfather, John England Jr., is on the university's board of trustees. (For what it's worth, Cobb also happens to be gorgeous.) If a black woman ever stood a chance at joining a sorority at Alabama, it was her". These women displayed both high scholastic standards, "beauty", wealth, and power, but they were still rejected, making it clear that these candidates were turned down solely because of their race.

However, Stallworth's interview with the public and the courage of other Black women to engage in the recruitment process, served as an embodied performance, introducing themselves in the rhetorical space White alumni and undergraduate members traditionally denied Blacks.

Finally, Black sorority recruits challenged spatial boundaries through national press and community activism. The conversation started off as an internal issue at The University of Alabama, but the stories of Black rejection, sorority retaliation, and campus protest spread through the media like wildfire, forcing the University and the Board of Trustees to respond to allegations of discrimination. Though *AL.com* was the first major news source to receive and follow up on the story, the news spread to outlets such as *USA Today*, *Washington Times*, *New York Times*, *Buzzfeed*, and *CNN* (Brown, 2013, p.1). These Black women's boldness in integration and outspokenness did not stop with national news coverage, but sparked dialogue at The University of Alabama, ultimately leading the Alabama Panhellenic Association to permit sororities to "reopen the bidding process" (Winslett & Brown, 2013, p.1).

“The Final Stand” March

The experiences of these Black women ultimately created a much larger movement at The University of Alabama that included Panhellenic members, faculty and staff, and non-Greek students who wanted visible change. The march began at Amelia-Gorgas library. Students and faculty stood with signs saying “The Final Stand In The Schoolhouse Door”. The march went from Gorgas to Rose Administration. Though the march was originally intended to challenge an administration that failed to respond to the institutional segregation perpetuating in Panhellenic sororities, it was suddenly coopted by administration. The position of protesters shifted from facing Rose Administration, to the building being at the backs of protesters.

Though the success of these Black women and student supporters was groundbreaking, the issue of segregation in the Greek system was nothing new to the University. Campus administration who knew of Panhellenic’s lack of diversity created a strong juxtaposition of a by standing with Black and White students on the day of the march. President Judy Bonner made a bold statement by standing in solidarity and interacting with the hundreds of protesters at Rose Administration, appearing to be an excellent media diffuser: “Following her appearance on the front steps of Rose, Bonner addressed the media. Bonner said the administration has been investigating allegations that alumnae blocked the integration of sororities” (Winslett & Brown, 2013, p.1). This action completely shifted the tone of the protest by ignoring the University’s responsibility for perpetuating this inequality. Ironically, the University had an up-close and personal opportunity to be proactive about the injustice occurring on campus, as President Judy Bonner had been a two-time graduate of the University and Panhellenic member. Marina Roberts, former Mallet Assembly president and march participant explained, “the original purpose of the march was to surround a building with a human chain, but the plan changed.

‘We’re not satisfied with the PR statements that continue to be made in the face of these issues,’” (Watkins, 2013). The University’s ego-functional response coopted the march by appearing to work with students, although they failed to respond to the injustice before the march was organized. Administrators stood as allies for Black bodies they ignored in the past when the cry for equality came from an overwhelming amount of White voices.

Highlighting Injustice

The Black women instrumental in integrating the University Greek system did more than use their bodies to highlight and refute injustice. Their experiences evoked “The Final Stand” and pushed for racial justice. These Black women encouraged University administrators to grant recognition for Black women so they can be seen as equals, worthy of a fair chance. Fraser wrote, “Recognition claims often take the form of calling attention to, if not performatively creating, the putative specificity of some group and then of affirming its value. Thus, they tend to promote group differentiation” (1998, p. 16). Black women and “The Final Stand” movement holistically affirmed the value of diversity and protest racial injustice in the Greek system.

Although administrators like President Bonner joined protesters in solidarity, this issue had been pressing since 2003. Affirming the value of the Black body in the University’s Greek system was not a priority; however, these Black sorority hopefuls brought the issue of segregation back to the University’s focus, finally breaking discrimination’s silence. Black sophomore columnist Erynn Williams (2013) wrote in *The Crimson White*:

Every year, there’s a courageous black girl or two who attempts to “break the barrier” and with one unsuccessful attempt after another. The same response is generated... Well, let me tell you why this year things are a little different: People are talking. And, might I say, it is about damn time (p.6).

The path to force change began with Black women attempting to join Panhellenic sororities, but the fight for University recognition could not stop there. It required a larger, vocal group of change seekers to conjure support and outrage for a system that has been in place for decades. In order to challenge that system, the engagement of students, faculty, staff, and community members were required.

Once racism was exposed, the University was forced to recognize the intrinsic value of diversity and remove racial barriers through integration. Though it had been nearly a decade since a Black woman was accepted in a Panhellenic sorority, this marked the first time administrators actively participated in making change. Student organizer Ross Green expressed gratitude explaining, “We’ve been really pleased that the administration understands how important this issue is and they are willing to work with us” (Winslett & Brown, 2013, p.1). Stallworth and Cobb asserted their stories across multiple outlets, challenge the societal norm of silent, and integrate Panhellenic sororities at the University.

CHAPTER 4

“WE ARE DONE” AND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

Every other weekend I traveled with my teammates on the Alabama Forensics Council, and every weekend I had the opportunity to speak on behalf of groups who are silenced by our society. But the last parts of my junior year made me understand that speech wasn't just about winning trophies. I had already won awards at national tournaments and I realized that winning at a tournament didn't change the way I was treated on campus. The summer before my senior year, I started looking for topics that could help me as a competitor and help me as a Black woman at a White university. I wanted to speak and change the lives of those around me on campus.

As a movement of Black student resistance, “We Are Done” (WAD) represents a more complex approach to social change by incorporating multiple layers of activism; unique to the “The Final Stand” and other racial justice movements on campus. WAD expanded their scope of activism, using multiple layers when demanding change. This included protests, videos, meetings, and even social media to advocate for change. This chapter analyzes four particular aspects of the WAD movement: the WAD demands, the initial protest, the grand opening of the Intercultural Diversity Center, and the video *Welcome to the Capstone*. I first analyze Fraser's framework of redistribution, recognition, transformation, and affirmation for seven of the eleven demands. Next, I examine the protest through Butterworth's framework centered on bodies and spaces. Then I evaluate the Intercultural Diversity Center's opening, continuing Fraser's framework. Finally, I assess collective memory through the video, *Welcome to the Capstone*.

The Demands

Students didn't exactly welcome the demands with opened arms. Conversations on social media platforms like Yik Yak were every bit of disgusting. They read: "President Bell: Ok I'll meet your demand #9, here's your safe space in the Ferg [picture of KFC]". Or "Y'all aren't Dr. Kings people anyone, y'all are a new kind of stupid". Or, "When black people who dress like thugs cry racism lmao. We treat thug/trashy dressing white people the same way. Like literally no different. Dressing nice = no racism from people on this campus". These comments were not only frustrating and discouraging, but they were flat out wrong. Our demands were not only about the treatment of Black students but for all marginalized groups. I thought to myself, "I wear Nike shorts and a t-shirt to class like most of the White girls, and I've still been called a nigger."

During the fall of 2015, WAD released eleven demands aiming to promote a more diverse, inclusive campus.² Each demand focused on addressing a form of inequality faced by

² [First]...the University create a division of diversity and equity with the addition of a vice president or vice provost of diversity. [Second]...the University remove the names of white supremacists, Klansman, Confederate generals and Eugenacists from classroom buildings or create markers to show the history of racism the buildings' namesakes are associated with. [Third]...the University increase its funding for student organizations and officers that do intersectional work. [Fourth]...the University takes steps to reinstate and provide sufficient funds for the Black Alumni Network. [Fifth]...the University creates an endowed budget for the Black Faculty and Staff Association to fund programming and initiatives with students. [Sixth] ...the University creates an effective way to report hate crimes and sexual assault on campus. [Seventh]...the University requires all students to take a freshman diversity course to teach them about race, gender and sexuality. [Eight] the University updates the diversity plan from 2008 and has students from diverse backgrounds to approve or create said plan. [Ninth]...the University provides a permanent safe space for students of color in the Ferguson Student Center. It. [Tenth]...the University increases the number of black faculty and staff by the 2017-18 school year. [Eleventh]...The University of Alabama Administration and Board of Trustees acknowledge the existence of The Machine and actively take steps to bring it above ground (Elkin, 2015).

students of color, the safety of the student body, and access to resources. This section evaluates seven of the eleven demands that particularly highlight Fraser's framework in action. In the first half of this section, I examine four WAD demands that engage Fraser's politics of representation: the first demand advocated for a division of diversity and equity, the second demanded the removal of names of white supremacists and Klansman from school buildings or erecting historical markers to describe their namesakes. The ninth demand advocated for a permanent space for students of color in the Ferguson Student Center, while the tenth demand surrounded the increase in numbers for Black faculty and staff members at the University.

Revisiting Fraser's four-part schema of social change approaches, she works from a premise that activist groups and change makers target inequality depending on its nature. She advocates for redistribution, recognition, affirmation, or transformation, depending on the situation, though they may be targeted simultaneously. Fraser (1998) explained:

In the first cell...is the project of the liberal welfare groups, it tends to support group differentiation; it can also generate backlash misrecognition. In the second cell...is the project of socialism; aimed at deep restructuring of the relations of production, it tends to blur group differentiation; it can also help redress some forms of misrecognition. In the third cell... is the project of mainstream multiculturalism; focused on surface reallocation of respect among existing groups, it tends to support group differentiation. In the fourth cell...is the project of deconstruction; aimed at deep restructuring of the relations of recognition, it tends to destabilize group differentiations (p. 27).

Consistent with this scheme, the first WAD demand addresses the issue of recognition for Black students and other students of color on campus, legitimizing their experiences and creating an outlet to appreciate diverse backgrounds. The senior administrative team at The University of Alabama is comprised of one of the least diverse areas of campus. Out of eight senior level positions, seven are White (President Dr. Stuart R. Bell, Provost Dr. Kevin Whitaker, VP Finance Dr. Lynda Gilbert, VP Research Dr. Carl Pinkert, VP Communications Linda Bonnin,

VP Student Life Dr. David Grady, and VP Development Bob Pierce). The only person of color is VP of Community Affairs Dr. Samory Pruitt. The team also completely lacks any women of color. This administrative structure of the University fails to include a division of diversity and inclusion, something abnormal to many colleges and universities. The University of Alabama is also the only school in the Southeastern Conference (comprised of The University of Alabama, University of Arkansas, Auburn University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, University of Missouri, Texas A&M, Vanderbilt, and University of South Carolina) and in the Alabama systems (including University of Alabama at Birmingham and University of Alabama at Huntsville) that lacks an administrative level division of diversity and inclusion. WAD argued that by creating a division of inclusion and a position of senior administrative leadership, this would ultimately lead to diverse recruitment practices, alumni relations, and other aspects of educational advancements. In this way, a recognition change, such as adding diversity and inclusion into the University's administrative structure, can produce material changes, or what Fraser would deem redistributive change.

The second WAD demand was another attempt to recognize the experiences and basic needs of students of color on campus. WAD requested that the University “remove the names of white supremacists, Klansman, Confederate generals and Eugenicists from classroom buildings or create markers to show the history of racism the building's' namesakes are associated with” (Elkin, 2015). The student leaders argued that whenever a Black student walked into a building on campus, the building’s namesakes glorified White supremacy, while simultaneously ignoring Black history on campus. For example, John Tyler Morgan, a KKK Grand Dragon Klansman, houses the English Department at The University of Alabama, where hundreds of Black students

are forced to walk down his halls to attend class. As they enter their classrooms, his legacy follows. His sentiments towards Black students were clear, as he explained, “The inferiority of the negro race, as compared with the white race, is so essentially true, and so obvious, that to assume it in argument, cannot be justly attributed to prejudice” (as quoted by Rochon, 2000, p.62). Organizer Amanda Bennett stated, “it makes it psychologically and emotionally difficult for at least more than one student to have to deal with that every single day as they walk to classes while also facing direct actions of racism and microaggression from other students...” (Smith, 2016). This demand asked for recognition, encouraging the University to understand the complex experiences of Black bodies being forced to entrench their presences in the buildings whose namesakes glorified people who stripped the freedom of their ancestors and stripped the breath out of their lungs. In addition, however, changing building names or adding signs requires significant capital investment – a way that symbolic sites of change can involve material redistribution, at least initially. In this way, WAD continued to be a more complex movement for change at the University.

WAD was unique in their approach, in comparison to “The Final Stand” and Autherine Lucy’s integration efforts, as their third, fourth, and fifth demands all addressed the need of redistribution for marginalized organizations, faculty members, and the Black Alumni Network. The third demand called for an increase in funding for agencies that do intersectional work, while the fourth demanded funds for the Black Alumni Network. Finally, the fifth demanded an endowed budget for the Black Faculty and Staff Association to provide programing and initiatives for Black students. Demand ten called for the increase in the number of Black faculty and staff members by the 2017-2018 school year. WAD argued that the University’s failure to bridge these gaps would perpetuate a twofold issue: deprivation of students and faculty members

of color receiving proper funding and representation, and the perpetuation of systemic racism. These issues clearly presented themselves as pressing in the 2012-2014 Minority Participation Report, collective by the University of Alabama Systems. For example, The University of Alabama's full-time faculty for fall 2012 comprised of only 6.3% Blacks, with 82.2% Whites (Bailey, Dale, Greer, & Smith, 2015, p.124). Fraser articulated that redistribution confronts economic injustice. In order to attack this disparity, the University would be forced to “re-organizing the division of labor, subjecting investment to democratic decision making, or transforming other basic economic structure” (Fraser, 1998, p.15). WAD activists worked to attack the issue of redistribution, as it would require the University to hire additional Black faculty members, reorganizing their labor division and changing the underlying economic structure through hiring practices and the allocation of funds.

The ninth demand called for a permanent safe space for students of color in the Ferguson Student Center (which became the Intercultural Diversity Center). This demand targeted affirmation and transformation. The creation of such a space would target affirmation, seeking to accept the differences of marginalized groups instead of ignoring their differences and their needs. Space encourages group differentiation, welcoming minorities who are often rejected or ignored by The University of Alabama including religions, races, sexualities, ability statuses, and non-Greeks. This demand also addresses the need for transformation, as The University of Alabama has never had such a division or center since its existence. This space not only is affirmed by accepting marginalized groups and their unique struggles but also recognizes their difference. Additionally, the space attacks socioeconomic injustice by requiring the University to funnel money for the creation of the space, staff, and longevity.

The March

As I stood around in the crowd passing out stickers that said “We Are Done” and made eye contact with students and faculty members who wanted a change on campus, I looked down at my feet, planted on the same soil Governor George Wallace gave his famous segregation speech. I stood where the University honored Vivian Malone, James Hood, and Autherine Lucy. I stood where the history of integration efforts started at The University of Alabama. Though this history was liberating, it also pissed me off. I thought to myself “why are we still fighting for equal treatment nearly fifty years later?”

Jahman Hill grabs the microphone and starts speaking Latin. He goes into detail about The Machine on campus and how the University ignores its presence but still uses the system to divide. I felt chills going down my spine as I heard the clapping and the co-signing of fellow organizers and marchers. We moved from the Malone-Hood Plaza and marched across University Boulevard, where traffic stopped. I saw police officers holding up traffic as we made our way to Amelia-Gorgas Library. We shouted to the top of our lungs songs of equality. We sang Negro spirituals, reminding me of my ancestors wiped away from the history of The University of Alabama. Then the rally continued. Once the eleven demands were read, and speeches from various students ended, the vibe of unity started to dissolve. White students from hundreds of feet away recorded our protests. Some pointed and laughed. Some told us that our efforts were useless and unwarranted. However, we turned and faced the opposition and chanted for them to join us. This didn't work. The divide could be figuratively felt and seen through space between us.

Approximately one day after the demands were released on social media, WAD organized a campus march for racial justice. While not the first student protest march on campus that sought attention to racial disparities, the WAD march of November 2015 can be viewed as an intentional use of bodies and spaces to bring rhetorical force to the movement's goals. In this analysis I consider how actions like marches fit within Fraser's theory of social activism and also how Butterworth's system of rhetorical presence captures activism such as marches. The march began at the Malone-Hood Plaza, a known collective memory site that symbolized integration and honored Black integrationists. Black and White bodies both gathered at this space as a meeting point; however, it also created a rhetorically significant moment, as it highlighted the need for a continued push for change. Jahman Hill stressed this need during his spoken word performance at the protest in one of the two poems delivered to the crowd. He said:

'The secret society I know, got them some Greek roots...Tends to run like a well-oiled Ma(cut off before saying machine). Tends to spell racism like Alpha Ch(cuts off). The society seems a little white washed. I mean, the whole organization seems a little white -washed' (as quoted by Privitera, 2015).

Hill's words resurfaced the conversation about racism on campus and alluded to the same issues targeted by "The Final Stand". Although "The Final Stand" attacked racism within the Panhellenic system, Hill made it clear that the matter was not solved, as "The Machine", an underground organization comprised of distinct, powerful White Greek houses (Kingkade, 2015), continued dictating to campus politics and culture. His words and the speech itself obstructed social norms at the University, as he challenged the silence by spreading his message loudly, literally using a megaphone to deliver his message.

Protesters made intentional choices when placing their bodies in particular spaces. Starting at the Malone-Hood Plaza, the WAD march crossed University Boulevard, one of the

most high traffic streets on the campus of The University of Alabama. The speakers and marchers dressed in unison, wearing all black attire. Every sign, megaphone, body, chant, and speech forced the University to confront the injustices Black students faced on campus. These bodies' rhetorical presence challenged the University's blatantly disregard to racism on campus. Agitators and counter protesters also challenged WAD protesters with unwelcoming reactions. These actions were not uncommon, as "protests have also been challenged on the grounds that, under certain circumstances, they may place an undue strain upon the community's resources or may conflict with other community interests" (Haiman, 1967, p. 101). Anti-movement agitators clearly highlighted their rejection of the movement through their actions. Whites recorded the protest instead of joining, despite WAD protesters inviting them in through chants to encourage them to join. The division spoke to a much broader structure at the University, displaying that all students and faculty members were not in support of the movement. By removing their bodies from the space where the protestors congregated, their message of rejection spoke loudly.

WAD's march placed Black student bodies in White spaces to advocate for change. Ritchie (1970) noted that the sit-in movements were successful because students left their mark in a way that was memorable to society and because sit-ins shaped student activism efforts in the future. Similar to Black student activists of the Civil Rights Movement, WAD was "effective because its action carries a powerful rhetoric" (Ritchie, 1970, p. 22). Students took to the streets, interjecting their bodies in spaces where they have been traditionally unwelcomed. Students spoke out, acknowledging and ignoring the possibility of consequence for a larger fight for equality. Even if the University refused to take measurable steps to promote change, the use of Black students' bodies and voices to disrupt and challenge societal norms "leaves messages there which the habitually "blind" and "deaf" must see and hear" (Ritchie, 1970, p.22). The University

was forced to acknowledge the message that Black students clearly spelled out, leading to both dialogue and action by The University of Alabama.

Intercultural Diversity Center

After the march was over, the work began. Khortlan Patterson, Steven Becton, Amanda Bennett and I carried WAD on our backs. We met bi-weekly for a semester with Dr. Grady, VP of Student Affairs, about our demands. We thought things would happen swiftly, but they didn't. In fact, the only change that happened immediately was our first demand, for a space for students. Every single detail in the center, including the artwork, computers, staff, location, came from the group of four students. After picking the location, hiring the staff, negotiating for funding, writing the policies and procedures, operating hours, mission statement, picking out the necessary equipment for the center, and planning the grand opening, the Intercultural Diversity Center was officially born on February 1, 2016, the first day of Black History Month.

The grand opening was hectic, but liberating. Faculty members and alumni congratulated us on our progress. We used the opening as an opportunity to highlight the needs for redistribution and to introduce a powerful video explaining the namesakes of buildings on campus, formally introducing the efforts to complete demand two, changing or removing problematic building names or erecting historical markers on campus.

The creation of the University's Intercultural Diversity Center demonstrates Fraser's notions of transformation and affirmation. As soon as WAD activists engaged with University officials about creating such a space, from the day of its opening, as organizer Khortlan Patterson explained to *The Crimson White* reporter Sean Landry "We've done everything almost... We've almost laid the strategic plans for the center, because in our interviews for a student worker, we've had to think longterm for the center... It's been us students pushing for this, with the help

of administrators” (2016). During an email exchange between Dr. David Grady, Vice President of Student Affairs, and I, the following components were agreed on: reservation rights to the second-floor lounge in the Riverside Annex, the removal of game tables in the game room space, the installation of projector and screen in the game room space and A/V equipment, the installation of computers and printing station, installation of additional seating and tables, and employment of part-time students to help manage space (personal communication, December 1, 2015). Also, there was an agreement on a small operating budget for campus programming. Fraser (1998) elaborates that transformation remedies seek to reduce social inequality by addressing material socioeconomic injustice. The lack of an Intercultural Diversity Center meant a lack of access for students who could not turn to Greek houses and campus organizations, as most University students were non-Greek. Such a space for student congregation outside of their dorm rooms did not exist. By providing access to grounds for diverse groups, computers, printers, televisions, and an environment that specifically catered to marginalized groups, this was an attempt at transformation remedies. Additionally, transforming this space meant financial contributions by The University of Alabama for employees, a new budget for the space, computers, printers, new and improved technology, lounging areas, and additional programming.

The center also proved to be a component of Fraser’s affirmation framework. I explained to *The Crimson White* reporter Sean Landry in an interview, “The intercultural diversity center is one way to make people more comfortable, because they can know that this is a safe haven, this is somewhere I know I will be accepted, knowing there is somewhere on campus where you can go...” (2016). Organizer Amanda Bennett incorporated rhetoric of affirmation when writing the mission statement of the Intercultural Diversity Center. The statement is to, “advance The University of Alabama’s commitment to cultivating and respecting diversity by serving as a

resource and liaison for students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy” (“Intercultural Diversity Center,” n.d.).

Fraser’s affirmation framework seeks to accept differences of marginalized groups. Instead of ignoring or rejecting difference, affirmation highlights and recognizes difference. The mission statement explicitly highlights differences for many marginalized groups on campus by “Encouraging productive and honest conversations about race, gender, sexuality, religious affiliation, and ability through the use of art, music, programming, and other methods to expose students to the importance of diversity and inclusion” (“Intercultural Diversity Center,” n.d.). The mission of this center is one of few at The University of Alabama that directly affirms and boldly accepts marginalized identities, placing their experiences as a distinct part of their mission for the present and future.

Welcome to the Capstone

A few days after the center was officially opened, I sat in my house after an organizing meeting and frantically called Khortlan and Steven from what I saw. As I clicked through Google to see what popped up when searching We Are Done, my name appeared in a press release from an FBI classified White supremacy organization, known as the Sons of Confederate Veterans. I knew at that moment that it was more than just school officials listening to our demands. I realized that my safety was at risk, and my presence was in territory I did not ask for. For weeks I double-checked the locks on the house door, looked for scratches on my car, checked the windows, and watched my front and my. I was afraid. Not of my name being in the article, but who was paying attention. The fear turned into outrage, the outrage turned into hiding, the hiding turned into passion, and the passion turned into action. I told my story in front of people, a lot of people. Students, faculty members at Strategic Planning Committee Meetings, forensics

tournaments, and to University officials, they all heard my story. But spreading the word didn't stop there. In fact, the movement continued from the 2015- 2016 school year to the fall of 2016 where we continued to push for demand number two.

*This was when I started reaching out to students to help scrape the White out, prompting the creation of the video, *Welcome to the Capstone*. I wrote the script, Cory filmed the video, and Jalen, Currie, and Teryn all agreed to lead the tour. I sat at my computer and thought about every building I passed by. I remembered walking into Morgan Hall and seeing the picture of John Tyler Morgan, the man who was responsible for the fate of so many African Americans due to his deportation policies and leadership in the KKK. Then I thought about Nott Hall, namesake holder of eugenicist Josiah Clark Nott who made it his life's mission to prove that Blacks were an inferior race through his science. I thought about the slaves buried behind the Biology building and the slave quarters behind the President's Mansion. Every memory made me sit and think about how the University scribbles white out over a story that was told in permanent ink, even though it is covered, it still never goes away; but was determined to spread the truth.*

In the fall of 2016, nearly one year after the initial WAD demands, student leaders released *Welcome to the Capstone*, a video campus tour that specifically targeted a history that is ignored by The University of Alabama. The video presents the history of The University of Alabama by revealing the White oppressors and forgotten Blacks to tell a truer history of the campus. The tour starts at Morgan Hall, which houses the English Department, capturing the story of John Tyler Morgan. The first speaker, Teryn Shipman, engages student tourists on Morgan's involvement as a Grand Dragon Klansman and US Senator responsible for deporting slaves. She interjects a quotation, explaining the "inferiority" of the Negro race, while the videographer, Corey Henry, focuses on the building. The next clip told the history behind Nott

Hall. Tour guide Jalen Drummond enlightens tourists how the building is named after Josiah Nott, a eugenicist and author of the book, *The Types of Mankind*, which told that Blacks were scientifically inferior to Whites. The final guide, Currie Blackwell goes to the slave cabins behind the President's Mansion. In front of the President's Mansion, there is a historical marker, but nowhere does it mention the word slavery.

This tour highlights a collective memory during the Antebellum South that is unspoken by the University. Though problematic to remain silent about the slave owners and KKK members who the buildings are named after, the lack of conversation also erases the Black body from The University of Alabama. Slaves walked the campus of The University of Alabama as property. Though the justification for keeping the names of these individuals is mainly due to their financial and educational contributions to the University, slaves were forced to do manual labor against their will. Ironically, their invisibility persists nearly two centuries later.

I was the final speaker of the video. The group convened at the Malone-Hood Plaza, a dedicated place of collective memory that commemorates Autherine Lucy, Vivian Malone, and James Hood. This strategically chosen location revisited campus politics, struggles of Black students at the University, and signified how their fights were not over. I elaborated on a death threat made to a Black student just weeks before the video was released, racist comments made by University students, and micro-aggressions that Black students face on a daily basis (Lee & Henry, *Welcome to the Capstone*). The video ended by connecting the link between the racism of the present and past. Pictures displayed Governor of Alabama George Wallace during his famous segregation speech on the same grounds that the video was recorded at Foster Auditorium, a site packed with historical significance. This site forced viewers to recognize the need for progress, as Black students are still experiencing the same struggles Black integrators face in the past.

WAD activists were able to start a conversation traditionally silenced by the University. In the midst of recording, many students walked on the set to ask questions about a history they did not know. As of March 10, 2017 the video has received over 13,000 views. It uniquely worked to highlight the history of The University of Alabama, while simultaneously using major collective memory sites to address ignored spaces where Black bodies have occupied, like the President's Mansion. *Welcome to the Capstone* visualize historical events and sites on campus while pushing for the University to honor WAD's second demand and spark institutional change.

The video *Welcome to the Capstone* worked in a unique manner to highlight the collective memory both present and absent at The University of Alabama. WAD critiques and challenges how the University and the broader community remembers sites on campus, including the President's Mansion, Nott Hall, and Morgan Hall. By revealing the history behind these buildings, activists insert the Black experience at the University, which is currently ignored by the University's status quo. Failing to erect historical markers, change the names of buildings, or acknowledge these sites for their histories rejects the notion of a comprehensive collective memory. However, this video inserts these stories by appearing at each site, explaining the history and highlighting commonly ignored eras on campus.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Although I finished undergrad in December of 2015, the month following the protest, I stayed at Alabama for my master's degree. So many of my friends urged me to leave. They told me to get out while I still had the chance. Although this did sound appealing at the time, I chose to spend another year and a half at The University of Alabama because my work just started. I wanted to keep urging the University to take action. My first semester as a graduate student consisted of the creation of the Intercultural Diversity Center and Strategic Planning Committee Meetings and thinking about how to push the University to consider the building names seriously. My second semester consisted of writing, casting, and co-editing a video that is now used in classrooms to facilitate complex dialogue. Now, in my final semester, I am writing about my experiences as a Black woman at The University of Alabama and leading younger activists here on campus. I stayed because my work just started. Now, I am ready to remove the white out from the stories of the past and finally close the pen cap to my own.

The experiences of Aurtherine Lucy, Black sorority recruits, “The Final Stand” activists, and WAD activists all highlight the use of material rhetoric in racial justice social protest movements and the power that bodies have in rejecting spaces. In returning to the research question, how has material rhetoric, including bodies and spaces, shaped racial justice social protest movements at The University of Alabama? I offer the following implications.

Implications

Bodies as Persuasion

First, this analysis reveals how our bodies themselves can be used as a tool of persuasion. Autherine Lucy's integration, "The Final Stand", and WAD all position Black bodies in a way that counteracts injustices around them. Autherine Lucy's body was able to persuade The University of Alabama and schools around the nation to correct the injustices occurring in academia. She was also able to receive support from White students at the University who were outraged with the actions of students and citizens. These students asked for the punishment of rioters who objected Lucy's integration. *Tuscaloosa News* wrote, "The petitions protesting the riots were circulated over campus yesterday, receiving an estimated 150 signatures in two hours in the Union Building" ("Petitions Ask Rioters' Ouster", 1956, p.1).

Likewise, Black women, including Chrystall Stallworth and Kennedi Cobb were able to interject their bodies in the White space of Panhellenic sorority houses. Although this space did not persuade many racist alumni members, these women were able to persuade White undergraduate members who stood up for a change, challenging alumni members and the standards set by the University in the past to integrate their organizations. The presence of Stallworth and Cobb also sparked national attention, which further placed pressure on the international headquarters of many Panhellenic organizations. For example, International President Jackie Stutts of Panhellenic sorority Alpha Gamma Delta explained:

'Initial efforts are being designed to increase diversity and understanding among our members and volunteers. With The University of Alabama President Dr. Judy Bonner's announcement of a change in recruitment processes and capacities, the chapter is making preparations to recruit additional members,' (Willingham, 2013).

Black women like Cobb and Stallworth were also able to persuade Greek and non-Greek members to be a part of the march, encouraging White and Black bodies alike to march against injustices excused by the University.

WAD activists were also persuasive to the entire administration, promoting a number of changes in a quickly. President Stuart Bell formed a Strategic Planning Committee that worked to benefit campus in a number of ways, including the diversity and inclusion efforts on campus. Additionally, the English Department was able to successfully remove the photograph of John Tyler Morgan from Morgan Hall, incorporating diverse artwork instead of pieces that were divisive. The University released a statement concerning the removal of Morgan's picture and its new change, explaining "Works from the Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art will be exhibited in the foyer of Morgan Hall, located on the UA Campus...The large wall space in the foyer of Morgan Hall provides an appropriate campus venue for extended display of works from the collection" (Gauntt, 2015). WAD also highlighted the need for the Intercultural Diversity Center, presenting themselves as a united front for minority issues on campus.

The presence of Black bodies at The University of Alabama was used to challenge societal norms. While injustice may be invisible in certain areas, Black bodies not only highlight these situations, but has the capability to persuade others on the need for change. Each movement proves that bodies in contested spaces have a capability to challenge norms and make change by persuading others.

Sacrifices & Vulnerabilities

Though Black students persuade audiences by inserting their bodies in places where they are rejected, the rhetorical power of the body forces Black students to continuously make themselves vulnerable to enact change. In many cases, using the body as a tool for persuasion

forces the Black community to make a bodily sacrifice, jeopardizing their mental health, safety, or even becoming a martyr for change. Black bodies have fallen victim to battery and murder on numerous accounts while using their presence to demand change. For example, during the Greensboro sit-ins, Black activists used their bodies to demand equality and integration, but racist Whites who rejected integration beat them. Medgar Evers, famous civil rights leader who used his voice and his body to problematize the norms of a racist University of Mississippi, was shot dead by a White supremacist and Klansman, Byron De La Beckwith, Jr. His fight for change ended up being the reason he was murdered.

Autherine Lucy's experience at the University highlights how Black bodies become sacrifices for change. Though she is known as the first Black student to enroll at The University of Alabama, her safety was compromised. White supremacist and anti-integrationist rioted, burned crosses, and attempted to attack Lucy, showing their willingness to assault or even murder her Black body to keep the University an all-White campus. Despite the risk to her safety, Lucy stayed on campus for as long as she possibly could. Her safety was a contributing factor to her expulsion. The mere presence of her Black body became a form of sacrifice to the Black community for a broader attempt at integration.

Much as Autherine Lucy, Black sorority recruits were forced to bear the brunt of rejection and humiliation when learning their denial in Panhellenic sororities boiled down to the color of their skin. Students such as Kennedy Cobb and Chrystall Stallworth entered into a space where the expectation was to reject Black women, but they took on the racist traditions of the White sorority recruitment process and withstood the rejection and racism, allowing women of color to become members of the same organizations that denied their bodies a space in their whitewashed system. WAD activist also made similar sacrifices in order to receive change on

campus. Threats surfaced on social media as anonymous messages, some directly to students.

My name appeared in The Sons of Confederate Veterans' news article online during the peak of our activism, making me extremely self-conscious, frightened, and nervous about my personal safety.

Ironically, even if individuals do not intentionally place their bodies in zones of conflict, as did Autherine Lucy, Black sorority recruits, and WAD activists, Black bodies are still targeted out of retaliation. Anti-Black sentiment has commonly been the motives behind hate crimes and rebellion against systems that uplift the Black community. When “non-confrontational” bystanders are also forced to see nooses on their campus, get called a nigger just for walking home, and even get their lives threatened on social media platforms, these bodies are also forced to sacrifice their mental health, comfort, and safety just because their skin is Black, not because of their activism.

Black bodies have been forced to sacrifice safety, sanity, and security to foster change in our communities. This creates a terrible quandary for the Black community. All people, regardless of who they are, should attain equal rights and justice. For Blacks, when that system is not equal or just, the community and the individuals suffer. Black people become robbed from basic equities in areas such as health care, criminal justice, and job accessibility. On the contrary, if Blacks work to address the system of inequality and fight against oppression, they leave themselves just as vulnerable, risking their safety (that already does not exist) to achieve equality. The dilemma continues in the Black community, either risk the deadliness of the status quo, or risk the repercussions for challenging it. Black students and Black people should not be forced to give up their lives in order to receive the systemic, institutional, and societal change *we* deserve. Using the body to prompt social change in racial justice social protest movements

makes the Black body a martyr for a movement much larger than the individual, regardless if martyrdom was consensual or not.

One final common denominator between bodily martyrdom and Black advocacy is the Black woman. Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Rosa Parks, all sacrificed their bodies for change. At the University, an overwhelming majority of the Black people making racial justice sacrifice displayed in the text were also Black women. Autherine Lucy, Chrystall Stallworth, Kennedi Cobb, Khortlan Patterson, Amanda Bennett, and myself...all Black women. Though Black men were present in some instances, like the overwhelming involvement of Steven Becton, many of these sacrificial bodies belonged to Black women. Patricia Hill Collins highlights one dangerous reality Black female bodies face as a reality. “Traditionally, Black women have either been excluded from or assigned subordinate roles within civil rights...Even radical Black organizations such as the Black Panther Party found it difficult to shake notions that women were unsuitable for leadership (Brown 1992)” (Collins, 2002, p. 216). Though the WAD movement allowed women to perform as leaders pushing for racial justice, every movement forced Black women to put their bodies in vulnerable and dangerous situations for change. This creates a dangerous precedent, continuing a cycle that has historically silenced the Black female voice but expecting their bodies to be readily available when needed.

Power

“The Final Stand” and WAD activists were both able to highlight the types of change they needed through Fraser’s framework of redistribution, recognition, affirmation, and transformation; however, this was the extent of their power. Student activists did not have the ability to make the change, but show the injustices in various areas at The University of Alabama, ultimately still having very limited power as Black students. Essentially, the

movements were able to garnish support and even achieve visible change, but it was only successful because the entities that oppressed students decided to make change. When minorities do not have the agency to create the change on their own, the power still lies in the hands of those who perpetuate the system of inequality, making change limited.

Autherine Lucy was able to force the University to confront racism and segregation by interjecting her body in a place where it did not belong, but it took University officials and the United States government to finally deem that change necessary. However, integrating the Greek system was not a pressing issue until nearly fifty years later. Black women made attempts to join White Panhellenic sororities, seeking for recognition, but the issue was not resolved until those in power, including the University administration and the international headquarters of Panhellenic organizations decided to take steps to integrate the Greek system.

WAD activists were also able to address the needs of Black students by targeting Fraser's framework through marches, interrupting meetings, attending meetings with upper level administration, creating videos, and contributing to a larger dialogue at the University. Their efforts were able to directly combat issues such as having a safe space on campus for students of color and other marginalized communities. However, the University in many areas has failed to address other needs that target transformation and affirmation. Though there is a search for a chief diversity officer, the position is still vacant. Though there are many conversations and series surrounding building names, there have been no tangible, proactive steps made to rectify this issue. Many of the demands articulated by WAD, such as creating mandatory diversity courses for all students on campus or acknowledging "The Machine" and taking steps to bring it above ground, has gone untouched and unspoken since the demands were released. Failing to address these demands or begin proactive measures to make change in these areas only becomes

counterproductive to the movement, as it perpetuates the lack of recognition, redistribution, affirmation, and transformation. The only way this framework becomes a viable and productive step is if those in power acknowledge the needs of marginalized groups, thus reinforcing the power. Change only happens when Whites are willing to provide it, forcing Black bodies to be patient until Whites are ready to distribute equality.

One-sided Narratives

Black people have continuously put their bodies in the most unsafe and vulnerable positions to foster change on campus, and in the United States. However, many of these successes go untold or retold in a way that does not give credit to the individuals who risked everything for change. This impacts the Black community by creating a narrative, through written and spoken language, that dilutes the success and triumphs made by the Black community. Imani Perry (2011) eloquently explained:

The stories that are told about members of racial groups in daily conversations, in print, through the broadcast and in new media, in literature, and in child rearing, are a fundamental piece of how we acquire knowledge about those groups. They are also a part of how we make decisions about how to treat individual members of those groups (p.44).

The moment our histories are ignored or stolen, the Black community is robbed a second time of their history from a White oppressor. For example, in 2015 a Texas high school was exposed for teaching a diluted version of American history. McGraw-Hill publishing company described “the Atlantic slave trade as bringing “millions of workers” to plantations in the American South” (Rockmore, 2015). Instead of hearing the stories of African slaves prevailing, even though they were taken in chains from their land, ripped away from their families, beaten for being Black, and nooses strung around their necks to suffocate the life out of their lungs, the narrative was boiled down to a voluntary event. The perseverance of the

Black community has been erased by Whites across the nation, and at The University of Alabama, allowing Whites to continuously control our narrative.

The University continues to erase the stories of Autherine Lucy, Black sorority recruits, and even the efforts of WAD activists, perpetuating the system of inequality by denying Black students access to their histories. Though Lucy received various collective memory locations on campus to honor her integration, such as Foster Auditorium and the clock tower in her honor, the gruesome details such as her escape from campus, the rejection in campus dormitories, and the riots that advocated for segregation still sit in silence.

Likewise, sorority integrators who were forced to endure humiliation and rejection are not seen by the University as the heroines of integration. Instead, the rhetoric exalts White Panhellenic members who spoke out against discrimination, White administrators who altered policy after student and media backlash, but not the Black bodies who experienced it. By allowing White women to be the heroes on paper (through interviews, statements, press releases, and oral history) and ignoring the experiences of Black women, a “White savior” complex is created.

Finally, one of the most pressing, and unmet, demands of WAD activists was erecting historical markers in front of buildings on campus that held the names of White supremacists, eugenicists, and KKK members. The act of erecting markers tells the true history of the campus and pays reverence to the bodies of slaves who were deprived of their freedom. Put simply, not telling the stories of White supremacy erases Black history, which is still a part of the University’s history. When any racial group is not afforded the opportunity to see the success of their own people and only hears the word “nigger” screamed through pickup truck windows and on Yik Yak posts, their worth becomes questioned. Presenting false narratives

takes away Black student's right to knowledge. Slave masters took away pens, pencils, books, and made reading punishable by death. They stripped away an entire culture, memories, language, and a unit of strength. Those with authority over collective memory risk repeating the same violence.

Closing Thoughts

Black activism at The University of Alabama has highlighted oppression on many occasions and lead to integration and support in various ways. Black bodies have continuously made sacrifices for change. Though racial justice social protest movements have been shaped in many ways by sacrifice, rhetorical scholarship should continue to highlight these impacts. Persuasion is not confined speaking at a podium or giving a message in a crowded room. Persuasion can be interjecting bodies in spaces where they do not belong.

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