

Title: “Say Her Name”: The Rhetorical Situation Surrounding Social Media Activism

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This literature review analyzes the rhetorical situation surrounding the #SayHerName campaign, protesting lethal police brutality against African American women. Specifically, this paper will examine the case of Sandra Bland, an African-American woman who hung herself in her jail cell largely due to the racial violence against her. Bitzer’s rhetorical discourse is referenced to examine the exigence, social injustice, and situation necessary for discourse to be called into action. Furthermore, pragmatic and rhetorical implications are drawn through the comparison of the Black Lives Matter movement. Pragmatically, this hashtag sets a precedent that political discourse through social media is the new norm. Rhetorically, the hashtag worked both in favor of promoting awareness of the suffering amongst Black women while simultaneously supporting the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Online movements have emerged within the last decade straying from typical street protests but still relaying the same message. The purpose of social media activism is to promote awareness on a larger scale while also enacting change. This paper will infer whether such political discourse strengthens or weakens movements for racial justice against police violence.

References

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