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ENGL 384: New Brown America

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White Hegemony in America

Despite legal action to depress racism and acts of racial discrimination in the United States, repression and inequity among people of color has become institutionalized and continues to be veiled by white denial. This denial can be seen in the election of a president whose platform is directly targeted at ensuring the continuation of inequity largely throughout the immigrant population and poor communities with unproportionate amounts of people of color. The impact of this election can be seen not only through enacted, or stalled, legislation but in the group mentality and actions of the white community. In Thomas Edsal's piece, "Who's afraid of a white minority?" he writes, "[...] Anxiety over the decline of white hegemony, in turn, helped propel a segment of conservative voters to cast votes for Donald Trump." This excerpt from Edsal's article articulates the new ways racism is being sustained and supported as society transforms, highlighting some of the tools responsible for this continued normalization.

When referring to the historic white majority in the United States, Edsal uses the term 'white hegemony', accurately defining the societal advantage associated with whiteness and its power. Hegemony, a heavily connoted word representing dominance, applies directly to the concept of whiteness and respectively blackness and brownness. Built from years of superficial superiority, whiteness has become an intangible symbol for power and authority; this dominance has been understood to fill a life of success and accomplishment. If you have the 'privilege' of being white in this country, it is accompanied with an expectation of selfish

motives and sense of authority for the point of economic gain and social security. Meanwhile, the narrative is and has always been different for people of color, reaping the consequences of white hegemony. Recently, this narrative has only been perpetrated by the continued facade of 'whiteness' as threats of America becoming a country of racial and ethnic diversity persist. The election of Donald Trump, as said by Edsal, highlights the white response to the threat of their self-proclaimed authority vanquishing.

When talking about the current racial climate in the United States, a point of conversation that is too often omitted is how the actions within the white community shape the new status-quo of whiteness. With strides being taken to make America seem racially and civically equal, the concept of whiteness and its hegemony must adapt with it; but historically we have seen the white identity morph into new social climates with the same foundational privileges. Rather than deconstructing the construct as a whole and incorporating it into the reality of our country's makeup, white hegemony has persisted and the reaffirmation of the white fight to keep a majority population through the election of Donald Trump has just given institutionalized and internalized racism a platform. The public is well aware of the racism persisting in this country, the news headlines and twitter feeds consisting of pictures of black death and crime remind them of that. Still there are some who, despite being told over and over again that racism is real and it is alive, impacting what will soon be majority of the country, will choose to listen to their white leader; the man who tells them that the American public is good when the American public is white— and they listen, because that is the hegemony.