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**Title:** Student Voice?: An ethnography of activist women of color and the Daily Illini’s negative representation of student activism.

**Course:** Anth411 Section 1G and 1U (Methods of Cultural Anthropology) Fall 2007 -- Nancy A Abelmann

**About the Author:** I am Wendy Marie Finley, a daughter, a student, a sister, a scholar, a girlfriend and an individual. As a Black women in the United States I experience multiple jeopardies that often position me in the role as "the other". This positionality increases my passion of Black feminist thought and activism. My other research interests include linguistic anthropology, specifically media stenographies under the framework of anthropologist Debra Spultulnik. All of these aspects contribute to my proposed research for this course and every other aspect of my life.

**Keywords:** Black women, activism, Daily Illini, Media Representation, Student activism

**Abstract:** Women of color have historically been active players in social movements in the United States (U.S.). Because of this, women of color are oftentimes the targets of negative media representation or absent from any form of representation entirely. My research examines how these women of color, student activists perceive their own activism in relation to the mass media representation, in this case the Daily Illini (DI). There is a hidden power in media, which gives media a privileged position in discourse. From preliminary research, I learned that the DI uses its privilege in a biased way: in reporting on student activism, they favor administration and faculty over the students. Studying how women of color internalize this marginalization inflicted on them by the DI’s media representation will reveal how influential and powerful this media outlet is or is not to Black women student activists, a group that is commonly oppressed on multiple levels. The results of this work will demonstrate the variability in power relations and influence between the DI and the subjects of its columns.

**Initial Exercises:**

***Note to reader***

**Reading Response**

Dear Reader,

This assignment, a response to the weekly readings, began my
thinking of ethnographies especially in regard to the idea of truth and perception. After reading Dunier I began to wonder about the truth behind a marginalized student's college experience. Although this response was not directly related to my pilot research, after reading it, it become clear that this was part of the thinking process to creating a larger project. I hope you enjoy.

Sincerely
Wendy Marie Finley

When I read the essays assigned many thoughts crossed my mind and many existing issues were rehashed. As a double minority in the field of anthropology, I often worry about how I, a woman of color, am perceived in a white male dominated occupation. Dunier’s article really opened my eyes on how someone who is normally the majority, deals with being placed in a situation where he is the minority. This essay also addressed issues such as proper rapport and gaining trust in a situation such as this. The article on feminism and ethnographies also opened my eyes to how all of these issues will affect and influence my research, causing me to question, is there a way to be objective and is it necessary.

The most relevant article to my predicament as a woman of color in anthropology was the article by Stacy on research in Brazil as a person of African descent and the way issues of racism are commonly
ignored in guides to conducting productive ethnographies. This essay raised questions on the insider theory on both sides of the spectrum. The most interesting idea was when it was raised that a person doesn’t have to be of a certain racial, ethnic and class community to identify and write about them. I completely disagree with this statement. Although a person’s race, class, and gender doesn’t automatically give someone the ability to relate to a certain community, it makes them more likely. The author presented facts from research conducted on a thousand Blacks in the south and shows that it was clear that responses varied greatly based on the race of the interviewer. This alone shows that trust and research in general can greatly differ depending on who is asking the questions.

This essay started to prepare me to ways to go about conducting research because depending on my project, the reactions to me as an ethnographer will vary greatly, either positively or negatively.

Each essay addressed different factors that will contribute to an anthropologist’s research, either hindering or helping. This is vital in learning how to develop appropriate rapport. For example, Dunier explained how he didn’t change his appearance or style of talk to fit into the community of Black peddlers because that act would be perceived as fake. Stacy stated that while in Brazil she expected to be seen as a researcher when in fact the opposite was true. She was seen as close to one of them and their ideals and beliefs were projected on to her
because of that. All of these facts show how important it is to acknowledge differences in different setting and take time to approach them appropriately.

**Initial Exercises: **

**Letter to the Reader***

Observation

Dear Readers,

This observation was very significant to my research for a number of reasons. When I was observing I noticed myself paying particular attention to racial phenomenons. For example, the lack of racial diversity on the quad sparked my interest. I began counting people of color and don't remember the number being very high. Being a woman of color, I know statistically that the number of people who look like me on this campus is low, but the activities I attend are predominantly Black and make the campus appear more diverse than it is. Actually observing and becoming immersed in my surrounding was a real eye opener. This made me start to wonder how someone who is an activist on campus and also a person of color feels about being in an environment that is very white and not always welcoming.

Sincerely,

Wendy Marie Finley

**A Day on the Quad**

It is a sunny Tuesday afternoon, at 2:30 pm, on the Quad. At the University of Illinois, the Quad is the central location, the eye or core of the students’ and faculties’ daily activity. Today I step out from the mix and observe the comings and goings. I sit at a blue table outside of the Union with two friends and my notebook ready to be astonished and was not disappointed. One of the first sights was a middle-aged Asian woman with purple hair and a floral dress walking with a white male.
Other unique figures walked by and some posted up. A women almost tripped over her own feet, a couple was exhibiting some serious public displays of affection, a tall, white male with greasy hair to the end of his back and no shoes walked out of the union, and a white student aged female felt the need to remove her over shirt due to the excruciating heat. All of these things surprisingly were not that out of the ordinary within the context of the University and if I were not purposefully observing I probably would not have noticed these individuals and activities.

The number of patterns and norms on the quad was reflective of the university. On the tables outside of the quad, people sat as segregated as they interact on this university. There was a table of Latinos, one male and two females and a ten-month-old pit named Elliot. There was my table with three African Americans, others coming and going, including myself. White people occupied the rest of the tables, around six or so. In fact, the entire time I observed the Quad I counted less than thirty people of color that I could see from my position in front of the Union. Another visible trend was that almost no one walks on the grass. They all follow the paved walkways, although no one is there to enforce this. However, there were several people riding bikes on the quad, although there are clear signs prohibiting this behavior. Why is one inherent rule followed better than an explicit one?
There were several groups on the Quad either handing out fliers or collecting money. The most apparent group was some people collecting money for the disabled. They were aggressively attempting to get $25,000. When I told them that I did not have any money they replied that they would be out all week and they expected to see me back. I was a little surprised but admired their drive.

The quad was most busy twenty and fifty after the hour. After those times, there were very few people on the quad. One busy site was an orange and blue football ticket trailer. During the time I sat out until 3:11pm, mainly white males stood in line for Illinois football tickets. I noted that not one person of color or woman bought a ticket during the time I was outside.

People either walked by themselves and talked on their phone or listened to some sort of MP3 player, most likely an IPOD, or they walked in groups of two or three. When they walked in groups of three they formed a triangle with two people in front and one slightly behind. When someone attempted to walk in the opposite direction, one of the people in front had to step back for a moment. One would think that this would get tiresome after a while, but it never failed that when three people walked together they walked in this triangle formation. A group of four students played Frisbee on the Quad near the chemistry annex and they have to move because a green landscaping truck driven by a
Black man in his late twenties or early thirties comes by. The truck stops on the grassy area on the right hand side of the Union near the English building and the man gets out and begins spraying the lawn.

Up to now, all of my observations are what I expected until a Black male in his early twenties, late teens, wearing a red, black and white striped shirt walks from the union to the stairs in front of me talking to himself. No lie! I can make out some words. “Y’all gonna make me hustle my ass off.” He continues to go on about something dealing with money. He walks back into the Union still rambling. Ten minutes later, he comes back out talking about the same thing. The charade continues until he returns to the Union and by then my hour is over. I guess it was not as ordinary a day on the Quad as I expected. However, the events observed were representative of the trends and social networks and behaviors on campus. For example, the segregation of the seating arrangements outside of the quad and the way students choose what rules to obey and which to disregard. In addition, the ethnicities, or lack thereof, showed really how non-diverse this University really is.

**Initial Exercises:**

**Dear Reader,**

**Analysis of a Text**

For this assignment I decided to evaluate the Inclusive Illinois text, an intuitive that was and still is very new. From my critical
discourse analysis I discovered many things as explained in the assignment. These discoveries made me think about how the university perceives race relations on campus as opposed to how the actual marginalized population perceived these same relations. From this document, my initial hypothesis was that these perceptions of truth contradict each other.

Sincerely
Wendy Marie Finley

The University of Illinois recently initiated the Inclusive Illinois project. According to an online document and pamphlet released by the University, this campaign is to unite people of different backgrounds and beliefs and create one big happy family. The document however is very vague on the process and simply states the end goals:

to heighten awareness and engagement about issues of identity and importance of examining and respecting differences based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, age, physical ability, religion, as well as the multiple and intersecting ways we see ourselves and others. In addition, to enhance the working, living, and learning environment for faculty, staff, and students, the University will encourage a standard of conduct and behavior that is consistent with the
values of inclusivity.

The entire project is presented as if Illinois is already an atmosphere of complete tolerance. There is an entire section on how Illinois fosters love and acceptance and “embrace[s] differences”. This section was particularly ironic because if this sort of environment already exists, why is there a need for an Inclusive Illinois project to begin with.

This project also does not give any ways the U of I plans to foster or advocate such an environment. On the site, there is an electronic commitment statement that it encourages individuals to sign. The statement claims that the road to tolerance starts with each of us, which is partly true. The statement reads as follows:

As a member of the University of Illinois community, I commit to supporting Inclusive Illinois.

I will encourage the expression of different voices, perspectives, and ideas.

I will challenge my own beliefs, opinions, and viewpoints.

I will create an accessible, safe, and respectful environment to enhance the living,
learning, and working community at Illinois.

I will be an advocate for inclusivity and will **acknowledge and respect the multiple identities represented in each individual.**

*My commitment will be demonstrated by my voice and my conduct.*

Although individual responsibility is an important step in gaining an environment of tolerance, this entire campaign completely ignores the idea of institutionalized racism and prejudice and that these ideologies are embedded in the history and policies of this business. This seems to be a half-hearted attempt to lessen the tensions from last year’s student activism and the demands made from administration. The pictures all show smiling people of different ethnicities, but it does not go into any details of ways to achieve these goals or background and context. The commitment statement does not include any follow up after the person actually signs and it seems like another instance of the university putting on the front of change but does not back it with action and a plan for success.

The site simply put up a list of diverse events. Many including La Casa and the African American Cultural Center.
They also supply websites to go for more information on tolerance, such as the Office of Equal Opportunity, the cultural houses, LGBT and other resources. However, as stated earlier, this entire initiative does not include the university’s role in the atmosphere of intolerance and tension. It does not state that the reason something like this is necessary is because previously, racist acts of students were dismissed as childishness or ignorance and no repercussions occurred unless students aggressively complained. This document ignores the role of institutionalized racism and hatred and the role of their great tradition “the Chief” and how they still refuse to let it go. How this has given the students a framework for intolerance. No, according to this, intolerance on this university is because of a few ignorant people, and if they sign the commitment statement, everyone will hold hands and sing songs together.

**Initial Exercises:**

**A Practice Interview**

Since I plan to work on racial tensions on campus with the possibility of looking into the *Inclusive Illinois* Intuitive, I interviewed X. X is an African American and Caucasian male involved in several activities on campus, including the University of Illinois football team. I opened up the interview with the question, how did you end up at the U of I? I expected a much deeper, detailed response but all I received was,
I wanted to play big ten football and this was cheaper than the alternative. Since I didn’t have much luck with the first question I guided the questions in the direction of race and racial tensions on campus. X explained to me that although he has not personally experienced any discrimination or hostility based on his race, he has heard through word of mouth stories of others’ hardships from previous years.

The interview was very broad because a lot of the responses that I anticipated would have very long, drawn out responses received one or two word answers. We touched on issues of football, family, priorities and relationships. When we came to issues of family, facts of possible racist tendencies coming from people within his family arouse. When this issue was explored deeper, X was hesitant to reveal that his mother and other members of his family have expressed racist beliefs. Examples of this include his grandfather calling his mother’s boyfriend a “super nigger”, his aunt telling a group of African Americans who were new to the neighborhood to get out, and his mother exhibiting a dislike for Mexicans while she was intoxicated.

X claimed that these facts did not affect him or who he was, but later on in the interview he revealed that he identified with the African American community in spite of the fact that he is half Black and white. He attributed this to the fact that he was raised in an all Black
However his explanation to this question was vague and I suspect that the true reason may have something to do with the discriminative tendencies of his mother’s side of the family. This is only my analysis of the reason why when issues of family and identity were raised he almost closed up and these responses were the vaguest.

Throughout the interview I had to guide it a lot because of my interviewee’s lack of depth and explanations in his response. I anticipated certain questions to start a conversation or a natural flow but this was never the case. I am a little disappointed in this fact however I am more interested in exploring reasons why this in fact was the case. X was especially quiet on issues involving his position as a football player. When asked if he ever experienced any tension or hostility in this sphere, he quickly responded no. However, when asked if players are regularly yelled at and degraded he went into a story of a coach calling a fellow team mate a little bitch. However X assured me this had nothing to do with race or any other discriminatory practices.

When I asked if X had ever heard of the inclusive Illinois initiative he explained that he had not but feels that there is a real need for that sort of thing on campus. I provided X with information on the initiative and plan to conduct a follow up interview in the future about his thoughts, concerns and beliefs on the issue once he has a chance to
familiarize himself with the issue.

The interview itself briefly touched on a few very important aspects of X’s life, my only complaint is the close lipped response I received to my questions. I hope in the future, during a follow up interview, I can use this information to know how to guide the next interview to receive maximum responses in issues that he was very secretive about, but may be a source for interesting conversation in the future.

**Question:***Second Edits 11/13/07***

Question

How does the Daily Illini’s negative media representation of student activists’ events affect the activism of political conscious women of color on campus?

***End of second edits***

***EDITS***

The University of Illinois is a sphere of resistance. Many groups are rebelling against individual and institutionalized forms of racism and discrimination. In the midst of all of this resistance, The Daily Illini, a newspaper that is supposed to be the voice of the student body, took a very conservative turn. The writers, mainly editors have explicitly stated their anti student resistance stand. This is very ironic and abnormal to the culture of social movements. In the past, student led papers supported student led movements. However, now the DI seems to have become a tool for the institution.

***End of Edits***

Through previous exercises I began unknowingly carving out a project. Through my examination of a document I gained a first impression of the Inclusive Illinois Initiative. This holds a particular interest because I am a member of a non RSO interested in bringing change to the
University. The way this initiative made racism, sexism and all the other isms out to be an individual problem and ignored institutionalized problems is both troubling and interesting. I want to focus on this. I want to interview several individuals who are working on the grassroots level to make change at the University in addition to people in charge of Inclusive Illinois to get a well rounded perspective of the universities many levels of oppression. The main goal is to see what many problems exist in this sphere and why so many students feel isolated and oppressed and see who the players are in this situation. This is especially important because of the racist party held last weekend in the midst of this one campus with many voices.

**Plan:** ***Second Edits 11/13/2007***

I plan to conduct preliminary research by doing some critical discourse on the Daily Illini, focusing on the Opinions columns. Form this research I will determine the degree of the shift to a more conservative tone and the events discussed in these columns. This provides the framework for the first my question in determining the negative stance the DI oftentimes holds on student activism.

Once I have the preliminary information my goal is to find three women of color on campus who were actively involved in one or more of the activities the DI expressed a negative opinion on in one of its columns. I want to focus on women of color because of their unique collective identity of a woman of multiple jeopardies, race, gender and sometimes class and sexual orientation. I will interview these women using questions regarding to how often they read the DI, has that changed recently. I also will gauge in question of their activism and self identity to build a strong idea of who they are individually. I then want
to engage in the issue of the DI’s influence of their activism, because there is a hidden power in media discourse. Does the opinion of the DI opinions columnist make the women devalue their efforts, work harder, or have no impact what so ever? I hope to do further research in the future such as focus groups to encourage a live discourse amongst these women on campus.

***End of Second Edits***

***EDITS***

I plan to conduct two interviews of conscious DI readers who are up to date on the recent political and social activities on campus. I plan to ask questions on the perceptions on the activism on campus and their thoughts of the DI’s current stance. I also hope to get an interview with someone on the editorial staff and an interview with one of the many people recently fired from the DI’s editorial staff. In addition, I will keep up with the DI and their posts, or lack of posts on school activism and the replies to these editorials to gain insight on how the DI is framing these events linguistically and thematically and what audience they are catering to with these stories.

***END OF EDITS***

I plan to conduct interviews and do fieldwork to provide and insight on Inclusive Illinois and how students and faculty feel. Also, if this isn’t the solution, because I don’t believe there is one solution, what other ways do the students feel administration can step up to address the institutional aspect of oppression on this campus.

Data: I conducted a very informative interview with a previous opinions columnist who worked on the Daily Illini for three semesters and was fired. This interview was especially significant because his position as a minority in both ideals and race allowed him a unique lens for evaluating certain situations he participated in and observed during
his time on the DI. From the start of the interview, the interviewee, who I will use the pseudonym Mike, described the DI as very white, to say the least. Mike stated that, “Umm…lot of white people. Lot of, lot of white people. Pretty equal ratio between white men and white women, umm…I was the only Black face on the opinions staff and I believe there was one other Black female that was a reporter. Two other Black females. I don’t know how many people were on the opinions staff, I think about nine or ten columnists and I was the only brother. They had an Indian, I think he was Indian and he was male. There were two other women and the rest of them were men and they were all white so I was the only Black person there and I wrote about Black issues because I felt obligated to do so.” The way that Mike immediately mentioned how his identity obliged him to speak up for and almost represents his race was very significant, especially since I did not prompt that response. This is something common in my interview with Mike, his volunteered information always seemed to reveal more than the responses of questions that I asked. I found myself talking very little and letting him just talk using a stream of consciousness methodology.

Mike’s identity as a Black man, he identifies himself as a Black Nationalist, was an issue in every response. This was very significant to my research because it not only showed how he himself internalized race, but how his race was emphasized in the environment of the DI’s
work context. When I asked who was in charge of what was printed in the paper, he returned to the issue of race. The new editor in Chief assumed that Mike represented the entity of African American people and asked him to do an interview on a community minority outreach program although the editor had no prior knowledge as to whether or not Mike knew anything about this program, and as it turned out Mike did not know anything about this program.

The fact that Mike felt personally obliged to write and Black issues and that the staff of the DI expected him to do that, almost reluctantly as I will touch on later, frames the relationship between Mike and his peers while on staff. I am not sure how to interpret this fact, but Mike described the situation as a catch twenty two. “It’s just, you know, the catch twenty two was me writing about Black issues was that I had a lot of criticisms. I had a lot of criticism… My column ran every Tuesday and on midnight it would be posted online and I would have kind of criticism opposing me and opposing my topic. Most of them were right after it was run and you only see certain people in the media company after midnight and I often thought it was people working for the Illini media company.” Mike seemed to believe that people perceived his columns as a threat when he explained that all he wanted to do by writing his columns was to “My intent as a columnist was to promote awareness and encourage discussion. And you know I
wanted to be popular and get the girls *laugh*”

Mike explained in the interview how he was one of the best columnists, not by his own standards but by those around him. He was in the top five of U wire and never had to reapply every semester, which is standard procedure that the editor just continued to ask him to return each semester. The issues he wrote about were touchy. He encountered a great deal of criticism that made the environment tense in the workplace. Mike explained how once he wrote about the word Nigger and people criticized his column very harshly. Mike expressed the following. “I defiantly didn’t feel welcome in the environment. I feel like everyone was sneering at me and talking about me behind my back. I don’t have any way to prove this but after my columns were published, immediately thereafter, there would be a host of comments on my column. They delete the comments that are derogatory and they had to delete a lot because if someone had outright called me a nigger they would delete that because they don’t want to encourage that, which I totally agree with. There were people who would overtly insult me and yea I would be insulted.”

Although Mike’s opinions for columns were often issues that people don’t want to deal with, he felt obliged as stated previously. Mike suspects that his columns and the topics he chose to write about were the reason he was fired. The summer before he was fired the DI
got a new Editor and chief and did some housecleaning as Mike described it. “. The editor when I was hired was liberal and the new person is extremely conservative so yea they did some house cleaning. Definitely more conservative and they didn’t want me up there talking about white privilege.” This information especially supported my thesis that the DI has taken a conservative turn in the past year or so. Hearing from someone who was on the inside during this time that there was deliberate housecleaning answered questions as to how this shift was achieved, but not why. The next question I tackled was on who is at the top of the totem on the DI.

From Mike’s responses I learned about the board of the Illini Media Company. Mike was an opinions columnist so he was not paid, because of this he did not have a lot of information of the make up of the board, but he did have a strong sense of their influence over what goes into the paper.

“The DI is supposed to be a student run newspaper and it is not. It is an independent newspaper and it is independent of the university. That is why we have the Illini media center. It is not a student led newspaper because everything we do is influenced by the board of the Illini media company. Of course I wasn’t on staff; I was a columnist so I didn’t get paid. At the end of the day they pick the editor and chief, they have say because it is their company. I wouldn’t go as far to call it the student
voice, I would call it a selective student voice or part of the student voice or a bunch of muthafuckers that think they are smart, a bunch of racist muthafuckers who think they are progressive… I don’t know whose on the board but the same people who run the news gazette run the Illini media company. The News Gazette is a very conservative paper and I believe that influence the DI. Now the people on the Orange and Blue Observer would say that the Daily illini is very liberal, I would not argue that because I think the liberal stand out most from the conservative voices because there is a conservative majority.”

Mike’s strong opinions and perceptions of the board of the Illini media company specifically stood out for these specific reasons; this was the first time he used profanity, in fact I know Mike and I know that he doesn’t often use that type of language, and he also places them at the top of the decision making process, completely devaluing the voice of the students. This excerpt points out the backbone of the DI and draws a connection that hasn’t been made yet, with the DI to the News Gazette. I am sure this information is going to come up again when my research is more developed, but this is defiantly not an issue to ignore.

From my interview with Mike I learned a lot about the DI and about how the politics of race play out and are internalized in this particular situation. Mike, a self identified Black nationalist, internalized the lack of color on staff and felt that he needed to give a voice to the
voiceless. At one time in the interview he stated that “Black folks on this campus do not have a media outlet”. He used the little bit of power behind media discourse to contradict this fact. When he did so he was shot down by both his peers and the general student body. This says a lot about both the Illini Media center and the student body as a whole. Although Mike stated that the DI was not an accurate representation of the students’ voice does the negative reaction to Mike’s liberal columns prove that maybe the student voice is a conservative one that correlates with the tone of the paper, or that those are just the most vocal opinions. The fact that Mike was fired, although he clearly had excellent credentials is also telling. The entire interview addressed the main issues that I want to further evaluate and I am sure a second follow up interview may be necessary to clarify some things.

Data: ***Updates 12/4/2007***
I don't see the archives as a relevant resource in this study because I focus on recent activism, from the last year or so. I did, however find a collection that may be interesting if I were to look at the acts of student activism on campus historically. In 1972 a chronology of campus protests were added to the archives. (Record series number 41/66/700, volume 0.1 cu. ft.) This includes ten pages of student demonstrations from 1948-1972. This collection includes information on demonstrations of "free speech, political protests, civil rights and anti Vietnam war demonstrations, and community, union, and voting initiatives." This will help to gain a holistic view of activism on campus. If I took that direction in this research then I would aim to get archives of DI articles that correspond with these events to notice a possible trend for the tone of DI articles on student demonstrations. link to archive page

***Interview***
I conducted a phone interview with a past columnist for the opinions section of the Daily Illini. This student was on the DI staff for one semester and prior to this he wrote in to the DI several times. I choose to interview him for the purposes of my research because it was my goal to gain insight on the inner working of the DI and to learn more about the recent conservative tone of the paper especially in the editorials and opinions section. The student I interviewed held liberal beliefs on many issues surrounding the campus.

I started out the interview asking X to introduce himself. He described himself as a graduate of the University of Illinois who used to work for the Daily Illini in the fall of 2006 and made an appearance on a talk show voicing his opinions on the chief after his retirement. I went on to ask about his affiliation with the Daily Illini. X replied that he wrote two letters to the editor in the two semesters before he wrote for the paper. He worked at the DI for a semester and when he reapplied for the following semester, he was not rehired. One of my main interests in regard to the DI is who is in charge of the hiring and firing, since it situates itself as a student run paper that represents the student voice on campus. X stated that the opinions editor is in charge of that process, yet I am still interested in who gives her orders, such as a board of trustees.

I thought the fact that he was not rehired was very significant to my research so I investigated that issue further. I first asked how many
people were not rehired along with him and he stated that there were
two others that he knew of that were not asked to return. X held very
strong beliefs as to why his two co-workers were not rehired. He stated
that, “they were both bombastic and were both bad writers. They had
really ill formed arguments. They were both kind of bigoted in their
own special ways.” This seemed significant and when I asked him to
elaborate he stated that the tone of their articles were very conservative.
For instance, one of the two people who weren’t rehired often wrote
articles on issues such as anti affirmative action. At this time, I decided
to leave the issue temporarily and focus on the social climate of the DI.

Interviewer: What was the social climate of that job?

X: Pretty relaxed. We [the opinion columnists and the editor] met every
Friday at four or five for like an hour. Usually Y [a very conservative
columnist as described by X] would make fun of you if you said
anything liberal. He is a terrible terrible person but he had a magnetic
personality. Other than his crazy political views, he is kind of likeable.
Usually the meetings were kind of a job meeting. Would plan out what
we would write for the next week.

One time cartoonist and deputy editor called something gay, I called her
on it, and she said “dude it was just a phrase.” I don’t know I didn’t
need to call her on it.
After I wrote my column on the green party, Y probably hated me. About how I didn’t think it was effective at all. I wrote some pretty bombastic things myself. She told me she was going to tear me up.

Interviewer: Did you ever feel that the mass majority of columnists or others on staff did not welcome your opinions or ideas?

X: I have been shrided a couple of times. Not really yelled at. The first time was after my second or third column. My first was about how Bush doesn’t do anything to prevent 911. My third column was basically just arguments. Z, who was the editor of the entire paper at the same time. It was a very incestuous place at the time (Not sure what he meant by that). “Good column, it was better than the previous ones, people liked it more.” The social climate is kind of like a club. This is second hand from my girlfriend who told me that it is, what did she say, she said when she worked for it, it was kind of like people who were anti-frat but it acted like a frat itself. Wasn’t so much with the opinions column. Kind of a tight knit place where people go to belong. A bunch of people who are independent but then they work for the DI. It breeds conformity.

Interviewer: Are their any situations that can illustrate that?

X: No, I do not think I can back that up
From this passage, I got that the environment was a close-knit family, as long as you held the same beliefs as everyone else. Although X could not always give specific examples, his strong tone and feelings of the way he remembered the interactions at the DI left little doubt that he perceived the DI as a place that was relaxed but not always welcoming of change, individuality or liberal thoughts. X was very strong with some of his descriptions. He called some of his peers things such as bombastic and bigots. In these instances, I paid very close attention to non-verbal cues, such as his tone, strength and volume to perceive how deeply he truly felt about these people and how accurate, at least to the way he viewed the situations, they were.

X also gave specific examples of the types of columns that the editor approved and the type that they looked down upon. At another time in the interview X states that there were two issues that they banned the columnists from writing about—Israel and the Chief. However, X later stated that when the Chief became a “hot topic” again, it was no longer off limits.

As stated previously, I was very interested in the hiring and firing process of the Daily Illini. When I reproached the question of average returning staff X gave a greater amount of information.

Interviewer: How many members of the staff were returning
columnists?

X: About ten people on staff and three people who did not return. All I know personally is I reapplied and wasn’t rehired. I don’t know personally about the other two people who did not return, but me him or her were the only people who didn’t come back. There were a couple other people who I don’t know if they came back but he wrote about one column the entire year so I don’t know if you would consider that coming back, but he was pretty conservative too and an ass.

Interviewer: Were you angry when you discovered you were not rehired for the upcoming semester?

X: I kind of thought maybe I would not get rehired but I was pretty pissed and disappointed I didn’t. Especially when I saw that most people did. It’s cliquey, I am not going to deny that. There are a lot of people who you can tell are really trendy and are going to do what the coolest thing is. A lot of people are there for the career and to be part of a group and I think you see that reflected.

X went on to discuss the new editor and how he is much more conservative than the previous one. Also, he elaborated on the staff and the types of articles that are produced. One longtime writer for the DI opinions column, according to X, held very bigoted and racist beliefs and these facts are reflected in his columns. X stated that people such as
the person discussed keep their jobs because there are specific politics behind the inner workings of the DI that not even he is sure of. I wanted to end with a question on whether or not the DI is a reflection of the student body on campus.

Interviewer: Was the DI a close portrayal of the voice of the students?

X: Looking at the student populations and looking at the online polls, they were fairly conservative and pro chief. I don’t know if that is because the pro chief people were more vocal. I guess it’s hard to say what the average students would be. My time there we had more liberal writers than conservative writers. I think it is more of a liberal campus than conservative. Even the pro-chief people. I know a guy who graduated and went to work with the Obama campaign and he was pro-chief. I knew a lot of really progressive people who were pro-chief. I think it was reflective of the schools population. When I worked there, it was pretty liberal but I think that’s how it ought to be because that is how the campus was. And then the next semester it got more conservative. But then again, I wasn’t there.

Interviewer: Recently the opinions columns have been very critical of a lot of the student activism on campus; do you have any predictions as to why?

X: The first thing directly critical is that they wanted someone to read J.
White’s book and write a response. Why would we want to do that, but they had someone do that. They aren’t funded by the University but I see no reason why they would support anything in the university. It is independent and funded by ad buyer so maybe that’s it. I think it is the leadership because I think the leadership of the DI is the one who controls what gets in. When I first came on they didn’t really print letters to the editors because they told me they weren’t getting many and I really don’t know if that is true. The DI is really careerist. Creativity, I don’t know how much you can really find there on the DI. There were a lot of people who pretended to be liberal but they kissed a lot of ass. One thing about the DI was that everyone on the DI talked about how hard they worked there and that they didn’t get any sleep, just the standard complaint you hear from the entitled and the privileged. They talk about how hard they work but what have you done lately. I don’t want to criticize the DI that much because I don’t really read it.

The interview ended shortly after and although there were several limitations, I was satisfied with the answers. X answered questions with a lot of depth. Our interview ran for almost two hours because he elaborated on many things without me asking and when he began talking, his train of thought revealed a lot of things that I believe he would not have said if I was constantly stopping him to ask question. In actuality, when he would answer one question, he usually ended up
answering about five that I had not asked yet. At one point, I had mixed feelings because he told me a story that he wanted to keep between the two of us and although I did not reveal that information, I felt that it would really add to my argument and wish that I could have included that information. As I stated earlier I had to deal with limitations. One main limitation was the fact that this was a phone interview and I had to type, listen and respond. This meant that I could not give my full attention, but I was able to keep up and I typed out his responses, which made the task easier since I type much faster than I write. I also had to change many names because X revealed a lot of information that may have incriminated other people on campus. It was hard to have discretion about what to include about descriptions and what to leave out in an attempt of confidentiality. The interview as a whole was a success and I left the option for a follow up interview if the need arises.

**Data:**

I began looking at the Daily Illini as a primary resource. I searched the words protests, activism, STOP, oppression and racism in the archives from last October until the presence. I found a number of articles and picked the columns and articles directly related to the student activism relating to the Tacos and Tequila incident, the forum, and other protests including the recent protest regarding the Union and students’ spheres. This gave me direct examples of the type of reporting and columns done by the DI staff, focusing more on the opinions
From looking at various articles, I noticed a trend. The opinion columns most always sided with the university when dealing with student activism. There were only two columns in favor of student activism. One editorial went as far as to tell students not to attend the forum because it would be a waste of time. One of the most recent columns on student activism called a student activist coalition on campus exclusive, claiming that they ignore the needs of the majority. The columnist also stated that the coalition was against the privileged group, meaning all white people.

I examined these columns and articles through a linguistic anthropological lens. Many of the columns minimized issues such as stereotype parties. The most telling factors were the letters to the editors and student online responses. Many of the responses were very conservative. This information corresponds with the information revealed by my two previous interviewees. With the information from my previous interviews, this information is easier to translate and evaluate for meaning. Both of my previous interviewees stated that there was a recent shift in the opinions staff, replacing more liberal workers with conservative ones.

I also wanted to use the idea of mapping to fit my particular
interest. I went through and noted the locations mentioned in these articles and categorized them as student spheres and institutional spheres. I ended up with an image of the perceptions of the university by both students and faculties. The first protest in October took place in front of the union and a march grew from this demonstration. The path of the march was from the quad, down the Chalmers past the tri delta house and down to the ZBT house, coming back around to end at Swanland. The student led forum on these events the following February’s central location was at Follinger on the quad and had spillover to Greg hall, and the union. The following press conference was held in the Black house on Nevada in Urbana. The most recent demonstration against the lack of student voice in the Union was held at the Union and the students protests throughout the halls and the courtyard café then marched to Swanland and entered the doors straight to the chancellor’s office. As stated previously, the majority of the columns written on these events favored administration as opposed to student voice.

From these facts a map can be drawn that shows the Union and Swanland to be a restrictive place for students. Follinger and Greg serve as limited spheres for activism within the rules provided by administration because this event had to be approved by administration to be held in these locations. The Union likewise can be seen on both
sides of the line, in pre-approved demonstrations, the union is a place for student activism, however without permission, and this is not a location for students. Swanland is a complete institutionalized location where students are not openly permitted without appointments. The only location in these situations that is a free student sphere was the Black house, a cultural house on campus. If a literal map were drawn then the entire campus except the cultural houses would be drawn off as restrictive spheres for students on campus. This is telling and the tones of the columnist of the DI buy into these hegemonic frameworks.

**Data:** I am unsure of my video plan but the following is an idea of where I want my video to go. I am limited with IRB restrictions, however if I was not I would love to include footage from the focus group I hope to have with Black women student activist on campus on their perceptions of the DI’s media representation of their activism. I also want to piece together already existing footage from some of the protest on campus, including the initial rally in October 2006, the Forum from February 2007 and the press conference held last year. All off these event will be juxtaposed with readings from some negative opinions columns and the focus group footage.

**Scene 1 Opening**

Will open with a clip from the march after the October rally to show the mass number of student participants marching and chanting. On the bottom of the screen will be the title and date of the protest. This scene would last only a few seconds and will eventually decrease in volume so a section from the opinions column can be read. The protesters will still be displayed will the column is read. This will fade into the next scene.

**Scene 2 Focus group**

This scene will be of my focus group of Black women who were active in at least one student led demonstration on campus. I will open this scene with the question, “do you feel the demonstrations on campus were effective?” It is my belief that the women’s answers will contradict those opinions expressed in the opinions column read to create a nice
sense of a unique Black activist epistemology. This scene will last long enough to let at least two participants answer.

Scene 3 Forum

This scene will focus on the forum held in February. On the bottom of the screen will be the title and date of the forum. The purpose is not to give an idea of the issues discussed, but to show the number of students who attended the forum. This scene will only have sound for the first few moments, and then will be muted so an excerpt from the editorial can be read with the forum in the background. This scene will fade out to return to the focus group.

Scene 4 Focus group

This scene will focus on the issue of acceptance that I hope will hint on how these women internalize the negative media representations in the Daily Illini. I will open with the question, “do you think the DI reflects the student voice?” I anticipate this will open up the floor to show the inner experiences of these women about their activism and the hidden power of discourse within the DI.

Scene 5 Screen Shots from the DI

While the voices from the focus group continue I will display headlines from the DI’s editorials and opinions columns that de-legitimize the activism of these women. I hope that this will help to illustrate the type of representations these women are fighting against.

Scene 6 Closing

After the women finish speaking the screen will go to black with the words “Students Voice? Then Why Aren’t These Women Being Heard?” Or something to that affect in bold white letters.

The End

Discuss: This document provides insight into a research project on the power behind negative media discourse and its affect on Black female student activist. Throughout this past semester, I have developed a research project through frequent trial and error. I hope to plan a
research proposal on the media discourse of the independent university paper, The Daily Illini (DI), on student activism in the past year and a few months and how active women of color on campus internalize these media representations.

I began this research unclear of my intent, but sure that I wanted to look at the hidden power of discourse as described by Norman Fairclough. I started by looking at the text in the editorial and opinions columns that had to do with student-led protests. I found these articles by searching websites, using words such as racism, protests, students’ protests, and STOP (Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege). STOP is a group that sponsored and organized the majority of the student activism on campus. I limited my search to articles from October 31, 2006 to the present. I chose this time span because October 31 was the first large student demonstration on the quad to protest a stereotypical party entitled Tacos and Tequila. Through my initial readings, I saw that in the past year, the paper took a conservative turn and most of the opinions columns supported faculty as opposed to student-led protests. This fact seemed odd to me because the Daily Illini is advertised as an independent news source and the face of the university. My initial findings led me to a brief discourse analysis of the texts and my finding paralleled this conservative shift. The columns mainly used passive tense and implicitly, however sometime explicitly,
stated resistance to the student led protests and demonstrations. One article that illustrated the explicitness of some columns was an editorial that told students not to attend a student faculty forum held on February 1, 2007 because it was supposedly a waste of time. From this information, I wanted to know from someone on the inside of the establishment, what was behind this shift. This led me to conduct interviews with two previous columnists. The Daily Illini fired one of my interviewees and the DI did not rehire the other for the following term.

I conducted these interviews with a more free flowing methodology. I asked short succinct questions and let the respondents do the majority of the talking. The main issues that resonated through both of the interviews were a clear distaste for the Daily Illini and the clear hierarchy of power. Through the information revealed in my second interview with the previous opinions columnist who was fired, I learned that the same company that owns the News Gazette, a conservative newspaper, runs the DI. The DI is independent but it is not student run. The students have to answer to the board and there are things that the columnists are encouraged to write about and some issues the board forbids them to write. The same respondent also explained how in the past year there some “housecleaning” was done on the part of the board. He was fired and others were not asked to return. He is
more radical, wrote on issues such as the Jena 6, hurricane Katrina, Michael Richards, and critiqued the president. The other interviewee I talked with was not asked to return. His column was one of the few whose discourse was positive on the first student demonstration in October. This respondent brought up issues such as white privilege and racism, words rarely seen in the DI’s editorial column. Although these facts were all interesting, I still did not have a research project, I had a discourse analysis. I had to take my research a step further and do something with the information that my respondents revealed.

At this point in my research it was known that the DI is owned by the same owners of the News Gazette, that the paper has taken a conservative turn in the last year, give or take a few months, due to some “house keeping”, and that the media discourse on issues of student activism shows an unequal privilege in favor of administration in regard to issue of student demonstrations. What I want to know is how this affects the students who participate in these demonstrations, more specifically women of color. I choose women of color as my ideal subjects because of the multiple jeopardies; racism, sexism, classism and sometimes heterosexism, these women already face. Zora Neale Hurston is infamous for her claim that Black women are the mules of the earth. With these issues already facing women of color, how does this added affliction affect Black women who are active on campus? Do
these negative media discourses in the DI stop the women from participating in student activism, increase their activity or have no bearing whatsoever. I also want to look into how these women perceive and internalize these media representations. Since Black women already deal with a great deal of –isms, do they deal with these negative media representations more easily or do they internalize these representations any more or less than any other targeted population?

In order to learn all of these things I plan to conduct more one-on-one interviews. During these interviews, I plan to email each of the interviewees a few columns and have them read them prior to the interviews so I can make sure we are all on the same page in time for the actual interview. This will allow me to refer to the columns in my questions using Weiss’s model for asking questions, paying special attention to inner events, i.e. “how did you feel when you read…?” In addition to interviews, I want to conduct focus groups. This method will allow me more free flowing conversation so I can act as more of an observer without prying too much. This technique will help reveal what the participants value in different situations. I also believe that in a group setting, more people will speak up when they hear other people sharing their own emotions. This buys into the Black feminist idea of a collective identity, that the Black women’s experience is unique, but there are several shared aspects amongst themselves.
My pilot research began with many uncertainties. I knew that I wanted to explore the unequal distributions of power in media discourse however; I did not know what to do with my findings. After all, if I already know the answer to my question it is not a research project. Since I went in with the presupposition that the DI was very conservative and through my initial interviews I gained a strong grip on why this was the case, I had no need to continue this research. Not all was loss though and this research was not in vain. The next step was to take these notions to the streets and find out how strong the hidden power of discourse was on campus. In a little over a year, a large number of student demonstrations have taken place on campus and the DI has been in favor of the administration and as one of my interviewees stated “acted as a tool for the university”. How does this affect the students involved in these demonstrations, more specifically the women of color? At this point, I have a firm grip of what I really want to know, how do these negative media representations of the DI on student activism affect the women of color involved in the activism on campus? I plan to use this preliminary research as the grounding for my investigation of Black women activists on campus and their internalization of unfavorable media discourse.

**Research Proposal:**

**Title:** Student Voice? An ethnography of the Daily Illini’s negative representation of student activism and its internalization by activist women of color.
Abstract

Women of color have historically been active players in social movements in the United States (U.S.). Because of this, women of color are oftentimes the targets of negative media representation or absent from any form of representation entirely. My research examines how these women of color, student activists perceive their own activism in relation to the mass media representation, in this case the Daily Illini (DI). There is a hidden power in media, which gives media a privileged position in discourse. From preliminary research, I learned that the DI uses its privilege in a biased way: in reporting on student activism, they favor administration and faculty over the students. Studying how women of color internalize this marginalization afflicted on them by the DI’s media representation will reveal how influential and powerful this media outlet is or is not to Black women student activists, a group that is commonly oppressed on multiple levels. The results of this work will demonstrate the variability in power relations and influence between the DI and the subjects of its columns.

Statement of Research Problem

Women of color have historically been the primary players in social movements, serving as grassroots style, bridge leaders (Lorde 1984). Throughout the years, this remains true and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s campus is no exception. During the recent upsurge of activism on campus against racist parties, racist incentives and overall institutional racism, women of color worked behind the scenes and stood in the forefront in these student demonstrations. In the majority of the activities led by student activism, the Breaking the Silence rally in October 2006, the Power and Privilege forum in February 2007 and a number of other events, women of color were the primary components, acting as speakers and organizers. These facts show that women of color were and still are the backbone of social movements; however, no one includes these women’s in the history books.

My pilot research in the Methods of Cultural Anthropology course in the fall 2007 at the University of Illinois proved that the Daily Illini (DI), an independent newspaper and one of the primary news sources on campus, is following the trend started by the history books. The opinion’s columns and editorials either completely ignore student activism or use its power of discourse to paint these activities in a bad light. I started my preliminary research by interviewing two former DI
columnists in an attempt to reach a consensus on why there has recently been a conservative shift in the DI. Both of the in depth interviews I conducted with former DI columnists, one was fired and the other was not rehired, revealed that the DI has recently done some “house cleaning” and fired many of their more liberal writers. After exposing this information, I then conducted a critical discourse analysis of seven opinion’s columns and one editorial that focused on recent student activism.

Out of the seven opinion’s columns and the one editorial I analyzed, only two represented student led demonstrations favorably while the other five described them as irrelevant or unreasonable. The one editorial that I examined explicitly told students not to go to the forum I previously mentioned. All of the DI columns that negatively represented student activism exhibited clear instances of both value and prepositional assumptions (Fairclough 2003). The columnist made value assumptions concerning the validity of the student activism on campus by de-legitimizing these student activists’ efforts. In addition, the columnist exerted presupposition assumptions when they foretold in the editorial that the forum would be a waste of time. However, Becker (1998) once wisely stated that “the trick with dealing with the hierarchy of credibility is simple enough; doubt everything anyone in power tells you” (91). Taking Becker’s advice, I plan to do first hand research on these events, the perceptions of these events and the internal drive of the activists from the activists themselves.

Since women of color are the main players in the activism that the DI’s opinions columns critique harshly, a study on their personal perceptions of activism and their opinions of media will add these oftentimes-ignored activists’ stories into the discourse surrounding student activism.

**Statement of Proposed Research**

I plan to narrow down the generalized group of women of color to Black women for many reasons. First, my identification as a Black woman makes these participants a group that I am particularly passionate; however, I cannot assume that I will be an insider in this research because of my identification as a Black woman. Secondly, Black women were active in a plethora of movements in the United States (U.S.), including, the Civil Rights movement, the Black Power movement and the Black Feminist movement. Their strong-shared collective makes Black women an interesting group to look at in the context of contemporary social movements. Black women are also a significant presence in the current student activism on the UIUC
In this proposed research, I intend to question how Black women involved in student activism internalize their own activities. I then want to examine if these women feel their efforts are successful, why or why not. I then want to incorporate aspects of the DI’s whether or not unfavorable media discourse of these women’s activism affect their psyche. Delving deeper into this issue, I plan to, in turn, look at how Black women’s internalization of these media representations affect their future activity in student led demonstrations. Building upon this issue, I also anticipate investigating the alternative media outlets these women may consult, other than the DI for news.

Methodology

I plan to take a multi-method approach to answering my research questions. Since the impending issues in my research are multi-dimensional, it is logical to take a multi-method technique to answering these questions. The first method I anticipate utilizing are focus groups. I want to find four to six Black women who are active on campus. When I use the term active, I am referring to women who have participated in at least one of the recent acts of activism on campus. These women would have to be sophomores or older, because background knowledge of the first rally in October 2006 is essential to creating a holistic perception of the activism on campus. I would conduct more than one focus group session with the same women because, as Balsham (1993) stated that establishing a relationship with your participants is key to effective research.

The use of focus groups as a first step in my proposed research is effective because they enable participants to ask questions, of not only each other, but also these conversations oftentimes force the individual to evaluate their own perceptions (Morgan 1988). Focus groups can also be empowering for the participants (Morgan 1988). This is especially ideal in this case because these women are all afflicted with multiple jeopardies, and feeling a sense of power in this case can encourage freer conversation and strengthen the relationships amongst the participants and amongst the moderator and the participants.

The group aspect of focus groups is especially appropriate for these women because social movements are communal activists, hence the word social. I hypothesize that these women, from the prior experience in the planning and acting stages of student led demonstrations, are comfortable in group settings and will converse more freely. The focus group is able to concentrate large amounts of
social activity into smaller time spans (Morgan 1988).

Within these social episodes, I plan to guide the conversation to address more internal issues, such as perception and cognitive issues to gain insight on complex behavior (Morgan 1988:19). Some examples of guiding questions are as followed:

- Why did each of you participate in these various student demonstrations?
- How did you feel about the campus environment towards marginalized populations, both before and after your activism?
- Do you feel that your activism improved these attitudes on campus?
- Do any of you read the DI? If yes, what did you feel about the columns written on these student led demonstrations?

At this point in the conversation, I anticipate that around half of the participants would be at least casual readers of the DI and the way they retell these columns will reveal the participants’ value system. I predict that these retellings will be just as telling, if not more, than the explicit response to my guiding questions. I also plan to pay attention to non-verbal cues of both the speakers and listeners.

After the initial focus group, I will conduct in depth one on one interviews with each of the participants. During this time, I can go in to depth on some of the issues raised in the focus group, but not elaborated (Morgan 1988). During these interviews, I will use “keyword analysis” (Strauss 2005). Strauss describes this method as a technique ethnographers use to look for and examine words that respondents use repeatedly and in turn hold a special significance (2005). These keywords can indicate concepts and perceptions of these student activists.

These interviews will also help to build the researcher participant relationships. During these interviews, the subjects may feel more comfortable to reveal personal feelings and I will have more time and space to pry within the sphere of a one on one interview (Morgan 1988). The purpose of the last focus group session will be to cover any additional information discovered in the one on one interviews to get a group perspective on these particular issues. I hypothesis that these women’s perceptions of the campus activism will juxtapose that of the DI. Instead of seeing their efforts and hard work as useless and a waste
of time, they will legitimize their efforts. It is a fact that there is a hidden power in discourse, but I am anxious to learn just how powerful this power is in the lives of my participants.

**Positionality**

Being a Black female student on campus who has been extremely active on campus, I have to acknowledge my subjectivity and address the fact that some of the participants either may have relationships with me prior to the research, or have heard of me in some context. I am not sure if this will be to my advantage or disadvantage. Their familiarity with me may make them trust me more and see me as a comrade as opposed to simply a researcher. Contrary, my power relation with them in this context may make them resentful. To accommodate either of these possibilities, I will let the participant have an active role in the research process. I will let them see my notes and comment where they see fit (Dunier 1999). I want to attempt to balance out the power relationship as much as possible.

**Statement of Ethics**

This research involves human participants that are vulnerable because of their marginalized positions, according the Institutional Review Board (IRB). I fully acknowledge this and contend to comply with IRB regulations to ensure that I do no harm physically or psychologically to my research participants. It is my hope that through this type of sharing that will take place within the concept of focus groups amongst peers, and interviews with myself, a sort of cathartic release will occur. These women’s opinions and perceptions are usually ignored, and it is my hope that someone showing genuine interest will be empowering for my participants. However, to protect the identities of my participants I will let them each choose their own pseudonyms. During my research, I will not objectify my participants in any way. As stated previously, they will all have an active role in the interviewing process (Dunier 1999).

**Significance of Research**

This research reaches out to a marginalized population that, although very active in changing history, is void from the history books. This research theoretically contributes to research on contemporary cultural and social movements in the context of universities by showing a more memoir reminiscent stories of the lives of active Black women. This research also contributes to theory of media discourse, critical discourse analysis and the hidden power of media by applying these concepts to Black women’s activism and their perception and
internalization of the media’s representations. Expanding this scholarship will hopefully serve as a catalyst for scholars in various disciplines to include marginalized groups in their retellings of truth and history.

The applied contributions of this research give us insight on ways to effectively accommodate and cater to the needs of Black women in the context of social movements and more generally to everyday life. Black women face an issue of invisibility in line with their multiple jeopardies. This invisibility exists because Black women do not fit into any single oppressed group, racism, classism or sexism individually; society oftentimes forgets to cater to their issues (King 1988). In brief, the liberation of Black women requires an acknowledgement of multiple jeopardy and multiple consciousnesses (King 1988:265-271). The first step to understanding is clarity, if the needs and voices of Black women enters the sphere of mass media and other widely read outlets; I believe this will jumpstart a discourse on accommodating these women’s unique needs creating a unique Black female epistemology.

References


Publications.


**EUI Links:** I used Cristobal Valencia Raqmirez’s report on the Chancellor’s Committee on Latino/a Issues Report (2003). Ramirez’s research is not as concerned with what is in the report as he is who has read the report, who the report was made available, and how the report is being used. The main point is research hopes to reach is to show that administrator simply goes through the motions when dealing with issues regarding hostility towards marginalized groups.

Although my research plan and Ramirez’s differ, there are a great number of similarities. His research focuses a lot on perceptions of the report. My research, in turn, looks at the student body’s perception of the editorials in the *Daily Illini* regarding student activism and mobility. His plan would work for my research with little variation. Ramirez plans to review the actual document and I also plan to look at the actual document which in my case are issues of the *DI* from the past two years, mainly late October, the Tacos and Tequila party, to the
present. Ramirez plans to interview one or two members of the committee who wrote the report. I am going to interview one or two people on the editorial staff of the *DI* and possibly a previous member of the *DI*’s editorial staff who was fired in the past year since last October and gain insight on the internal workings and decisions of the *DI*. Lastly, similar to Ramirez I plan to interview members of the student body who have been on campus for at least three years, long enough to observe the shift in the *DI* to take on a more conservative tone.

Ramirez’s report and my own ambitions are also similar in methodology of reading text. He pays particular attention to language. My background and focus on linguistic anthropology gives me a particular interest in the intersectionality between language and power. Ramirez notes small linguistic cues on tone and importance when he notes the uses of ‘recommend’ and ‘demand’. While reading the *DI* I plan pay close attention to the explicit and implicit use of language. I will analyze the language of the authors and the replies on the web based addition for linguistic cues and tone and power. Ramirez’s attention to language is significant because that is the basis of my study for reading the issues of the *DI* and not many other reports I browsed mentioned linguistic anthropology in their methodology.

Ramirez’s report and the planning stages of my own are very
similar, although the themes are different. The methodology, use of linguistic anthropology, and the close observation of a document makes Ramirez’s document the perfect model for my own work.

Reflect: As an undergraduate student, the idea of a research proposal baffled me. I don't think I fully grasped the concept until about a month ago. Although I was unsure of the outcome of a free flowing course such as this, I thoroughly enjoyed it, even when I did not have the slightest clue as to what I was doing. Working in a group for comments and sometimes in class discussions, helped me to develop and start thinking in terms of a research proposal. As a student in the process of completing grad school applications, I gained valuable skills for the not to distant future. This course did have it's down side though. IRB protocol was no fun. I felt like every time I looked up I Tim was sending a new email with exceptions to the last email and nothing was clear, as to our guidelines and what we could and could not do. However, by the end, I had a decent grasp on IRBs. The idea of archiving is also very frightening to me because I am so guarded of my work. I want to know how is citing my work and how. I have this fear of being misquoted and feeling the repercussions down the road. Although I was weary of archiving, I did choose to publish my work in IDEALS. All in all, this course was a very unique and exciting experience.

Recommendations: Based on my preliminary pilot research, mainly interviews, marginalized groups do not have any media representation on campus. This is the case mainly because of lack of funding for culturally based programs. There was an African American newspaper called The Griot that did not work out because of leadership and funding. One of the people I interviewed revealed that although the DI is an independent news source, it is not student run. I recommend that the university provide adequate funding to one of the cultural houses to start a newspaper to represent the voice of the marginalized populations on campus. Although I have not began conducted my research on the women of color who are affected by the DI’s negative representations, I think that a sphere that reflects the perceptions of the marginalized populations on campus will be effective in showing that these students are appreciated and do, in fact, have a voice on campus. In addition, I recommend a course on diversity training to help in combating some of the ignorance shown in not only the opinions columns but also in the comments posted online in response to these columns. One of the people I interviewed expressed how much it hurt to read hateful comments on his columns that were more left wing. Allowing a space
for an alternative voice to the white majority and more diversity training will help encourage women of color in their activism and expressions of individuality.