

**Oral History  
Capturing Quarantine  
Spring 2020  
Final Reflection**

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- How did you feel when you read the email notifying students the oral history project would change from *Interfaith Chicago* to *Capturing Quarantine* due to the transition to remote learning?

In all honesty, it was a relief. I was getting really stressed about having to go somewhere and talk to someone that I didn't know for up to 3 hours. I've always been very shy around new people and don't have great socialization skills. I'm good at making friends but when it comes to talking to strangers I get very anxious. The narrators we had been previously assigned were basically strangers to us. We had never met them and I hadn't had more than a 10 minute phone conversation where I was focused more on being polite than I was being myself. I was also getting stressed about how well online interviews were even going to work and how well the narrators were going to handle it. So when I heard we would be interviewing each other, a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. These were at least people I had some kind of connection with and I knew I could trust them to know how to work a Zoom call. I had some issues with my internet connection during my interview and I had to have Nolan send me their recording. I can't imagine how much more difficult it would have been to try and get my previous narrator to send me the recording. In the end I still had fun and was glad I got to participate in such a unique oral history.

- What were your initial thoughts about participating in an oral history project documenting your classes' experience during the first months of the global pandemic?

I was excited. I was really eager to have my story be heard. Before we changed projects, I was already excited to be immortalized as an interviewer; But now I'll be immortalized not only as an interviewer but as someone whose story mattered. It was also interesting to me because I would get to know my classmates better and they will be more than just people I had a class with once.

- How do you feel about the project now?

I'm very excited to go and watch all the interviews once they get published in the archives. This project was definitely the hardest thing I did this semester and I'm glad that I no longer need to stress over it. I do feel a little like I bombed my interview as the interviewer and I wish I could do it over. In the end, I don't think I'll be transcribing anything again for a long time.

- As an interviewer:

- How did you prepare for the interview?

I made sure I had all my facts right before starting because the last thing I wanted to do was embarrass myself .

- What was it like to interview a classmate?

It was nice because I was way less stressed about being able to hold a conversation. With this new project, I knew that we were in the same boat and if I was confused about something then they were doing the same exact project and could probably help me out if I couldn't find the answer myself. There was a lot of comfort in knowing my interviewee was someone else's interviewer.

- How did you feel after the interview?

I honestly feel that I might not have met all the requirments and that really makes me upset because I enjoyed the interview a lot and I think it's good materials but it might not be up to par with everyone else.

- What is the most important thing you learned as an interviewer?

Just because I don't know an easier way to do something doesn't mean there isn't one. When setting up a space to conduct my end of the interview, editing to transcription, and writing the abstract bio summary my dad showed my numerous ways to make my life so much easier. This was especially true for the transcription because multiple times I wanted to just do it the hard way because I didn't know there were easier methods out there that can be found with a simple google search.

- What advice would you give to future interviewers?

Read your script out loud before conducting the interview! There were multiple questions I had to rephrase mid interview because they didn't makes sense once I considered them again. This made me have to stop listening to the interview and think about how I should say the question instead or even take really long pauses between questions that created dead space and killed the flow.

- As a narrator:

- How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I know we weren't supposed to think of our answers before hand, but I have always been really bad about writing scripts for myself and since I was also an interviewer I know some of the questions that were coming and already had certain answers in my back pocket. I don't think this was a hinderance however as I didn't stumble on my words as much as I would have and took less pauses to think.

- Describe your experience being interviewed.

I discovered a lot of things I didn't know about my situation during the interview. While answering questions I was putting a lot more thought into certain topics that I really just accepted and had never previously questioned. It was also surpriseing how many of the same questions my interviewer asked that were also in my script and I had never thought about how I would answer them. I worried more about letting

someone else answer my question and never stopped to wondering what I was think or say if someone asked that to me.

- How did you feel after the interview ended?

I felt like what I had to say mattered. Everyone has a unique voice and individual experience but now my experience was getting shared. And whether or not I get to see how sharing my voice will manifest, I know that it will, and someone somewhere wants to hear what I have to say and will be glad I said it.

- What would you tell someone who is hesitant to be interviewed?

They should be excited to be interviewed. There is nothing difficult about it because there are not right and wrong answers. Everything someone has to say is interesting and someone wants to listen, whether they believe that or not.

- (OPTIONAL) Questions about narrators' private lives and personal relationships were not included in the formal interview, how do you feel about this?

I think this was valid because not everyone would want to share those things anyways, so I think it avoided a lot of conflict or discomfort.

- How has your gender, sexuality, race, and/or ethnicity affected your experience during the global pandemic?

It is even more important that I recognize my white privilege now that people are using the virus as an excuse to discriminate against people of different races and nationalities. This applies especially to those of Asian descent, who are being blamed for something they could not control, whether they are Chinese or not.

- Exploring and developing new relationships is an important part of the undergraduate experience, how has this aspect of your life been affected?

For me, this pandemic is a great excuse to not get caught up in any sort of relationship that I don't want or need. Honestly, I'm glad to be single during this time. There's no point in wanting a significant other because I wouldn't be able to see them right now anyways.

- How are you dealing with the absence of physical contact?

- Is there anything else you would like to include?

N/A