

Oral History
Capturing Quarantine
Fall 2020
Final Reflection

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Section I:

1. Thinking back to the start of the semester, what were your initial thoughts about participating in an oral history project documenting your experience during the ongoing global pandemic?

I understood the reasoning for it. There is not a lot of recorded information about historical pandemics, and so this is a good opportunity to make our experience with the pandemic public. I thought that we would be interviewing people in the college though, outside of the people in our class. I was also really thankful for the topic, because it was something I related to. I was also nervous, because it seemed like a lot of work.

2. How did your feelings about the project change?

I really enjoyed getting to know all of our classmates. It was something where we were in it together. I think it really fostered a sense of community within all of us. As the election went on, I think I understood more of the importance of this project, and why our thoughts, as college students, needed to be heard.

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Section II:

1. As an **interviewer**:

a. How did you prepare for the interview? .

I attended all of the classes and read the assigned reading. I also tried to look over my script as best I could to make sure it had all of the questions that were a part of the core assignment but had room for some personal things about Purlz. I also tried to make sure I did not have any distractions around because I wanted to be able to listen and ask follow up questions.

b. What was it like to interview a classmate?

It was nice to already have that level of comfortability with someone. I could tell that she got more comfortable as the interview went on, but there was one part of the interview where I was laughing a little bit and she saw my face and was also trying not to laugh. It's also so interesting, because I felt like I knew her from class, but this was such a deep dive into her life, and I learned so much more about her.

c. How did you feel after the interview?

It felt good! I was honestly very relived to be done. I was surprised by a lot of her answers and my respect for her went up a lot after this interview. She's done a lot in her life.

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

Listening is so important. I knew that that was a big part of conversations, but if you give someone that amount of time to just listen to them, it is amazing what stories they will tell. I also think that body language is so important, and it is really difficult to get the effect of that from being screen to screen.

e. What advice would you give to future interviewers?

I would say to listen carefully to what your narrator has to say! I would also say to keep an open mind and make them feel as comfortable as possible. If they feel uncomfortable with you at all, they aren't going to want to open up about the deep things we want to be talking about.

4. As a **narrator**:

a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I filled out the bio data form myself, but that was about it. Other than scheduling the interview, I didn't do too much. Before the interview, I did light a candle to help me relax and be able to talk.

b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

It is so strange to go into that much depth about my life. We talked about some things that I talk about with my therapist, but not so much every day. I was nervous at the beginning, but Elliot had good follow up questions. It felt weird to talk about myself that much, even though I joke that all I do is talk about myself.

c. How did you feel after the interview ended?

It's actually funny, I think the interview brought up a lot of things I hadn't thought about in a long time. I was fine, but later that night I cried, and couldn't stop crying for around two hours. I think I was finally processing everything that I said and all of the emotions it brought up. It was so strange because I was crying, but I couldn't really articulate why I was crying so hard.

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

I would tell them to be open, and just tell their story. It really is a great experience, and I think taking that time to talk about and record your life is important for the next generation.

Section III:

5. What information is missing? What else do you think those trying to understand the pandemic should know?

I think that people looking back on this should know that the majority of people were struggling. The wealth gap right now is huge. The stimulus bills haven't been going to the people. They've been going to bail out the larger corporations and not the small businesses. Everyone is feeling isolated from being inside. I think that the divide in our country is larger than ever now, and as an Asian-American woman, the pandemic has been kind of difficult for me. The former president and the people that follow him have made racism more prevalent in our society, but it's hard to realize that it is happening. I said this in the interview, but my roommates were talking about how it was the Chinese people that started it from being gross and eating bats, and I just felt really uncomfortable. It wasn't until I called my mom later that she said, that's really racist. During the beginning of the pandemic, people would also yell racial slurs at me and tell me to stop spreading the virus. I really don't know how to react because I'm third generation down in my family. I've never been to China, so hearing it is kind of weird.