

How was this project different from research you did in high school?

There were absolutely differences in my process. I think in highschool, you're given a couple sources, you're told, "These are your options for sources," and then they really try to cut down how many you can use, and they want you to use certain amounts from each. When I got into this, it was...well, I have all these technical things that I already looked up: let me look into these personal stories, let me see how those can coexist within my paper without me sounding cold or detached from what I'm writing about. In high school, I didn't write anything that I put my heart into like I put this into. I had already argued a lot with people about it when I presented it as a bill, so it had a lot of emotional value to me. In highschool, you do research on dead white men's books, you know? You tell people, "This is why I think this character did this. So this is symbolism everyone!" And...and here it was--I have to find a way to help people.

I think just resources in general. I knew it was going to need to be more than, like, the first thing that popped up when I searched on Google, you know what I mean? So I think it was just the realization that I probably should be using the resources that are provided to me as a student. Like, just taking the time to really look for resources as opposed to just reading a paper. And, I mean, the length also is something I kind of had to get used to. So it was nice, actually, to be able to use resources and research and just continue to kind of let my ideas evolve as I was writing.

I think this research paper in college...there's just so much more creative liberty in the actual process. I don't know if it's just to attribute it to my professor, but he was awesome. And he just gave us the topic--he's like, "Write about food." And then that was your only parameter. Like, that was my only guideline. I remember in high school, you've got a very specific question that they want answered, and you've got your five primary sources, and you're over here highlighting, trying to find the connections between that. But in college, and when you do research papers from this point on beyond, you know there's so much more depth in what you can use and those resources available, you know? You can synthesize peer-reviewed journals, and books, and newspaper articles, and create something that is truly unique. Not to be...not to say it again but, again, just a vast body of literature.

I guess in highschool when I did research papers, I was faced with the the problem of scarcity because our resources were a bit more limited, which meant it was easy for us to find that common thread, but it was hard for us to put, you know, the meat on the bones, so to speak--to start crafting the argument. On the other hand, I guess this time around, I was faced with the problem of abundance. That may be good, that may be bad. Especially if you're a bit more curious, in the sense that, you could take your argument a thousand-and-one different ways. While it's hard to narrow it down to one, once you do it, that was a very, very satisfying process from then onwards. So I guess in short, compared to high school, it can be a bit more overwhelming. There are a lot more resources to overwhelm you. But then again, there are a lot more resources to help you.