My #ResearchStory: My Metagame

If someone asked me back in my freshman year what I would be doing for my Honors Thesis, I would’ve laughed and said, “I have no idea.” If someone had asked me last year, I would’ve said, “The 9 to 5 Adventurer Project.” It’s true that the Honors Thesis is a four-year journey, but the hardest part of that journey is figuring out where to start.

As it turns out, my Honors Project is not what I would’ve expected. I came by it while frantically searching for a seminar I could take to fill the requirement, since my plans to do an Independent Honors Project had fallen apart. By chance, I found Connie Griffin’s Narrative Nonfiction Honors Project seminar, and I somehow managed to get in. It didn’t take long to make up my mind about what I wanted to do, and I soon had an ironclad plan.

But as my “ironclad plans” often do, this one began to break down as the seminar went on. Creative nonfiction is a vast and confusing field that forces the writer to drill into themselves until they find truth, then bleed that truth out onto the page. But this wasn’t what I thought when I first entered the class. Still seething from falling just short of securing a highly competitive internship with a video game developer, I went in with a narrowly career-focused mindset. I needed two things if I wanted a job in the field: to prove I liked video games, and to hone my skills in multimedia. So naturally, this class was the perfect opportunity to do both. Right?

Not so much. I stuck with the central theme of video games, but my peers encouraged me to look beyond the idea of games as products, but to the gaming experience. It was difficult. It took a lot of reimagining, soul-searching, and often painful reflections on things like my relationships, my family, my responses to failure, and how I view myself. This challenged me to experiment with my writing, and to come up with new ways to
dramatize my views on games. The result is *My Metagame*, a multi-genre collection of five short narrative nonfiction pieces: “The Game of Life,” “Daddy Deathspire,” “Burn My Dread,” “Winter Nights,” and “Silent Protagonist.” I will be presenting “Winter Nights” at the HFA Student Showcase on Tuesday, April 15 from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Cape Cod Lounge, and I will be reading “Burn My Dread” at our seminar’s presentation at Amherst Books on Thursday, April 17 at 6:30 p.m.

Thanks to Professor Griffin and the six other students in my seminar, I’m proud of the work I was able to produce. I would recommend the Honors Project Seminar, Honors 499N: Truth/Telling: Reading and Writing Narrative Nonfiction, to anyone looking for a highly supportive workshop environment that will encourage and challenge you to write and learn about yourself in ways you would never expect.

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