Roll with It: Exploring Pen and Paper Role-Playing Games as Collaborative and Experimental Fiction Through Visual Anthropological Methods

Sara Thome  
Illinois Wesleyan University  

Rebecca Gearhart, Faculty Advisor  
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc
ROLL WITH IT: EXPLORING PEN AND PAPER ROLE-PLAYING GAMES AS COLLABORATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL FICTION THROUGH VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL METHODS

Sara Thome and Rebecca Gearhart*
Sociology and Anthropology Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

Using the visual media of photography and collaborative ethnographic research methods, this poster presentation aims to facilitate discussion about the collective and experimental fiction elements of Pen and Paper Role-Players at IWU. By examining the photographs taken by the ethnographer’s participant-observation of weekly gatherings, the Pen and Paper Role-Players have concluded that the continued success of their activity is based on their group effort to create a great story. The research highlights the cooperative elements of story-building in addition to the significant portion of story line that is left to chance, which lends a level of realism and unpredictability to the process.