

THE WHY OF IT ALL

Over the long years that fantasy role playing has been in existence, a large amount of discussion has concerned just *what* FRP actually is, and *why* people play.

A few feel that it is all a demonic plot to undermine the moral and religious fiber of America (or the world). Others may feel that is nothing more than a "lash in the pan" fad. A real minority even feel that it is a nasty communist plot bent on subverting the youth of our nation!

Well, I can certainly state with unequivocal knowledge (being in on the very birthing pains of fantasy role playing and sticking with it right on up to the present time) that there *never* have been and *never* will be any "Demonic" or "anti-Christian" forces behind FRP gaming. None, nada, zip, zero, naught, an absence and lack thereof. Any way you wish to say it, it is still the same: ABSOLUTELY NONE. I can't be any plainer than that.

Point in fact, a couple of Christian organizations have even lauded my work (THE ARDUIN ADVENTURE in particular) as "eminently suitable" for play by Christian players!

As for being a fad, well, how many years does it take for something to become a recognized gaming fixture? Arduin alone is over eight (8) years old in its published form and predated that in non-published and in play format for a couple of years. At least one other major FRP rules system is as old and several more are very close to being as old. Eight years and more! Now *that* is no fad but a truly lasting and major facet of gaming, wouldn't you say! How many other "fads" that came out around then are still around? How many still have conventions world wide that draw *thousands* of participants to them each year? How many have spawned television, fiction book and motion picture spin offs? FRP has ... and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Fads *don't* do that!

Being a Viet Nam survivor and a veteran of more than seven (7) years of *voluntary* military service, I won't even dignify the "Commie" label affixed to FRP by a few demented nuts with any more space in this book. I've *paid* my dues!

So now it comes to the *real* "WHY" of FRP, to the driving force behind the most incredible happening in all of recorded games history.

And do you know, it's quite simple? Sure! FRP games provide people of all ages, ethnic groups, cultures and social status with a way to gather together and to communicate ASIEQUALS. There are no gender or physical handicaps, no barriers due to being a "novice." In fact, there is *nothing* that limits the games at all save the imagination of the players themselves. No other game or hobby can say this and none come even close to the reality of its fraternity and equality.

Doctor, lawyer, junior high school student, state policeman, black college student, twelve year old boy, forty year old housewife, all are people who have played in, and with each other during, FRP games I have game mastered. They still. What other "hobby" can say this? What other game allows for the total freedom of choice and imagination as to mode and rules of play? None do, none except this FRP we are discussing here. The new eighth wonder of the modern world!

Within the confines of FRP (and I use the word "confines" very, very loosely as one's imagination is virtually limitless) there is every opportunity for the participants to see first hand, to experience themselves, the entire gamut of human endeavor and emotion. Good and evil are starkly laid bare for all to see. Peace and war, charity and greed, loyalty and friendship, love, laughter, tears and despair are all there. But so too is perseverance under adversity, brotherhood (or sisterhood), hope, courage and defiance of fate. In short, everything that humans can encounter in this life is available to them in FRP games, only safer.

I have never met a person that these games didn't teach something to. And many learned much more than just the rules of the game. Mythology, history, psychology, mathematics, logic, architecture and military tactics are just some of what a player learns. And most of the school age people I have known through FRP have put this newly acquired knowledge to good use by improving their grades in school.

It also imparts with the players, a desire to LEARN, for in knowledge is contentment. And few FRP gamers are anything if not content.

How does one explain to a non-player all of this? How to bring home to the disbeliever that, in truth, here is a worthwhile and entertaining hobby for everyone? The only way is through example, by playing with those who have doubts. Easier to say than do, I know, but it is the *surest* way to get people to see the *truth*.

Now I know that there will always be detractors to this form of gaming and these people will wield all in their power to denounce and destroy that which they cannot understand (so they fear it). Having been the target of slanderous diatribes and attacks myself in everything from newspapers to magazines, I can speak with some knowledge on this subject. It's no fun but it comes with the territory, I'm afraid.

Unfortunately for the world, there are those people who are so afraid of anything that they do not understand or which does not fit neatly in their limited world view, who will attempt to destroy whatever it is that has so angered them. For it is anger (and jealousy) that drives these kinds of people. Anger at those of us who know how to enjoy ourselves and to have fun when they can't (they're *afraid* to have fun!). They are terribly jealous of anyone or anything that causes their own little "empire" to break open and let in a little light and laughter. These kinds of people are the ones who put up those signs that say: "No _____ (fill in the blank) Allowed" and who refuse to let anyone do anything that *they* have not first approved. These are the ones who want to tell you how to run your lives (everything from what you can eat to who can associate with whom). These are the ones who believe that one race is better than another and that anything that says different must be bad. Oh yes, we all know who these kinds of people are. Unfortunately, they will be with us in some numbers for the foreseeable future. Prejudice seems to be a popular pastime for many people.

So, just smile, *be nice* to such people as these and continue on about your business (of FRP). But *never* ignore these people! For if you do not come out and publicly answer their spurious charges concerning FRP, someday you may find that they have legislated your right to play away from you! Just like the Nazi's of old, anti-FRP types thrive on the silence and inaction of those whom they persecute. So *defend* what you believe in, speak out whenever and where ever there is sentiment against FRP. Only by doing so will the creeps who would abridge our freedom of choice (in game play)

be forced to crawl back under the rocks they normally reside beneath. Be an FRP booster!

Well! I certainly seemed to have got wound up there! But, truth to tell, this also pertains to the "WHY" of FRP. FRP is freedom of choice, freedom to associate with those whom you choose, freedom to live a lifestyle according to your desires. It is all of these things and the defense of these freedoms as well. For freedom is never free and always has a "price" upon it. That price is as high or as cheap as those holding the freedom let it become. With vigilance and straight forward defense of one's ideals, the bullies and and "lords" of the world stay quiescent and give very little trouble. But, when free people become lax and lazy and do not defend their freedom, they soon find that someone has come along and taken it from them. Then the price of regaining that freedom can be very, very high. Look at history for thousands of object lessons about this.

So don't be just a player, be a defender of what you believe in as well. FRP *deserves* to be allowed to be a free choice among a free people because it is the ultimate of free style games ever invented. Players have no limitation but their own imaginations. Isn't that worth speaking up about? Isn't that what FRP is all about? Freedom in mind and of imagination. FREEDOM...

