

Thinking for yourself

A guest editorial by E. Gary Gygax

The fanatical elements are at it again. Those groups who are convinced that they must decide for everyone are again attacking role playing games in general and the D&D® game system in particular.

Hopefully, most do so out of ignorance. If you know of anyone such as this, why not explain what role playing is, that games are not reality, and the play is both fun and useful in many ways. Of course, some detractors will be convinced that such games are basically evil, and there is little which can be done about that. Obviously objects are neither good nor evil, so just be polite to such individuals.

The worst of the lot are those cynics who seek to use a famous activity to further their own ends. By attacking role playing, they

bring Attention to their "cause" — and donations, too. It is worth mentioning that those proclaiming that they know the absolute truth do not appreciate people who are able to think and judge for themselves. The world has had its share of narrow-minded bigots, thought-controllers, and book-burners. It seems that they crop up periodically, just as noxious weeds do.

The United States is still the land of liberty. We have the freedom to choose. Those who demand that we think and act in the way they do know this, so they attempt to suppress by pressure campaigns and smear tactics. If you know of such activity in your area, please counter it! If some game outlet is being pressured to remove role playing games, write and let them

know that you support their business.

Please let us know too. Drop us a line and we'll help all we can. Your letter will get the fastest service if it is addressed as follows:

Corporate Public Relations Director
TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 756
Lake Geneva WI 53147

It is interesting to note that educators, psychologists, and psychiatrists seem to find role Playing games to be helpful tools for learning and communicating, at the very least. Why, then, are certain elements seeking to deny you the right to play such games? The answer appears evident. They do not find free thinking desirable. You draw your own conclusions!

The forum

(From page 6)

tion must be involved. The simplest way to extend the table, if desired, is to increase the Kill figure by 5% for each additional 10 feet.

Finally, any character taking more than 50% of his hit points in damage from a fall will be stunned for a number of melee rounds equal to the tens of feet fallen. Any character knocked unconscious remains so (unless aided) for a number of turns equal to the tens of feet fallen. Characters who are killed outright just lie there.

It works for me.

William Huish
Las Vegas, Nev.

* * *

I read the fight in the letter column of issue #89 over the "Warrior Alternative" with considerable interest and some feeling that both sides have missed a key point — namely, that there are at least three good reasons for running a non-Adept in the DRAGONQUEST game.

The first is a house rule of mine that every

other DQ referee I know also favors, to guard our sanities: No player may run an Adept unless (a) he owns a copy of the rules, (b) he has read the Second Book, and (c) he can show me a correctly filled-out character sheet. This eliminates most Adepts at the gate. DQ is difficult enough to run without players asking what level they get Sleep at.

The second reason, this time rooted in the rules, is that a non-Adept will tend to become proficient in his/her skills more quickly than a non-Adept — because the Adept not only has to expend XP on weapons and professional skills like everyone else, but also has to sink increasingly huge amounts into spells. The Adepts I've seen are almost invariably several ranks behind the non-Adepts in almost everything. Sure, it represents the same number of XP either way — but non-Adepts don't get into the same situations as Adepts, and in their own field of activity, they tend to be more competent at any given point in their careers.

But I've saved the best for last: I don't see any need to hand out 6500 XP to non-Adepts for the same reason that Luke Skywalker doesn't need to carry a dagger: it's gilding the lily.

Consider: When first creating the character, a player's first major decision is whether he/she wants to run an Adept or a non-Adept. If run-


ning a non-Adept, the first mark on the character sheet is a "5" under Magic Aptitude — because MA is utterly worthless to a character, you intend to run as a non-Adept.

Since the average attribute score is 15, a non-Adept gains 10 *de facto* points to split among the remaining five primary attributes. On the average, the non-Adept will, in every attribute of interest to him/her, be 2 points better off than the Adept. The XP cost for an Adept to catch up that advantage is not 6,500, but 47,500 — and that strikes me as a sufficient advantage for the non-Adepts.

One intriguing aspect of all this is that most fantasy role-playing games, such as the D&D game, inform us that warrior-types have spent their lives honing their bodies and martial skills, while mages have spent, and still spend, most of their time in study, and then use this as the basis for giving warriors more hit points and mages slower advances. The DQ game shows the process dynamically — we can actually see it happening not through fiat but through the logic of the rules. It seems characteristic of the game's final detail work.

Paul Montgomery Crabaugh
San Diego, Calif.

WHAT IF YOU COMMANDED CAESAR'S LEGIONS
ALEXANDER'S PHALANXES
ATTILA'S HORDES...
CAN YOU CREATE AN EMPIRE IN GSI'S NEW



DAWN OF THE ANCIENTS

A strategic PBM game pitting 12 ancient empires against each other and their ancient foe ATLANTIS during the dawn of history!! Registration fee only \$10.00 (includes rules, map and 1st two turns FREE.) Rules alone \$5.

GSI game systems inc. The publishers of **EARTHWOOD**
PO BOX 431166 (A fantasy world of conquest and sorcery)
MIAMI, FLA. 33243-1166

Label your letter

The address of DRAGON® Magazine is P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, and that's all you need to make sure your letter gets here. But you can help us serve you more quickly by adding a line at the top of the address to tell us what department should receive your letter or package. Call it a "manuscript submission," "cartoon submission," "query letter," or any other short phrase that tells us what's inside, and it'll get exactly where it's supposed to go.