



FORUM



"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CR1 3LB, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

For some time, we have been collecting letters from gamers concerning the attacks being made upon role-playing in general (and the D&D® and AD&D® games in particular) that charge such games with being harmful to gamers. These letters address the specific prejudices that gamers encounter and suggest ways to overcome that prejudice. We welcome further letters from our readers on this topic.

I have been interested in AD&D games for about four years now. I started out as a DM and later became a player. I am very concerned about the image problem that this game has. I just saw an episode of *Sally Jesse Raphael* about a teenager who got into satanism and then murdered his family. The first question she asked him was whether or not he played the D&D game. The people I know at school either think it's a stupid kid's game or it's satanic. Why don't you [TSR] advertise more or try to explain that D&R games have nothing to do with satanism? When you don't deny it or try to explain more about what it is all about, it makes them think they are right!

Jason Caudill
Carey OH

On January 31, 1989, I was watching a talk show (*Sally Jesse Raphael*) that said that two suicides had been caused by fantasy role-playing games, the D&D game in particular. This show talked to three parents, two whose children had been murdered by a baby sitter who, among other things, practiced devil worship and human sacrifice. After saying all this, they had a satanist on to defend satanism. By doing this, the show's producers tacitly accept that the D&D game does in fact promote satanism, even though they had no one to defend the game. I am a good Roman Catholic and do not believe that your game promotes devil worship or irreligiosity, and you should set the producers and the American public right on this matter.

Paul Shuster
Rahway NJ

On January 22, 1990, I was asked to appear as a member of the audience for a taping of the *Shirley* talk show. I was the founder of a game club, but the show's researchers obviously had strange notions about the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, because the show's topic was on "satanism." The researcher, Jeannette Diehl, wanted to cover D&D games as one of the eight aspects of satanism on this show. When I spoke to her, she became increasingly perplexed ("What, do you mean that D&D game players don't wear costumes?").

Still, I was contacted only three days before the taping. Two guests, however, had been "operating" on the show two months in ad-

vance. They were Mrs. Patricia Pulling (who claims her son killed himself because of a D&D game "curse") and Dr. Thomas Radecki (who claims he has a list of "hundreds" of cases of teen suicides directly attributable to playing D&D games). These are [two] anti-D&D-game crusaders from the U.S., but their statements were full of holes. I was one of the few game-players to research this, but even when I shoved refuting evidence right into the hands of the show, it was ignored. The truth, in this case, was "inconvenient" to a show about to be taped.

The show was taped January 25. . . . The two guests above were given free rein to spout incredible nonsense about D&D games, and as an audience member I could not do much to discount them. Mrs. Pulling [stated that the D&D game] is based on the occult, that "role-playing" is a psychological mind-manipulation technique, and that there are gods and demons in the D&D game books.

The show's producer explained that they wanted to get away from the style of American talk shows. I publicly asked, "Then why do you import American-style lunatics?" This show can be described in no way other than as a scurrilous hatchet-job unfairly linking D&D games with satanism, even more so because ample refutation was available (that they did not expect from the token gamers) but was not allowed on the show.

Written complaints can be directed to:

"Shirley"
99 Queen Street, E.
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M5C 2M1

or to:

CTV
42 St. Charles St. E., 4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M4Y 1T5

Please spread the word among other game fans in your game club, group, or convention. Help stop the slanders against fantasy role-playing games and the people who play them!

CAR-PGa (the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games) is an organization of five directors (four in the U.S., one in Canada) and regional representatives who are drawn from ordinary game fans like you and me. We boast the most complete research available on anti-D&D-game groups and the spurious "controversy" over the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Requests for information are welcome.

A complete reference file on role-playing games, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, and any controversy over them is available at the Spaced Out Library (Toronto Public Libraries' Special Science-Fiction Collection) at 40 E. George St., 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario.

Pierre Savoie, M.Sc.; Director
CAR-PGa Region 5 (Canada)
22 Harris Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M4C 1P4

For the past few years I have been told and have heard that the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game is just a form of devil worship. It supposedly brings out the worst in someone, making him want to do evil things or, in some cases, commit suicide.

In my opinion, this is just a lot of hot air being blown around by people with nothing better to

do in their lives. Close to 100% of these so-called "experts" on the subject have probably not seen a good gaming session in progress.

I have played D&D games for seven years now, and my group has played longer than that. Not once in that time have I come under the influence of evil or thought of suicide, and neither has anyone else I know who plays the game (or any other role-playing game, in fact). Role-playing games are meant to be fun. In a single session of play, your imagination and brain are used in various situations. This gets you to think, something that everyone wants today's youth to do. The president is calling for our youth to rank higher in education, and a role-playing game can help with that. Time and time again, math comes into play in a D&D game, making the players use their minds somewhere besides in a classroom. I know that more must be done for our educational skills to be higher than other countries, but this helps.

On the matter of suicide being blamed on a game, I think other matters should be looked at first. Was the person being abused? Were there problems at home or work? These are just two questions that can be asked before the blame is thrown onto a game just because a D&D game book was present in [the suicide victim's] room.

I think it's about time the D&D game was looked upon for what it is: a fun, educational way of using one's imagination with some close friends. People will one day realize that this game has done a lot of good, and all those so-called "experts" will realize how wrong they were. Thanks for listening.

Dennis Gill
Cresco PA

Looking through my rather large stack of DRAGON issues, I came across the editorial, "Is the press doing its best?" by Kim Mohan (issue #102, page 3). This article and others like it anger me. Many people view gaming as an outlet to worshipping Satan and his demons. Like many others, I support the idea of having TSR create a tape to demonstrate to the public (and to potential customers) the enjoyment of the game. In a back issue of *Lake Geneva* magazine, I found an article written about TSR and the games it produces. Nothing negative was said in this article. The writer even pointed out that role-playing games are very educational. Being a student in school, I have based many reports and projects on TSR-produced material. But many people do not see that aspect of role-playing games, simply because they have never played the games. Another piece of literature on this topic angered me even further (and made me write this letter). A recent issue of *Computer Buyer's Guide* (vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 1989, page 7) stated that the effects on children of playing D&D games are: they take no interest in school, become careless with their homework, bypass eating, play all night, and do not relate with their friends anymore. The effects on adults [says the article] are just about the same: [gamers] neglect families, lose their jobs, play into the mornings, and worse. . . . I do hope that TSR produces a tape that shows what goes on during a D&D game session. This may not set the world straight on the topic, but it might give the D&D game a good name to some people.

Rob McNamee
Muskego WI

Of late, I have heard a lot of complaining from critics of the AD&D game. In particular, [the critics say] that the game takes up too much time, and that it is a waste of that time.

A friend of mine had been suffering from a speech impediment for the last four years and had taken up playing AD&D games as an "outlet." The game produced for him a sense of confidence, and after several months of gaming, his problem had all but vanished. He attributes this to the game, and I must agree.

In my nine years of playing, I have learned many words, greatly increasing my vocabulary. My DM makes it a point to add new words to his descriptions, thus insidiously increasing [my fellow gamers'] vocabularies.

Norbert K. Bendriss
Huntington Station NY

I have been accepted to take part in a Youth Science Exchange to the Soviet Union through the People to People organization. . . . I am one of only, 15 Americans selected to participate in the Computer Programming delegation. You may be pleased to learn that I listed the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game as one of my hobbies and as a partial credit to my success.

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game is a great game with some great people playing it. Note, however I said some. The rest either sit contentedly at home not caring about the image of the game or else they screw off and become detriments to society and the game. I think it's time for us serious players to start showing people what D&D games are about while excluding the detriments. It is time to purge the ranks. It's time to start a revolution and free ourselves from these detriments. We don't need

them, and we don't want them.

So the next time you go out and get into trouble, tell [the authorities] you did it because you were an idiot, not because you play D&D games. And don't leave a doubt in their minds.

Tim A. Smith
Watford City ND

I was truly impressed to say the least. The editorial in the June issue (#134) entitled "Equal Time" was, for me, the equivalent of a *lifesaver*. My friends and especially my "church-going" friends have always raked on me about my playing D&D games. I have played for about seven years and am still going strong. My friends all say that since I'm a United Methodist

and a Christian, aren't all those gods in AD&D games an antithesis to what you've been taught?

I keep saying no, there's nothing wrong with it, because I don't believe in those gods; they're just part of the game, and it's *only* a game. This got me nowhere until your article came out. I made everyone who was criticizing me read it. After they read it, 100% stopped getting on my case. So, thank you ever so much.

Scott Miller
Columbia SC

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