1.2 Introduction

A role playing game is any game in which the people who play it take on different personalities, interests, and attributes than what they are really like. This is a broad category of games and comes in a variety of forms. Some are played alone on a computer or as a video game. These usually have impressive graphics but force the player to follow a set script of what they can do. Others are played among a group of people where one person creates the environment that the rest play in. Essentially, one person takes on the roll of a storyteller and the rest participate as characters in the story. Since people are facilitating the game rather than a machine, the players can take a range of actions that are too creative or bazaar for a machine to handle. This game is of the second type.

Different role playing games have a different degrees of openness. Some games, like Dungeons & Dragons, micromanage what actions the player can take. It limits the types of situations that characters can be in, thus making it possible to cover every conceivable action with the rules. This leads to a video game like feeling in which there is a great deal of repetition. This game takes a far opener form, allowing characters a full range of possible actions. The rules cover common actions the best that they can but often leave the effects of uncommon situations up to the players to figure out fair consequences. This allows for a great deal of openness but it also allows for inconsistency. Games with different storytellers might have different opinions on what the results should be for certain situations.

This game includes combat, as most do, but the abilities of the characters allow them to use the environment to their advantage far more than others. An example might be if the wizard was at the entrance to a cave and peering inside, he saw an advancing dragon. Instead of being limited to either attacking the dragon or running away, the wizard might use a spell such as earthquake to collapse the cave on the dragon.

The main things that will make this game interesting is the creativity of the players. The open form allows the people playing it create (purposefully or not) humorous and unique situations that require unique solutions. The missions and quests almost never go quite the way the game's facilitator had planned and many times, the players find a better way through the obstructions than the creator had intended.

This game is played with at least three people: a storyteller (called a 'game master') and at least two players. To participate in the story the players create characters to use in the world, figuring out the personality, interests, and attributes. Some people might base their characters off a fictional one from a movie, book, or video game. Others may make their character from scratch. Either way the player should chose a personality that they can relate to but is different from their own. This way they will care about the character enough not to do anything especially risky or foolish but also have a chance to, in a way, be someone else.

This is a turn based game meaning that the game master goes from one player to the next asking what they want to do and describing the effects. When the character attempts an action it isn't as simple as the game master saying that it succeeds or fails. Part of making a character is choosing the character's proficiencies which is measured in a certain dice amount. Then, when determining if the character succeeds or not they roll the dice amount of the associated skill. The higher the roll the more successful the action is and if they are higher than the required roll then they succeed (the size of the roll determines how well).

As time goes on the character grows stronger, becoming more skillful and having new abilities. These new abilities are part of what keeps the game interesting. There is a huge multitude of different paths the player can follow in creating characters, each with different abilities and that should be played in different ways. New abilities gives the player something to look forward to and as the character gets stronger so does the dangers they face (making for a better game).

Another way in which this game is different from most other role playing games is that it is split between three distinct games. The rules that govern each game are essentially the same so by learning one you can understand all of them. Still, many of the specific rules, their environment, and how they are played are entirely different from each other. Of the two main games, one is set in a fantasy world and the other in a futuristic, science fiction environment. The third game is a mix between these two, allowing for magic and technology in the same world. This third game is called the 'Nexus' role playing game. The fantasy and science fiction role playing games have been designed so they can be mixed together fairly. Neither starships and blasters nor spells and dragons are overpowered against the other. For this reason the Nexus role playing game has very few rules of its own, instead making use of the starships, spells, and various sections of the other two role playing games.

The fantasy part of the role playing game is placed in a medieval environment with magic and mythological creatures. When they start, the players chose their class from among many warrior, maji, and wizard classes. Each class has its own unique proficiencies, making different characters more desirable in different situations. The choice between having a warrior, maji, or wizard is simply a matter of mind set and the way which the player makes their way through quests. The warriors are given physical strength and combative abilities while wizard have special attributes that will aid them in the use of trickery and wits. The maji are a medium between the two, having some magic abilities and fair physical strength.

The science fiction role playing game, on the other hand, is based in a large scale future environment where just about any scenario can take place from apocalyptic planets to advanced alien civilizations. Each planet can have its own customs, government, technology, etc. Sci-fi games generally take much more planning on the game master's part to make since there are so many more aspects of the environment to decide on.

Another difference is the types of missions the characters go through. Instead of dealing with elves and hydras, the characters will encounter alien races and androids. Unlike the fantasy quests, the sci-fi allows and requires more planning ahead

on the player's part. Rather than busting into a company's headquarters there are countless safer ways to get what they want. They could be hired as guards, use a cloaking device, look for an ex-engineer to describe the security system, hack into the building's computer system, or even threaten the company with orbital bombardment (if the character has the resources).

The characters, too, are very different. Players have the choice of three general classes: human, android, or alien. Humans are what most players use and can be enhanced with various special abilities such as telekinesis or genetic memory. Androids are a little harder to play as but can get new attributes by purchasing components. Aliens represent the height of adaptability for the sci-fi games. Players can create their own alien race with unique characteristics, abilities, history, culture, etc. With the race, the player can make new technology and ship components that are then used in the game. In short, almost every part of the game is modifiable to fit the player's interests.