

# In Defense of LARPing

Recently, I keep seeing advocates for human liberty calling others who want the same thing LARPers for owning guns, trying to be “ungovernable”, and other forms of embodying their ideas.

The intent, I think, is to avoid naïveté, and to slap them with the cynical reality that their guns and rebellious T-shirts won't stop a government that has already imprisoned the entire populace in their own homes, banned gatherings, etc. It's too late for pretend acts of resistance, the state is too strong, so the desire to buy more guns or be more rebellious is worthy only of mockery. These LARPers would crumble at the first real battle.

It may be true, but it misses something.

LARPing is imagining yourself in an epic story, as a powerful hero. To get in that frame of mind, LARPers adopt the garb, language, and mannerisms of the heroes they pretend to be. It's a form of elevating and inspiring oneself. Sometimes cheesy and silly, sometimes delusional or even pathetic.

But sometimes it works.

Sometimes LARPing is a fake-it-till-you-make-it that elevates the person doing it. Sometimes the bonds formed around the LARP and the heroes being emulated work their way into the LARPers and make them better people. Sometimes they even make the world better.

Passionately living and speaking the ideals of liberty, even if in unrealistic, make-believe ways, is not a bad thing. Maybe it's naïve. Maybe people will find that out the hard way. But idealism sometimes to the point of delusion is the foundation for all breakthroughs, epic stories, innovations, and expanded freedoms, individually and culturally.

In *The Silver Chair*, a book in C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia series, the characters are trapped underground by an evil queen. Her magic begins to work on them and she has nearly convinced them that the world above ground doesn't exist. The more they try to describe it to her, the more she mocks and convinces them it's a LARP. They are imagining some glorious world because they're too childish to accept the one they inhabit. At the last moment, the most humble creature among them steps forward and tells the queen he doesn't care if it IS all make-believe. If a few children can make-believe a world so much better than this, it must be a pretty cheap world and he'd rather keep believing in the delusion. At that, the spell was broken.

Living the adventure – the LARP – needn't be mocked or dismissed. It may be naïve. It may

do nothing. But it also may be the path to freedom. It certainly puts the mind in a better place than the cynical response to it.

*"We must make the building of a free society once more an intellectual adventure, a deed of courage."* — F.A. Hayek