WHY PEOPLE PLAY MMORPGS

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INTRODUCTION

- THIS TALK CONCERNS **M**ASSIVELY **M**ULTIPLAYER **O**NLINE **R**OLE-**P**LAYING **G**AMES
  - **MMORPGS** TO THE PLAYERS
    - OR MMOGS, MMOS, PWS, MUDS, MUGS, MU*S, ...
  - **VIRTUAL WORLDS** TO ACADEMICS
    - OR SYNTHETIC WORLDS, VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS, ...
- MY AIM HERE IS TO EXPLAIN **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY THEM
  - BECAUSE, HEY, THEN WE GET BETTER ONES!
- GET COMFY, IT'S A **LONG** JOURNEY...

- VIRTUAL WORLDS ARE **PLACES**
- BEING PLACES, THEY HAVE A NUMBER OF PLACE-LIKE **FEATURES**
  - YOU CAN **VISIT** THEM
  - **OTHER** PEOPLE CAN **ALSO** VISIT THEM
  - AT THE **SAME TIME**
- THEY ARE, HOWEVER, **NOT REAL**
- THIS SEEMS LIKE A MAJOR **DISADVANTAGE**
  - HOW DO YOU **VISIT** SOMEWHERE THAT **ISN'T REAL?**

- YOU USE AN **AVATAR**
  - OR, MORE TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, A **CHARACTER**

- FAR FROM ITS BEING A **DISADVANTAGE**, PEOPLE OFTEN **LIKE** USING AN AVATAR

- SOME PEOPLE **PREFER** IT TO REALITY

- PEOPLE PLAY THESE FOR SEVERAL **HOURS** A DAY
  - DAY AFTER DAY
    - MONTH AFTER MONTH
      - YEAR AFTER YEAR...
- I HAVE PLAYERS FOR MY OWN GAME THAT ARE STILL THERE AFTER **19 YEARS**
- SURVEYS HAVE **CONSISTENTLY** SHOWN THAT THE **AVERAGE** TIME A PLAYER SPENDS IN A VIRTUAL WORLD IS AROUND **20 HOURS** A **WEEK**
  - THEY OFTEN INVEST A LOT OF TIME IN IT **OFFLINE**, TOO
- SO WHERE DID THESE GAMES **COME** FROM?

- *WORLD OF WARCRAFT*, BLIZZARD, 2004:

- *EVERQUEST*, SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT, 1999

- *EVERQUEST* RULED UNTIL *WOW* CAME ALONG
  - 480,000 SUBSCRIPTIONS AT ITS PEAK
- *WOW* IS **MODELLED** ON *EQ*
  - BLIZZARD LOOKED AT *EQ* AND FIGURED **THEY** COULD DO THE **SAME** THING ONLY **BETTER**
  - *EQ*'S AND *WOW*'S UNDERLYING ARCHITECTURE AND PRINCIPLES ARE THE SAME
    - THE ACTUAL **CODE** IS DIFFERENT, THOUGH!
  - MUCH OF THE UNDERLYING **DESIGN** IS THE SAME
    - LEVELS, CLASSES, RACES, COMBAT, GUILDS, …

DIKUMUD, COPENHAGEN UNIVERSITY, 1990

```
[x2] A barrel has been left here.
An angry-looking statue of Hoturi is standing here.
An angry-looking statue of Priapus is standing here.
A statue of Odin is standing behind the altar.
A Sign for Newbies is here.
You are a guest here until you save yourself.

If you need
to get to your guild, use the guild medallion in your inventory. If you lose
it, pray to the statue of Odin for another.


105m/202e/38hlook
Temple of Udgaard
    You are inside the small and humble village temple in Udgaard.  A simple
stone altar, with strange stone carvings, is placed against the north wall.  A
small humble donation room is to the east.  The temple exit is south to the
Village Square.
[x2] A barrel has been left here.
An angry-looking statue of Hoturi is standing here.
An angry-looking statue of Priapus is standing here.
A statue of Odin is standing behind the altar.
A Sign for Newbies is here.

105m/202e/38h
```

- EQ IS BASICALLY A *DIKUMUD* WITH A **GRAPHICS ENGINE** BOLTED ON
  - THE GAMEPLAY IS PRETTY WELL **IDENTICAL**
  - SO MUCH SO THAT THE DEVELOPERS HAD TO SIGN AN **AFFIDAVIT** TO SWEAR THEY DIDN'T **RIP OFF** ANY ACTUAL *DIKU* CODE!
- *EQ*'S DESIGNERS HAD PLAYED *DIKU*S EXTENSIVELY AND FIGURED **THEY** COULD DO THE **SAME** THING ONLY **BETTER**
- UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES *ETC* ARE THE SAME

- *ABERMUD*, ALAN COX, 1987

```
Your wimpy value is set to 15. See 'help change' to see what that means.

The Temple Of Paradise
   You stand in the Temple of Paradise, a huge sandstone structure whose
walls are decorated with ancient carvings and runes, some so old that even
the priests no longer know their meanings.
   A single set of steps lead south, descending the huge mound upon which the
temple is built and ending in the forests below.
A roaring fire burns here.  Its flames make the temple sparkle and glitter.
   At your feet a huge sacrificial pit allows you to give valuables to the gods
in the hope of being rewarded.
A furled umbrella lies here.

Obvious exits are:
North : Welcome Center
South : Forest Track
 Down : Forest Track

Last login: Wed Sep  7 17:43:26 2005


>
```

CONNECTION

- *DIKUMUD* IS A MORE HARD-CORE FANTASY GAME THAN *ABERMUD*
  - THE DESIGN WAS STREAMLINED TO APPEAL TO **ACHIEVERS** (ABOUT WHICH MORE ANON)
  - CAME WITH AN EXTENSIVELY **TESTED** GAME WORLD
  - **RAN** "OUT OF THE BOX"
- *DIKUMUD*'S DESIGNERS HAD PLAYED *ABERMUD* EXTENSIVELY AND FIGURED **THEY** COULD DO THE **SAME** THING ONLY **BETTER**
- UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES *ETC* ARE THE SAME

- *MUD*, ROY TRUBSHAW & RICHARD BARTLE, 1978

```
Narrow road between lands.
You are stood on a narrow road between The Land and whence you came.
To the north and south are the small foothills of a pair of majestic
mountains, with a large wall running round. To the west the road
continues, where in the distance you can see a thatched cottage
opposite an ancient cemetery. The way out is to the east, where a
shroud of mist covers the secret pass by which you entered The
Land. It is raining.
*w
Narrow road.
You are on a narrow east-west road with a forest to the north and
Gorse scrub to the south. It is raining. A splendid necklace lies
on the ground.
*
```

- ISN'T SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT WONDERFUL?

- *ABERMUD* WAS JUST ONE OF SEVERAL **DOZEN** MUD CLONES OF THE ERA
  - GENERALLY REGARDED AS HAVING **INFERIOR** GAMEPLAY TO THE ORIGINAL
- HOWEVER, IT RAN ON ANY **UNIX** SYSTEM
  - *MUD* ONLY RAN ON **DECSYSTEM 10** MAINFRAMES
- IT SPREAD ACROSS THE NET LIKE A **RASH**
- ALAN COX PLAYED *MUD* EXTENSIVELY AND FIGURED **HE** COULD DO *ETC.*

PRE-MUD

- THERE WERE **NO** VIRTUAL WORLDS BEFORE *MUD*
  - IT'S THEREFORE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS *MUD1*
- THE CONCEPT OF A VIRTUAL WORLD WAS INVENTED **INDEPENDENTLY** AT LEAST **6** TIMES
  - *MUD, SCEPTRE OF GOTH, AVATAR, ISLAND OF KESMAI, ARADATH, MONSTER*
- *MUD* WAS FIRST, HOWEVER, AND ALMOST **ALL** VIRTUAL WORLDS **DESCEND** FROM IT
  - TRACES OF OTHERS **DO** PERSIST (EXCEPT *AVATAR*)

PERPETUATION

- I'VE TOLD YOU ALL THIS BECAUSE **SOME** OF THE **DECISIONS** ROY AND I MADE WHEN WE WROTE *MUD1* ARE STILL **INTACT**
- EXAMPLE: WHY DOES *WOW* HAVE **LEVELS**?
  - BECAUSE *EQ* HAD LEVELS
    - BECAUSE *DIKUMUD* HAD LEVELS
      - BECAUSE *ABERMUD* HAD LEVELS
        - » BECAUSE *MUD1* HAD LEVELS
- *MUD1* HAD LEVELS BECAUSE I **GAVE** IT LEVELS
  - AND I DID THAT FOR A REASON I'LL EXPLAIN "SOON"

- MUCH OF THE **ARCHITECTURE** AND **GAMEPLAY** OF TODAY'S VIRTUAL WORLDS IS THE WAY IT IS **ONLY** BECAUSE, ULTIMATELY, THAT'S HOW IT WAS IN *MUD1*
- NOT **ALL**, OBVIOUSLY
  - *DIKUMUD* INTRODUCED CLASSES AND RACES
  - *EQ* INTRODUCED GRAPHICS
  - MANY **OTHER** REFINEMENTS
    - DESIGNERS OFTEN **DID** DO IT **BETTER** THAN THEIR "PARENT" WORLD

- IT'S NOT **JUST** THE CODE, THOUGH
- WHY DO *WOW* PLAYERS CALL MONSTERS "MOBS"?
- BECAUSE WHEN I ADDED **MONSTERS** TO *MUD1*, I CALLED THEM **MOBILES** (FOR "MOBILE OBJECTS")
  - WE GOT THE WORD **NEWBIES** THAT WAY, TOO
- THE **CULTURE** OF VIRTUAL WORLDS **ALSO** PROPAGATES FROM PARENT TO CHILD
  - AGAIN, MORE ON THIS "SOON"

- *WORLD OF WARCRAFT* HAS OVER **8,500,000** PLAYERS WORLDWIDE
  - MORE THAN AUSTRIA, SWITZERLAND, ISRAEL, IRELAND AND ABOUT 130 **OTHER** COUNTRIES...
- PLAYERS PAY $**15** A **MONTH** TO PLAY
  - $13 IF BUY 6 MONTHS AT ONCE
    - SOMEWHAT **LESS** IN CHINA...
- IT COST SOMETHING LIKE $**30M** TO DEVELOP
  - I'VE SEEN ESTIMATES BETWEEN $25M AND $70M
- MOST OF THE DEVELOPMENT COSTS WENT ON ARTWORK AND CONTENT

- THIS MAY **SOUND** IMPRESSIVE, BUT **SOUTH KOREA** IS THE WORLD LEADER HERE
  - POPULATION OF SOUTH KOREA IS **48,000,000**
  - **35,000,000** HAVE VIRTUAL WORLD ACCOUNTS
- IN 2006, KOREAN GAME **MU ONLINE** CLAIMED **32,000,000** ACCOUNTS IN CHINA AND ANOTHER **8,000,000** ELSEWHERE
  - AND THOSE ARE JUST ON THE **LEGAL** SERVERS!
- **65,000,000** PEOPLE HAVE TRIED *LINEAGE* OR *LINEAGE II* AT LEAST ONCE

- SOME PEOPLE SPEND MORE TIME IN **VIRTUAL** WORLDS THAN THEY DO IN THE **REAL** WORLD
  - PEOPLE HAVE **DIED** AT THE KEYBOARD FROM PLAYING 2+ DAYS CONTINUOUSLY WITHOUT SLEEP
- THAILAND HAS A 10PM-6AM **CURFEW** ON THEM
- CHINA HAS A **3 HOUR PER DAY** LIMIT
- ONE PLAYER **MURDERED** HIS FRIEND FOR **SELLING** HIS CHARACTER'S **SWORD**
- THEY **DON'T** DO THIS FOR `normal` GAMES
- **WHY** DO PEOPLE DO IT FOR MMORPGS?

- THE THEORY I'M ABOUT TO EXPOUND BEGAN WITH THE QUESTION: "WHAT DO PEOPLE **WANT** OUT OF A MUD?"
  - YES, BACK IN THE OL' TEXTUAL WORLD DAYS...
- IF YOU ASK, PLAYERS WILL USUALLY REPLY: "TO HAVE **FUN!**"
  - NOT EXACTLY **INFORMATIVE**...
- **MUD2**, NOVEMBER 1989-MAY 1990
  - A BIG DISCUSSION AMONG WIZZES TO ASCERTAIN WHAT PLAYERS DO "TO HAVE FUN"
  - NB: WIZZES AND MORTALS HAVE **DIFFERENT** FUN

- WHEN I **SUMMARISED** THE DISCUSSION, I FOUND THERE SEEMED TO BE **FOUR** MAIN ACTIVITIES THAT MORTALS FOUND **FUN**:
  - **ACHIEVEMENT** WITHIN THE GAME CONTEXT
  - **EXPLORATION** OF THE GAME
  - **SOCIALISING** WITH OTHERS
  - **IMPOSITION** UPON OTHERS
- LET'S LOOK AT THESE **INDIVIDUALLY**...

- MOST PLAYERS REGARD VIRTUAL WORLDS AS BEING BASICALLY **GAMES**

- PLAYERS WHO TREAT THE VIRTUAL WORLD AS IF IT WERE A GAME ARE CALLED **ACHIEVERS**
- THEY GIVE THEMSELVES GAME-ORIENTED **GOALS** AND SET OUT TO **ACHIEVE** THEM
- EXAMPLES:
  - FINDING **TREASURE**
  - KILLING **MOBILES**
  - GETTING **POINTS** AND GOING UP **LEVELS**
    - SEE? I SAID I'D EXPLAIN WHY I PUT IN LEVELS!
- ACHIEVERS DO **NOT** LIKE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS UNDERMINED!

TYPE #2

- SOME PEOPLE JUST LIKE THE **THRILL** OF EXPLORING SOMEWHERE **NEW**

- **EXPLORERS** TRY TO DISCOVER AS MUCH AS THEY CAN ABOUT THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- USUALLY BEGIN WITH THE **TOPOLOGY**
  - THE **BREADTH** OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- THEN MOVE ON TO THE **PHYSICS**
  - THE **DEPTH** OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- **DON'T CARE** ABOUT THEIR **CHARACTER**
- THEY KNOW **MORE** ABOUT THE VIRTUAL WORLD THAN **ANY OTHER** CHARACTER TYPE

TYPE #3

- THROUGH THEIR AVATARS, PLAYERS OFTEN ENJOY **INTERACTING WITH** EACH OTHER

- **SOCIALISERS** USE THE GAME AS A CONTEXT TO **ENGAGE** WITH OTHER PLAYERS
  - THE VIRTUAL WORLD'S **GOINGS-ON** GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO **TALK** ABOUT
- COMMUNICATION IS **ULTRA-IMPORTANT**
  - "WORDS
  - ;PERFORMS SOME DEEDS
- **ROLE-PLAYING** FITS IN HERE
- AN OBVIOUS EXPRESSION OF **COMMUNITY**

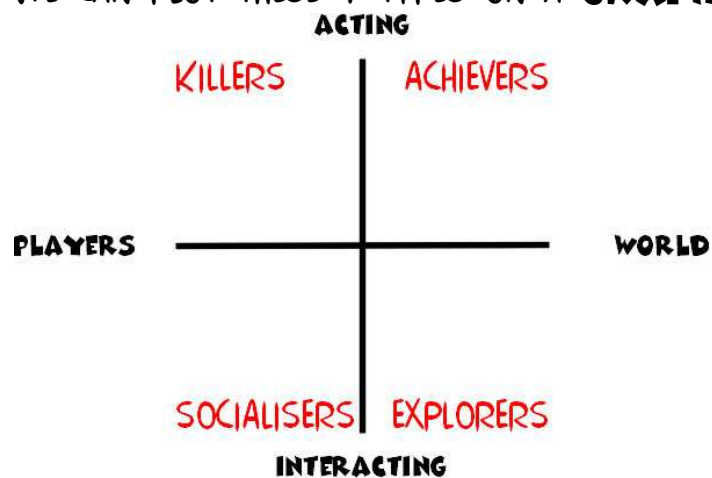- A FEW PLAYERS ENJOY **ACTING ON** OTHER (USUALLY UNWILLING) PLAYERS...

Trellick's corpse

- **TWO** SORTS
  - THOSE WHO IMPOSE THROUGH **KINDNESS**
  - THOSE WHO IMPOSE THROUGH **UNKINDNESS**
- 1ST ARE BUSYBODY, **MOTHER HEN** FIGURES
  - POLITICIANS
  - OFTEN HAVE A **SUPERIORITY COMPLEX**
- 2ND ARE **VILE DREGS** OF HUMANITY
  - GRIEFERS
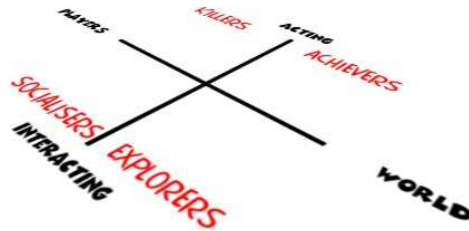 - OFTEN HAVE AN **INFERIORITY COMPLEX**

INTEREST GRAPH

- WE CAN PLOT THESE 4 TYPES ON A **GRAPH**:

ACTING

KILLERS   ACHIEVERS

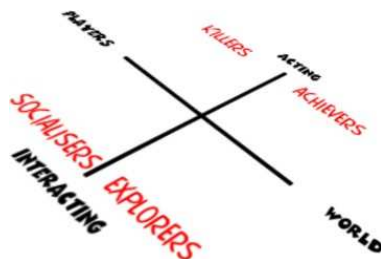PLAYERS ———————|——————— WORLD

SOCIALISERS | EXPLORERS

INTERACTING

- A **STABLE** VIRTUAL WORLD IS ONE IN WHICH THE PLAYER TYPES ARE IN **EQUILIBRIUM**
  - THIS DOES **NOT** MEAN THAT THE **NUMBERS** OF PLAYERS OF EACH TYPE ARE THE SAME!
- REGARD THE GRAPH AS A BALANCED **PLANE**

- AS A **DESIGNER**, YOU CAN **CHANGE** THE POINT OF EQUILIBRIUM BY **TILTING** THE PLANE
  - FAVOUR/DISFAVOUR ONE END OF AN AXIS

- DO THIS BY MAKING **ACTUAL CHANGES** TO THE VIRTUAL WORLD'S DESIGN

- TO TILT IN FAVOUR OF **PLAYERS**:
  - ADD LOTS OF **COMMUNICATION** FEATURES
  - **REMOVE** OTHER COMMANDS
- THIS WILL RESULT IN THE VW HAVING MORE **SOCIALISERS** & **KILLERS**
- IF YOU TAKE AWAY **TOO** MUCH, THOUGH, THE WORLD CAN'T PROVIDE A **CONTEXT**
  - BECOMES A MERE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL
  - IN OTHER WORDS, A **CHATROOM**

- TO TILT IN FAVOUR OF **WORLD**:
  - MAKE IT A **BIG** WORLD!
  - WITH BARRIERS FOR TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATION
- THIS WILL INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF **ACHIEVERS** & **EXPLORERS**
- MAKING THE WORLD **TOO** BIG RENDERS IT EFFECTIVELY **SINGLE-PLAYER**, THOUGH
  - NO COMPETITION => NO SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT
  - SATISFACTION FROM EXPLORING OUTWEIGHED BY TEDIOUSNESS OF FINDING SOMETHING TO EXPLORE

- TO TILT IN FAVOUR OF **INTERACTING**:
  - REDUCE **CHOICE** OF DIRECT ACTIONS
  - IMPOSE DEVELOPMENT PATHS (EG. **STORY ARCS**)
- THIS WILL INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF **SOCIALISERS** & **EXPLORERS**
- NEWBIES OFTEN LIKE **MILD NANNYING**
- BUT IF YOU REDUCE PARTICIPATION **TOO** MUCH:
  - PLAYERS BECOME **PASSIVE**
  - MAY AS WELL BE **WATCHING TV**

- TO TILT IN FAVOUR OF **ACTING**:
  - INTRODUCE **SURMOUNTABLE** OBSTACLES
  - PROVIDE AN ORGANISATIONAL **HIERARCHY**
  - REDUCE **FEEDBACK**
- THIS WILL INCREASE THE NUMBER OF **ACHIEVERS** & **KILLERS**
- BUT IF YOU **OVER-DO** IT:
  - VIRTUAL WORLD BECOMES **MONOTONOUS**
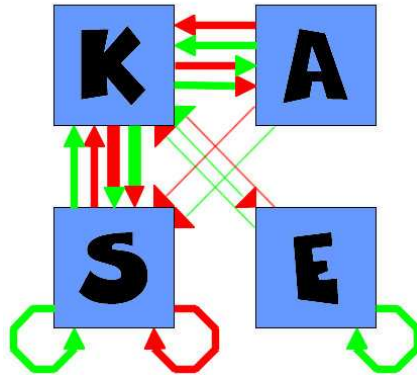 - LOSES FRESHNESS, BECOMES PREDICTABLE
    - MAY AS WELL BE **HALF LIFE**

- PLAYERS OF DIFFERENT TYPES **INTERACT** WITH ONE ANOTHER
- FOR EXAMPLE, **INCREASING** THE NUMBER OF **KILLERS** WILL:
  - GREATLY **DECREASE** THE NUMBER OF SOCIALISERS
  - HAVE **VERY LITTLE** EFFECT ON THE NUMBER OF EXPLORERS
  - **LOWER** THE NUMBER OF ACHIEVERS
    - WHICH WILL IN TURN **REDUCE** THE NUMBER OF KILLERS UNTIL AN **EQUILIBRIUM** IS REACHED

- COMPLETELY ANALYSING **ALL 16** PERMUTATIONS REVEALS HOW THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS OF EACH TYPE CAN BE **CHANGED**
- FOR EXAMPLE, TO **INCREASE** KILLER NUMBERS:
  - INCREASE NUMBER OF ACHIEVERS & SOCIALISERS
  - DECREASE NUMBER OF EXPLORERS
- TO **DECREASE** KILLER NUMBERS:
  - DECREASE NUMBER OF ACHIEVERS & SOCIALISERS
  - INCREASE NUMBER OF EXPLORERS

GRAPH FORM

- GREEN = INCREASE, RED = DECREASE
- LINE = FROM, HEAD = TO, THICKNESS = EFFECT

FOUR TYPES OF VW

- IF WE **RUN** THESE DYNAMICS, WE FIND THERE ARE **FOUR** STABLE TYPES OF VIRTUAL WORLD:
- 1) KILLERS & ACHIEVERS IN EQUILIBRIUM
  - SOCIALISERS FEW AND FAR BETWEEN
- 2) SOCIALISERS HEAVILY DOMINANT
  - KILLING OUTLAWED, ACHIEVEMENT UNDERMINED
- 3) ALL TYPES IN EQUILIBRIUM
  - VERY DIFFICULT TO ORGANISE FROM SCRATCH
- 4) EMPTY GAME...

- THIS IS A THEORY WITH **APPLICATIONS**
  - HAS BEEN AND **IS BEING** USED IN VW CREATION
- DESIGNERS CAN EXAMINE THEIR WORLD
  - AS IT **IS**
  - AS THEY **WISH** IT TO BE
- ADJUSTMENTS CAN CHANGE **RELATIVE** AND **ABSOLUTE** PLAYER NUMBERS
  - **REBALANCE** AN UNDER-PERFORMING WORLD
  - INCREASE PLAYER **RETENTION**
- BUT CAN IT BE **IMPROVED**?

- THIS 4-TYPE MODEL FOR PLAYERS HAS **FAULTS**
- HOW DO PLAYERS COME TO BE **DIFFERENT** TYPES OVER TIME?
- HOW COME **SOME** OF THESE TYPES HAVE **TWO** TYPES OF PLAYER IN THEM?
- WHY DO WIZ-LEVEL (I.E. ADMIN) PLAYERS **NOT** FIT INTO THE SCHEME?
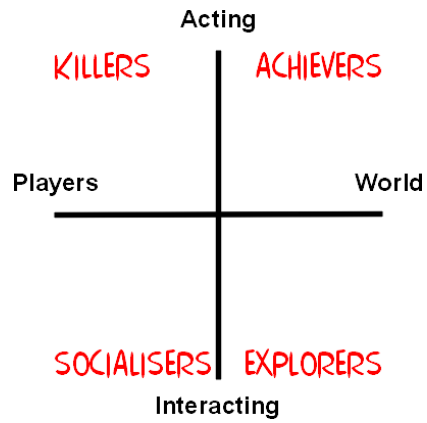- **WHY** DO THEY PLAY?

WIZZES

- THE REASON WIZZES **DON'T** FIT INTO THE SCHEME IS BECAUSE MANY OF THEM ARE **NO LONGER INTERESTED** IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD ITSELF
- THIS MEANS WE CAN'T USE THE **PLAYER/WORLD** AXIS FOR THEM
- HOWEVER, WHEN I FORMULATED THE PLAYER TYPES MODEL I **DID** NOTICE **ANOTHER** AXIS THAT SEEMED TO APPLY TO WIZZES...
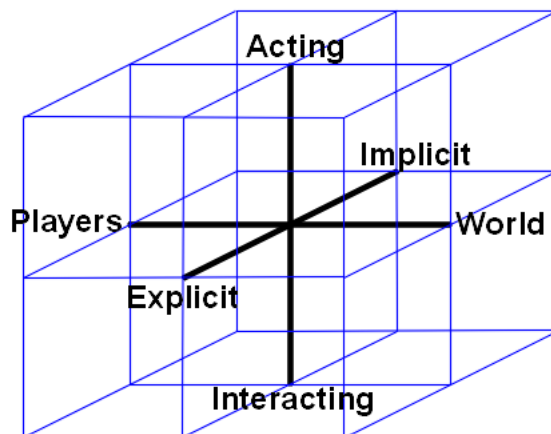
IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT

- SOME WIZZES LIKED ACTING **OVERTLY**, FREELY SHOWING THEIR POWERS TO MORTALS
- OTHERS PREFERRED TO ACT **COVERTLY**, TWEAKING THE WORLD IN SECRET
- OVERT CHANGES APPEARED **EXPLICIT**
- COVERT CHANGES APPEARED **IMPLICIT**
- OVERT/COVERT ISN'T MEANINGFUL FOR MORTALS, BUT WHAT ABOUT IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT?
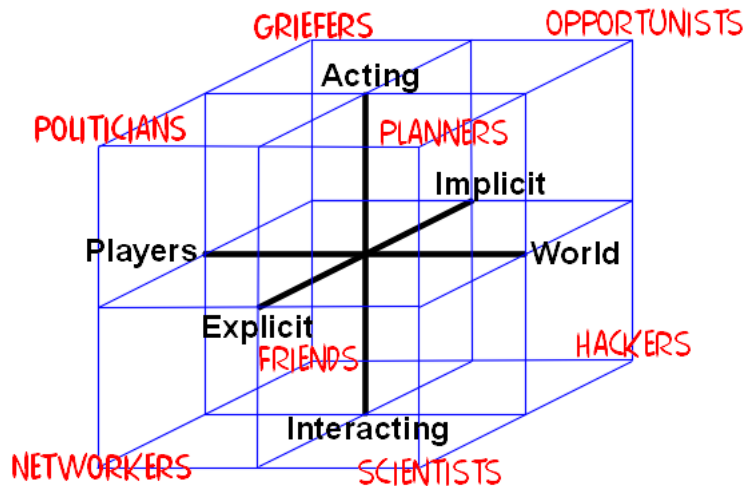 - AW, YOU **KNOW** THE ANSWER...

WE GO FROM **THIS**

Acting

KILLERS   ACHIEVERS

Players   World

SOCIALISERS EXPLORERS

Interacting

TO **THIS**

Acting

Implicit

Players —————— World

Explicit

Interacting

LABELLING THE CUBES...

GRIEFERS   OPPORTUNISTS
Acting
POLITICIANS   PLANNERS
Implicit
Players — World
Explicit
FRIENDS   HACKERS
Interacting
NETWORKERS   SCIENTISTS

ACHIEVERS

- OPPORTUNISTS – **IMPLICIT**
  - SEE A CHANCE AND TAKE IT
  - LOOK AROUND FOR THINGS TO DO
  - IF THERE'S AN OBSTACLE, DO SOMETHING **ELSE**
  - FLIT ABOUT FROM IDEA TO IDEA
- PLANNERS – **EXPLICIT**
  - SET A GOAL AND AIM TO ACHIEVE IT
  - PERFORM ACTIONS AS PART OF A LARGER SCHEME
  - IF THERE'S AN OBSTACLE, WORK **ROUND** IT
  - PURSUE THE SAME IDEA DOGGEDLY

EXPLORERS

- SCIENTISTS – **EXPLICIT**
  - EXPERIMENT TO FORM A THEORY
  - USE THEORIES PREDICTIVELY TO TEST THEM
  - METHODICAL ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE
  - SEEK TO **EXPLAIN** PHENOMENA
- HACKERS – **IMPLICIT**
  - EXPERIMENT TO REVEAL MEANING
  - INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING, NO NEED TO TEST
  - GO WHERE FANCY TAKES THEM
  - SEEK TO DISCOVER **NEW** PHENOMENA

SOCIALISERS

- NETWORKERS – **EXPLICIT**
  - FIND PEOPLE WITH WHOM TO INTERACT
  - GET TO KNOW THEIR FELLOW PLAYERS
  - LEARN WHO AND WHAT THESE PEOPLE KNOW
  - FIND OUT WHO'S **WORTH** HANGING OUT WITH
- FRIENDS – **IMPLICIT**
  - INTERACT WITH PEOPLE THEY ALREADY KNOW WELL
  - DEEP/INTIMATE UNDERSTANDING OF THEM
  - ENJOY THEIR COMPANY
  - ACCEPT THEIR LITTLE **FOIBLES**...

KILLERS

- GRIEFERS – **IMPLICIT**
  - ATTACK ATTACK ATTACK!
  - VERY IN-YOUR-FACE
  - UNABLE TO EXPLAIN WHY THEY ACT AS THEY DO
  - VAGUE AIM IS TO GET A BIG, **BAD** REPUTATION
- POLITICIANS – **EXPLICIT**
  - ACT WITH FORETHOUGHT AND FORESIGHT
  - MANIPULATE PEOPLE SUBTLY
  - EXPLAIN SELVES IN TERMS OF USE TO THE VW
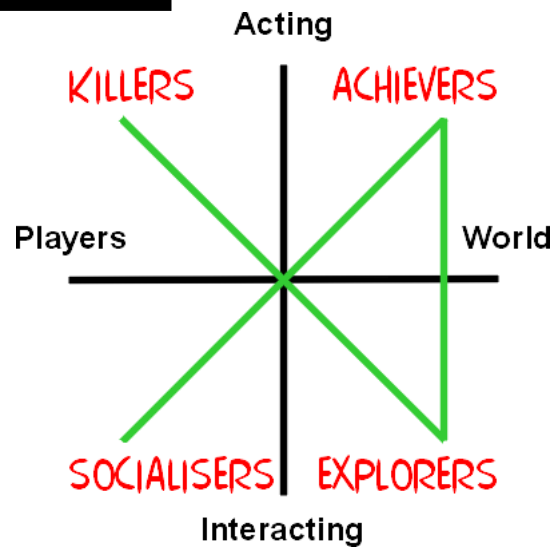 - AIM IS TO GET A BIG, **GOOD** REPUTATION

SO WHAT?

- OK, SO **AT LAST** WE CAN EXPLAIN THE TWO SUB-TYPES OF KILLER
- BUT NOTE THAT **IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT** ISN'T THE SAME AS **OVERT/COVERT**
  - WIZZES ARE EITHER **HACKERS** OR **FRIENDS**
  - BUT **STILL** ACT EITHER OVERTLY OR COVERTLY
    - ALTHOUGH THERE **IS** A REASONABLE CORRELATION
- ALSO, THIS NEW MODEL SAYS **NOTHING** ABOUT CHANGES IN PLAYING STYLE
  - YET…

- IT'S **LONG** BEEN KNOWN THAT PLAYERS CHANGE PLAYING STYLE OVER TIME
  - SINCE **BEFORE** PLAYER TYPES CONCEPT EXISTED!
- IN *MUD1*:
  - NEWBIES STARTED BY **KILLING** ONE ANOTHER
  - THEN ABANDONED THAT AND WENT **EXPLORING**
  - MOVED ON TO RACKING UP POINTS AND RISING LEVELS - **ACHIEVING**
  - FINISHED AS GNARLED OLD-TIMERS **SOCIALISING**
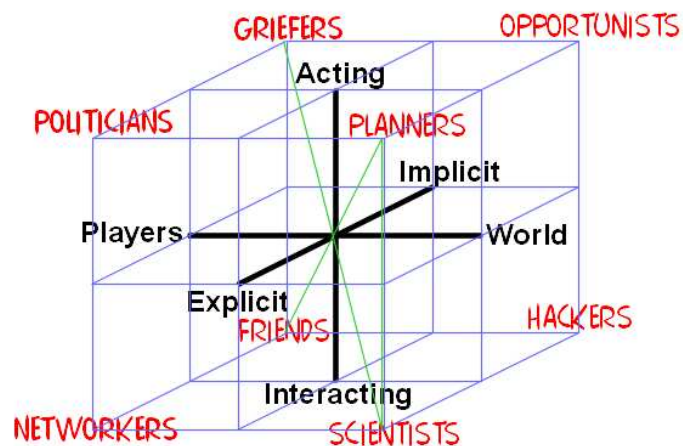- **MAIN SEQUENCE** FOR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

ON THE 2D GRAPH

Acting

KILLERS   ACHIEVERS

Players   World

SOCIALISERS | EXPLORERS

Interacting

- SOME PLAYERS **DON'T** FOLLOW THIS SEQUENCE
  - SOME OSCILLATE **ACHIEVER->EXPLORER**
  - SOME OSCILLATE **KILLER->SOCIALISER**
  - SOME ARE ALL over the place
- DOES THE NEW, 3D GRAPH **HELP** ANY?
- YES, IT **DOES**
  - I DON'T THINK THIS ATTEMPT TO BUILD UP **DRAMATIC TENSION** IS WORKING...
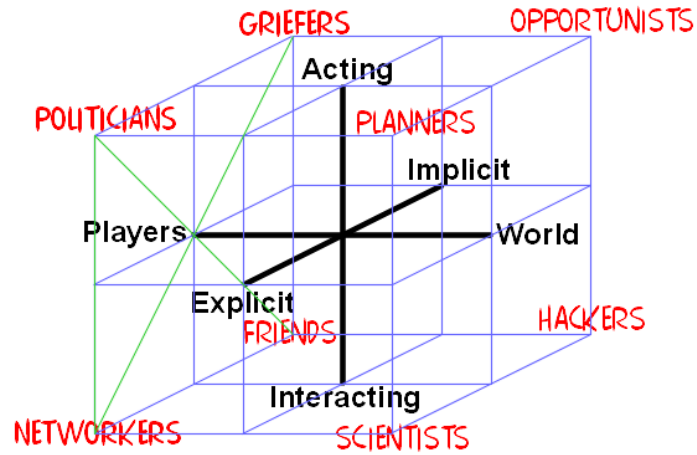

- GRIEFER->SCIENTIST->PLANNER->FRIEND
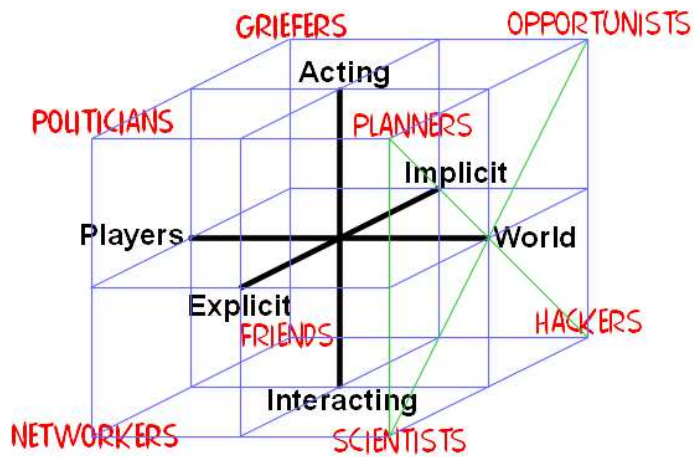
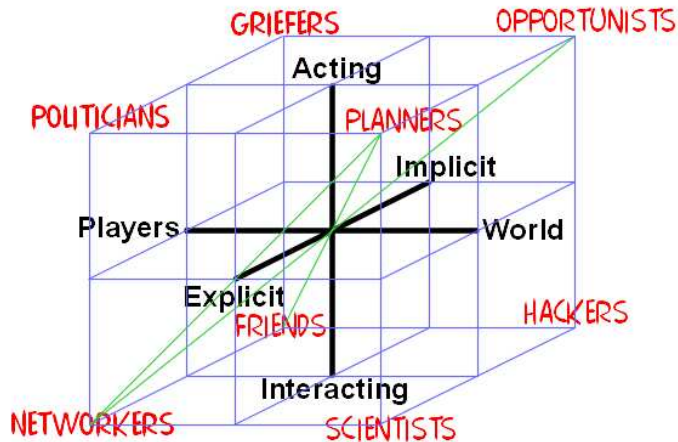MAIN SOCIALISER SEQUENCE

- GRIEFER->NETWORKER->POLITICIAN->FRIEND

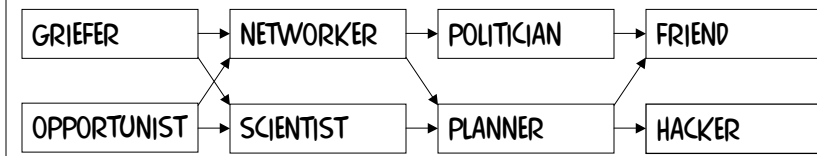MAIN EXPLORER SEQUENCE

- OPPORTUNIST->SCIENTIST->PLANNER->HACKER

- OPPORTUNIST->NETWORKER->PLANNER->FRIEND

- ALL THESE START OFF **IMPLICIT**, THEN GO **EXPLICIT**, THEN RETURN TO **IMPLICIT**
- PEOPLE **DO** OCCASIONALLY **SWITCH** BETWEEN SEQUENCES, BUT MAINLY **DON'T**
  - (SWITCH AT **INTERSECTIONS**)
- WE CAN **COMBINE** THE SEQUENCES TO GIVE **DEVELOPMENT TRACKS**

GRIEFER	→	NETWORKER	→	POLITICIAN	→	FRIEND
OPPORTUNIST	→	SCIENTIST	→	PLANNER	→	HACKER

- PLAYERS START BY DETERMINING THE **BOUNDARIES** THAT GOVERN THEIR ACTIONS
- NEXT, THEY STRING TOGETHER **MEANINGFUL SEQUENCES** OF PRIMITIVE ACTIONS
- THEN THEY **APPLY** WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED
- UNTIL EVENTUALLY THEY **MASTER** IT AND IT BECOMES **SECOND NATURE**
- LOCATE->DISCOVER->APPLY->INTERNALISE
  - THRASH, KICK, TODDLE, WALK

- WHAT WE HAVE NOW IS A MODEL OF HOW PLAYERS **PROGRESS** THROUGH TYPES
  - EVEN IF IT IS A **BIT WEIRD** FOR POLITICIANS
- WHAT DOES THIS **TELL** US, THOUGH
  - WHAT USE IS IT TO **DESIGNERS**?
  - WHAT USE IS IT TO **PLAYERS**?
- IN ITSELF, IT'S OK BUT A BIT **SO WHAT?**
- WELL, IT'S THE **KEY** TO UNDERSTANDING **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY VIRTUAL WORLDS

- MYTH. THAT'S **MYTH**
- PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION
  - SEE? I SAID I'D COME BACK TO CULTURE PROPAGATION!
- I'M GOING TO **USE** MYTH TO EXPLAIN HOW VIRTUAL WORLD **THEORY** HANGS TOGETHER

- [BLANK LOOKS]

- JOSEPH CAMPBELL, 1949: "THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES"
- MYTHS FROM **ACROSS THE WORLD** FOLLOW THE **SAME** BASIC FORMULA
  - THE "HERO'S JOURNEY", OR "MONOMYTH"
- ROOTED IN THE **HUMAN PSYCHE**
  - FROM A UNIVERSAL NEED TO EXPLAIN THE SAME, FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF **SOCIAL**, **WORLDLY** AND **OTHER-WORLDLY** REALITIES
- EFFECTIVELY A **PATH** TO SELF-UNDERSTANDING

- **MYTHS** FROM NIGERIA, NORTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, PHRYGIA, CHINA, ICELAND, BALI, PERSIA, MEXICO, FINLAND, CAMBODIA, PERU, ...
- THE **EPICS** OF GILGAMESH, ARTHUR, VISHNU, OSIRIS, MOSES, CUCHULAINN, BUDDHA, JASON, ...
- THE *ODYSSEY*, DANTE'S *INFERNO*, *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*, *ANNA KARENINA*, *FAUST*, *THE FROG PRINCE*, *STAR WARS*, **HARRY POTTER**, ...
- OH, AND **VIRTUAL WORLDS!**
  - NB: THESE AREN'T MENTIONED IN CAMPBELL'S BOOK...

THE BASIC IDEA

- THE HERO'S JOURNEY CONSISTS OF A NUMBER OF **STEPS**, TAKEN IN **ORDER**
  - ALTHOUGH **SOME** LEEWAY FOR STEP EXCHANGES
- VW PLAYERS WANT TO BE **HEROES**
  - BUT THEY'RE RARELY PREPARED TO **ACT** HEROICALLY
  - **FEW** ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT **RISK**
- THEY WANT TO BE **TREATED LIKE** A HERO
- BUT THE **ONLY** WAY TO BECOME A HERO IS TO **COMPLETE** THE HERO'S JOURNEY
- WHY? IT'S A **SEARCH FOR IDENTITY**

- THE **CALL** TO ADVENTURE
  - INDICATION OF CHANGE TO COME, OFTEN SYMBOLLIC
- **REFUSAL** OF THE CALL
  - REQUIRED TO ACT BUT WON'T (FEAR, DUTY?)
- **SUPERNATURAL** AID
  - A GUIDE APPEARS TO HELP THEM
- CROSSING OF THE **FIRST THRESHOLD**
  - ENTER WORLD OF ADVENTURE (DEFEAT GUARDIAN?)
- THE **BELLY** OF THE **WHALE**
  - FINAL SEPARATION FROM OLD SELF; REBIRTH

INITIATION

- THE **ROAD OF TRIALS** [USUALLY 3]
- THE MEETING WITH THE **GODDESS**
  - SYMBOLLIC; EXPOSURE TO TOTALITY OF KNOWLEDGE
- WOMAN AS THE **TEMPTRESS**
  - OLD-WORLD ORIGINS AT ODDS WITH NEW WORLD
- **ATONEMENT** WITH THE FATHER [KEY POINT]
  - HERO FACES THE SUPREME **POWER** OVER THEM
- **APOTHEOSIS** [PEACE, REST, BLISS]
- THE ULTIMATE **BOON** [OBJECT HERO CAME FOR]

- **REFUSAL** OF THE RETURN
- THE **MAGIC FLIGHT**
  - CAN'T STAY **AND** HAVE THE BOON
- **RESCUE** FROM WITHOUT
- CROSSING OF THE **RETURN** THRESHOLD
  - HOW TO RECONCILE THE OLD WITH THE NEW?
- MASTER OF THE **TWO WORLDS**
  - SENSE OF BALANCE, DESTINY ACCEPTED
- **FREEDOM** TO **LIVE**

EXAMPLE I

- HERE'S HOW *THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING* FITS THE MONOMYTH
- THE **CALL** TO ADVENTURE
  - ELVEN WRITING APPEARS ON THE RING
- **REFUSAL** OF THE CALL
  - FRODO OFFERS GANDALF THE RING
  - **AND** FRODO OFFERS COUNCIL OF ELROND THE RING
- **SUPERNATURAL** AID
  - GANDALF TELLS FRODO TO LEAVE THE SHIRE
  - **AND** BILBO GIVES FRODO HIS DAGGER & ARMOUR

EXAMPLE 2

- CROSSING OF THE **FIRST THRESHOLD**
  - FRODO LEAVES THE SHIRE
  - **AND** FRODO LEAVES RIVENDELL
- THE **BELLY** OF THE **WHALE**
  - STABBED IN THE BARROWDUNES
- THE **ROAD OF TRIALS** [USUALLY 3]
  - LOTS, *EG.* BALROG
- THE MEETING WITH THE **GODDESS**
  - GALADRIEL

EXAMPLE 3

- WOMAN AS THE **TEMPTRESS**
  - THIS IS THE **MIRROR** OF GALADRIEL
- **ATONEMENT** WITH THE FATHER
  - BOROMIR TRIES TO TAKE THE RING
- **APOTHEOSIS**
  - FRODO ACCEPTS THAT THE RING WILL DESTROY HIM, AND GAINS A KIND OF PEACE
- THE ULTIMATE **BOON**
  - FRODO TAKES THE RING WITH HIM, NOW FULLY KNOWING WHAT IT IS

EXAMPLE 4

- **REFUSAL** OF THE RETURN
  - THIS STEP IS MISSING..!
- IT'S **NOT UNUSUAL** FOR TELLINGS OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY TO
  - MISS A STEP
  - SWAP STEPS
  - REPEAT STEPS
- THE **MAGIC FLIGHT**
  - FRODO FLEES FROM THE ORCS

EXAMPLE 5

- **RESCUE** FROM WITHOUT
  - THE REST OF THE FELLOWSHIP KILL THE ORCS
- CROSSING OF THE **RETURN** THRESHOLD
  - CROSSES THE RIVER ANDUIN
    - (RIVERS OFTEN REPRESENT TIME)
- MASTER OF THE **TWO WORLDS**
  - SAM IS THE OLD WORLD, GOLLUM THE NEW
- **FREEDOM** TO **LIVE**
  - "ALL WE HAVE TO DECIDE IS WHAT TO DO WITH THE TIME THAT IS GIVEN TO US." – GANDALF

- VW DESIGNERS HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE HERO'S JOURNEY FOR **SOME TIME**
- VIRTUAL WORLDS HAVE BEEN DESIGNED WITH HERO'S JOURNEY FORMULA **QUESTS**
- BUT THOSE ARE FOR **CHARACTERS**
- IT'S THE **PLAYER** WHO WANTS TO BE THE HERO
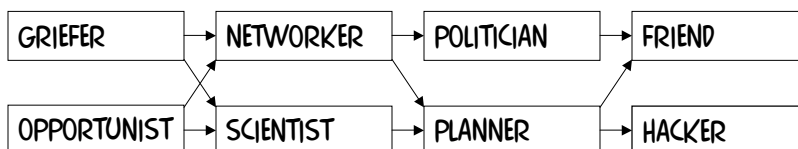- **YOU** DON'T BECOME A HERO **WATCHING** STAR WARS – **LUKE SKYWALKER** DOES

- THE HERO'S JOURNEY INVOLVES
  - LEAVING THE WORLD OF THE **MUNDANE**
  - BECOMING **REBORN** IN AN "OTHER WORLD" OF **DANGER** AND THE **UNKNOWN**
  - RETURNING TO THE WORLD OF THE MUNDANE ARMED WITH **NEW** KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE
    - A RENEWED SENSE OF **SELF**
- SO:
  - REALITY IS THE "MUNDANE WORLD"
  - THE VIRTUAL WORLD IS THE "OTHER WORLD"

- THE **CALL** TO ADVENTURE
  - ADVERT, ARTICLE, COVER DISK, SHELF UNIT, ...
- **REFUSAL** OF THE CALL
  - EXPENSE, TIME, FEAR OF INADEQUACY, SOCIAL LIFE, ...
- **SUPERNATURAL** AID
  - A FRIEND WHO ALREADY PLAYS, GAME STORE REP, ...
- CROSSING OF THE **FIRST THRESHOLD**
  - INSTALLING THE CLIENT SOFTWARE
- THE **BELLY** OF THE **WHALE**
  - CHARACTER GENERATION SYSTEM

QUICK REMINDER

- THIS DIAGRAM IS FROM **LONG AGO**, SHOWING THE **DEVELOPMENT TRACKS** THAT PLAYERS FOLLOW

| GRIEFER | → | NETWORKER | → | POLITICIAN | → | FRIEND |
| OPPORTUNIST | → | SCIENTIST | → | PLANNER | → | HACKER |

VW INITIATION 1

- THE **ROAD OF TRIALS**
  - PLAYER FINDS THEIR FEET
  - OPPORTUNIST/GRIEFER STEP
- THE MEETING WITH THE **GODDESS**
  - PLAYER SEEK'S KNOWLEDGE
  - NETWORKER/SCIENTIST STEP
- WOMAN AS THE **TEMPTRESS**
  - TRANSITION FROM LEARNING TO DOING
  - ARE THEY IN IT FOR THE **LONG HAUL?**

VW INITIATION 2

- **ATONEMENT** WITH THE FATHER
  - TRY TO SUCCEED ON THE WORLD'S **OWN TERMS**
  - ACHIEVER/POLITICIAN STEP
  - THE **DESIGNER** IS THE "FATHER"!
- **APOTHEOSIS**
  - UNDERSTAND THE WORLD, ITS PEOPLE, THEMSELVES
  - FRIEND/HACKER STEP
- THE ULTIMATE **BOON**
  - OH DEAR! VIRTUAL WORLDS ARE **VIRTUAL**!
    - I'LL RETURN TO THIS SHORTLY...

- **REFUSAL** OF THE RETURN
  - POWER, RESPECT, FRIENDS – WHY LEAVE?
- THE **MAGIC FLIGHT**
  - COMPELLING ELDER GAME ADDED?
- **RESCUE** FROM WITHOUT
  - PARENTS, WORKMATES, S.O., ...
  - YOUR **EXCUSE** TO LEAVE
- CROSSING OF THE **RETURN** THRESHOLD
  - STOP PLAYING BECAUSE YOU DON'T **NEED** TO PLAY ANY MORE

- MASTER OF THE **TWO WORLDS**
  - **VIRTUAL** SELF AND **REAL** SELF ARE **ONE**
  - VIRTUAL WORLD IS A **PLACE** LIKE ANY OTHER
  - IT'S LOST ITS *mystical significance*
- **FREEDOM** TO **LIVE**
  - PLAYERS CAN FINALLY BE **THEMSELVES**
  - COMMERCIAL BENEFIT! THEY'LL KEEP THEIR ACCOUNTS **INDEFINITELY**
    - REMEMBER, THAT'S **19 YEARS** FOR SOME *MUD2* PLAYERS – SO FAR!

- PLAYING VIRTUAL WORLDS IS A HILL-CLIMBING EXERCISE THROUGH **IDENTITY SPACE**
- THE HERO'S JOURNEY IS A GOOD ALGORITHM FOR FINDING A **LOCAL MAXIMUM**
- **BUT** THE FIT WITH VIRTUAL WORLDS ISN'T **EXACT**
  - AND IT'S **EASY** TO APPLY TO OTHER FISH-OUT-OF-WATER SITUATIONS (COLLEGE, NATIONAL SERVICE, BREAKFAST) – NOT ALL **APPROPRIATE**
- SO WHAT ARE THE **MAIN** PROBLEMS WITH IT?

- WOMAN AS TEMPTRESS
  - WHY DOES IT GET ITS **OWN STEP** WHEN THE OTHER TRANSITIONS **DON'T**?
- ATONEMENT WITH THE FATHER
  - MUST BE **POSSIBLE** – THE GAME MUST **END**
  - MUSTN'T BE AUTOMATIC – MUST FEEL **DESERVED**
  - MEASURED **TANGIBLY**, SO HOW DO **POLITICIANS** GAIN ACCEPTANCE?
- THE MAGIC FLIGHT
  - BREAK OUT, OR **FAILURE** TO BREAK BACK IN?

- VIRTUAL WORLDS HAVE NO **BOON**
  - WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY **TAKE** FROM A VW?
- ACTUALLY, YOU CAN TAKE **YOURSELF**
  - IN FORMAL TERMS, THE BOON IS **SYMBOLIC** OF YOUR NEW IDENTITY ANYWAY
- **REVERSE** THE ORDER OF **MAGIC FLIGHT** AND **RESCUE FROM WITHOUT**
  - YOU DON'T NEED **HELP** TO LEAVE, YOU NEED AN **EXCUSE** TO LEAVE
- RECALL, SUCH REVERSALS **AREN'T** UNUSUAL IN REGULAR EXAMPLES OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY

- YOU VISIT THE VW TO **BECOME** A HERO, BUT YOU CAN ONLY **BE** A HERO IN THE REAL ONE
- IS **DELIBERATE** PREVENTION OF COMPLETION OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY **ETHICAL**?
  - "HEY, NO-ONE'S **MAKING** THEM PLAY"
  - "BUSINESS IS BUSINESS"
  - MANY PEOPLE AREN'T UP TO COMPLETING THE HERO'S JOURNEY ANYWAY
  - MANY OTHERS DON'T **WANT** TO BE A HERO, THEY JUST WANT TO **KILL STUFF**

SUMMARY

- WE CAN **AT LAST** ANSWER THE QUESTION: **WHY** DO PEOPLE PLAY IN VIRTUAL WORLDS?
- BECAUSE IT'S A **QUEST FOR IDENTITY**
- BY BEING SOMEONE **VIRTUAL**, THEY FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE IN **REALITY**
- WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING AT ANY ONE MOMENT TO **PURSUE** THAT AIM THEY REGARD AS **FUN**
- **THAT'S** WHY THEY PLAY SO MUCH
- AND **THAT'S** WHY VIRTUAL WORLDS ARE **HERE TO STAY**

QUESTIONS

- THIS IS THE PART WHERE NO-ONE HAS ANYTHING TO SAY, AND NORBERT HAS TO THINK UP SOMETHING TO ASK IN ORDER TO SPARE MY EMBARRASSMENT