WHY PEOPLE PLAY MMORPGS

HOW GAMES ENABLE PLAYERS TO BE AND BECOME THEMSELVES

COLOGNE GAME LAB

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- SO, ORIGINALLY THIS LECTURE WAS PART OF A **SERIES**
  - "CHANGING IMAGES AND **CONCEPTIONS** OF BEING **HUMAN** IN MOVIES, **GAMES** AND OTHER MEDIA"
- NOW, THOUGH, IT'S ONLY ABOUT **GAMES**
- THIS IS **GOOD** FOR ME!
  - I KNOW AN **IMMENSE** AMOUNT ABOUT GAMES
  - **NOT** SO MUCH ABOUT OTHER MEDIA...
- IN PARTICULAR, I KNOW ABOUT **MMORPGS**

- THE SECRET WORLD, FUNCOM, 2012

- WHEN I **QUIT** IN MAY 2015 I WAS **50TH** IN ITS HIGH SCORE LIST (OUT OF ~50,000)

- ## STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC, BIOWARE, 2011

- ## THE MOST **EXPENSIVE** GAME YET MADE
  - – I PLAYED 6H/DAY FOR **137 DAYS** IN 2012

- WORLD OF WARCRAFT, BLIZZARD, 2004

- I ACCRUED **225 DAYS** OF /PLAYED FOR THIS
  - I LEFT WHEN **PANDAS** BECAME PLAYABLE

- EVERQUEST, SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT, 1999

- I NEVER PLAYED EVERQUEST...

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
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- # ABERMUD, ALAN COX, 1987

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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


>
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- MULTI-USER DUNGEON, 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.
*
```

- MUD WASN'T BASED ON **ANYTHING**

  – THIS **MAY** BE WHY I WAS INVITED HERE TODAY...

- MMOS ARE **PLACES** WHERE THE **IMAGINARY** MEETS THE REAL

- TO **QUALIFY** AS AN MMO, A CANDIDATE SYSTEM MUST SATISFY **SIX** CONDITIONS:
  - 1) IT MUST HAVE UNDERLYING, AUTOMATED **PHYSICS**
  - 2) PLAYERS CONTROL **SINGLE** INDIVIDUALS "IN" THE VIRTUAL WORLD, THROUGH WHICH THEY ACT
  - 3) INTERACTION TAKES PLACE IN **REAL TIME**
  - 4) THE WORLD IS **SHARED**
  - 5) THE WORLD IS **PERSISTENT**
  - 6) THE WORLD IS **NOT REALITY**

- I'M GOING TO SPEND **MOST** OF THIS TALK EXPLAINING **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY MMOS

- THIS IS BECAUSE PLAYING MMOS **CHANGES** PEOPLE ... SORT OF

  - ACTUALLY, IT'S MORE THAT PLAYING MMOS **STOPS** PEOPLE FROM **NEEDING** TO CHANGE

  - PLAYING AN MMO IS A SEARCH FOR **IDENTITY**

- HOWEVER, IF YOU **ASK** PLAYERS WHY THEY PLAY, THEY WILL USUALLY GIVE THE SAME ANSWER: "TO HAVE **FUN!**"

  - THIS IS NOT EXACTLY **INFORMATIVE**...

- WHEN PLAYERS DISCUSS **WHAT** THEY FIND FUN, IT'S SOON CLEAR THAT **DIFFERENT** PLAYERS FIND **DIFFERENT** THINGS FUN
  - NOTE: **NOT** EVERYONE **DOES** PLAY FOR FUN!
- WHEN I LOOKED AT THIS, I DISCOVERED **FOUR** MAIN ACTIVITIES THAT PLAYERS FOUND **FUN** :
  - **ACHIEVEMENT** WITHIN THE GAME CONTEXT
  - **EXPLORATION** OF THE GAME
  - **SOCIALISING** WITH OTHERS
  - **IMPOSITION** UPON OTHERS

- 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 **MONSTERS**
  - GETTING **POINTS** AND GOING UP **LEVELS**

- ACHIEVERS DO **NOT** LIKE SEEING THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS **UNDERMINED**!

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

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

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

- **SOCIALISERS** USE THE GAME AS A CONTEXT TO **ENGAGE** WITH OTHER PLAYERS
    - THE MMO'S **GOINGS-ON** GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO **TALK** ABOUT
- COMMUNICATION IS **ULTRA-IMPORTANT**
    - QUITE OFTEN **ROLE-PLAYING** FITS IN HERE, BUT NOT ALWAYS
- SOCIALISERS ARE 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
  – THEY OFTEN HAVE A **SUPERIORITY COMPLEX**
- 2ND ARE **VILE DREGS** OF HUMANITY
  – GRIEFERS
  – THEY OFTEN HAVE AN **INFERIORITY COMPLEX**

- WE CAN **PLOT** THESE BEHAVIOURS ON A **GRAPH**:

ACTING

- EVERQUEST

PLAYERS   **WORLD**

SW:TOR

- SECOND LIFE

THERE

INTERACTING

- THE THEORY **SAYS** THAT THIS DISTRIBUTION OF **FUN** APPLIES ACROSS **ALL** MMOS

ACTING

- SHADOWBANE

PLAYERS

RIFT

WORLD

- A TALE IN THE DESERT

PUZZLE PIRATES
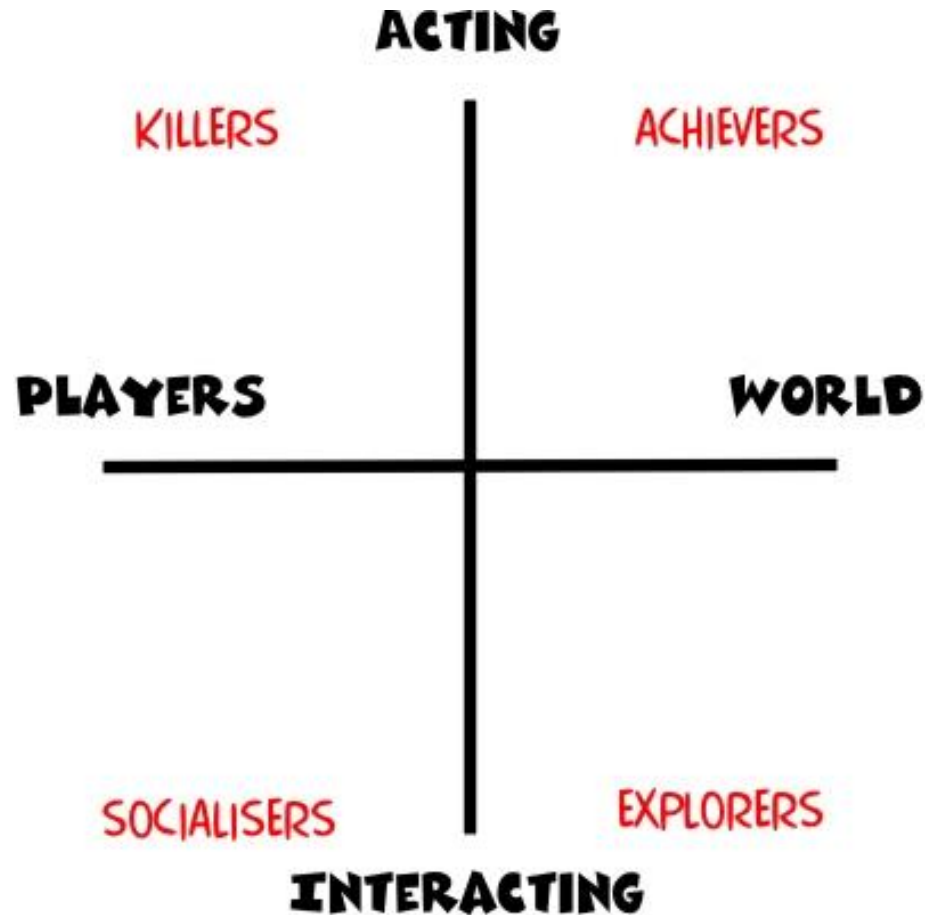
INTERACTING

- OR, WITHOUT THE **INTRUSIVE** MINI-SCREENSHOTS:

ACTING

KILLERS   ACHIEVERS

PLAYERS   WORLD

SOCIALISERS   EXPLORERS

INTERACTING

- I **PUBLISHED** THIS THEORY IN 1996
- IT WAS **IMMEDIATELY** TAKEN UP BY MMO DESIGNERS AND IS NOW **STANDARD**
  - SO **MUCH** SO THAT MANY NEW DESIGNERS CAN'T IMAGINE A TIME WHEN MMOS **WEREN'T** DESIGNED FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLAYER
- PRETTY WELL **ALL** MMOS WRITTEN THIS CENTURY USE PLAYER TYPE THEORY
  - IT HELPS **DESIGNERS** ARTICULATE THEIR IDEAS
  - IT HELPS **DEVELOPERS** MAKE MORE MONEY

- HOWEVER, THE MODEL HAS THREE MAIN **FAULTS**

1. IT DOESN'T EXPLAIN HOW INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS COME TO **CHANGE** TYPE OVER TIME
   - IT'S BEEN KNOWN FOR **30** YEARS THAT THEY DO

2. IT'S SILENT ABOUT WHY **SOME** TYPES HAVE **TWO** SUB-TYPES OF PLAYER IN THEM
   - ESPECIALLY THE TWO TYPES OF **KILLER**

3. IT STILL DOESN'T TELL US **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY MMOS
   - ONLY WHAT THEY FIND **FUN**

- THESE FAULTS CAN BE FIXED BY ADDING A THIRD **DIMENSION** TO THE GRAPH

- THIS CONCERNS WHETHER WHAT PEOPLE DO IS CONSIDERED **EXPLICITLY** OR **IMPLICITLY**
  – ARE THEIR ACTIONS EXTERNALISED OR INTERNALISED?

- I'LL GIVE **EXAMPLES** ON THE NEXT SLIDE, BUT IN ESSENCE:

  – ACTING/INTERACTING IS WHAT PLAYERS **DO**
  – PLAYERS/WORLD IS WHAT THEY DO IT **TO**
 – IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT IS **HOW** THEY DO IT

- **IMPLICIT** ACTIONS ARE ONES YOU CAN DO WITHOUT **THINKING** ABOUT THEM
  - THROWING A DART, WRITING A NOTE TO YOURSELF, BRUSHING YOUR TEETH, DRIVING A CAR, WAVING
- **EXPLICIT** ACTIONS ARE ONES YOU HAVE TO **PLAN** BEFORE/WHILE DOING THEM
  - CATCHING A BUS, WRITING A PROGRAM, BUYING NEW CLOTHES, MAKING A GAME, FREE RUNNING
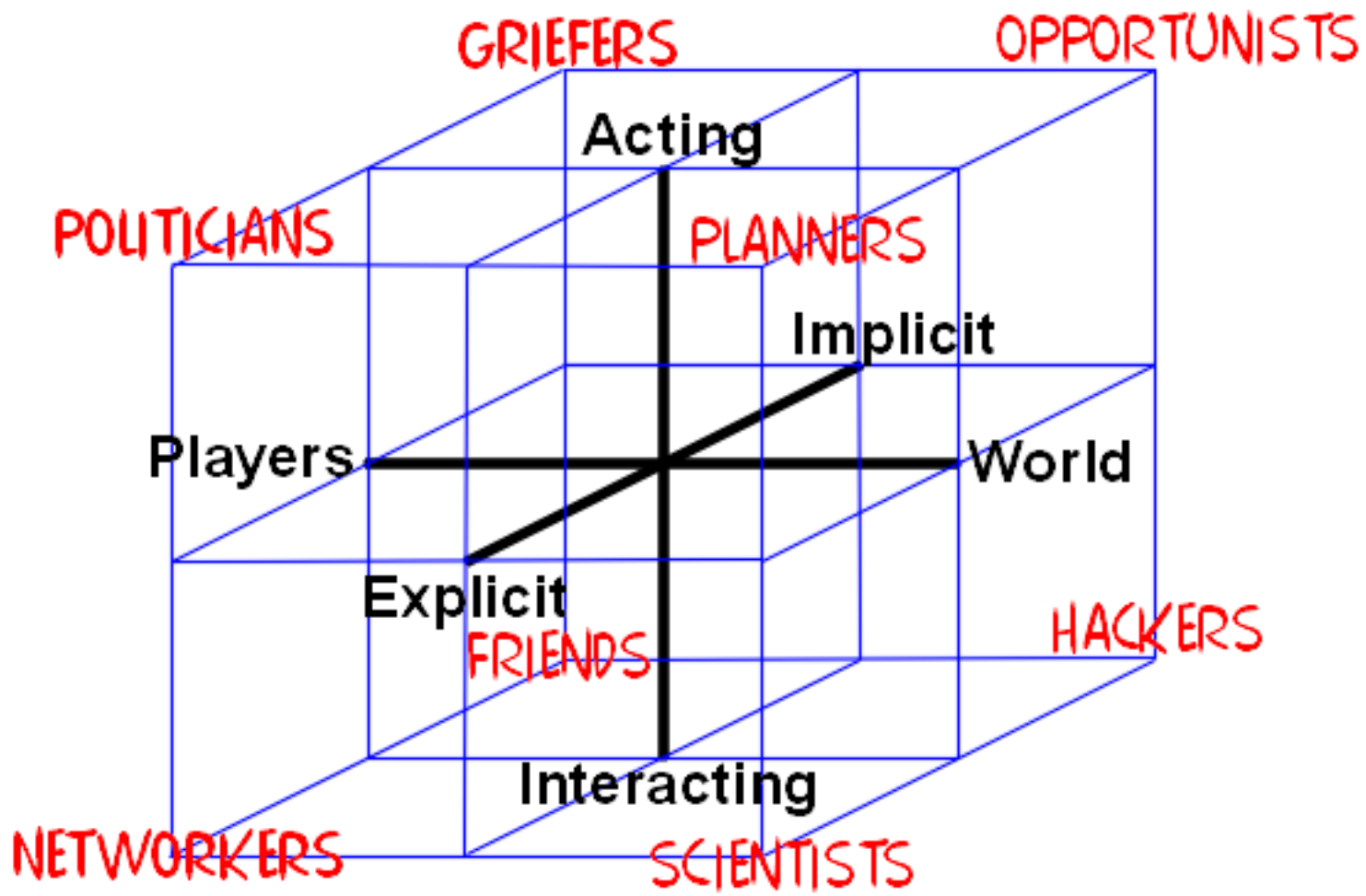- WITH ENOUGH **PRACTICE**, MOST **EXPLICIT** ACTIONS CAN AND WILL BECOME **IMPLICIT**

Acting

KILLERS   ACHIEVERS

Players   World

SOCIALISERS EXPLORERS

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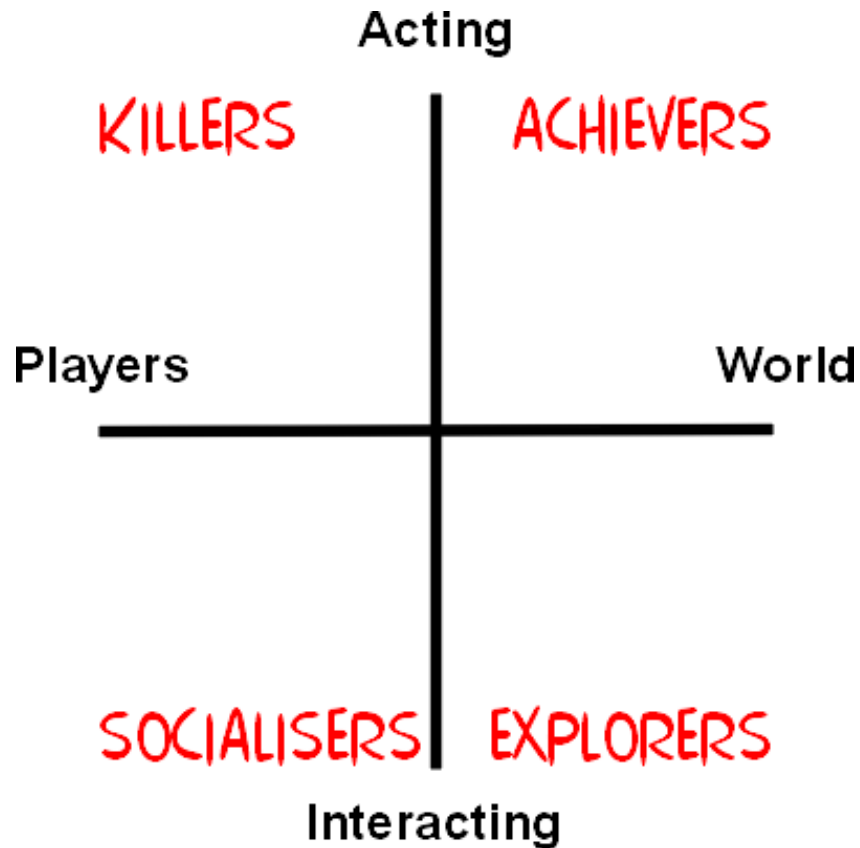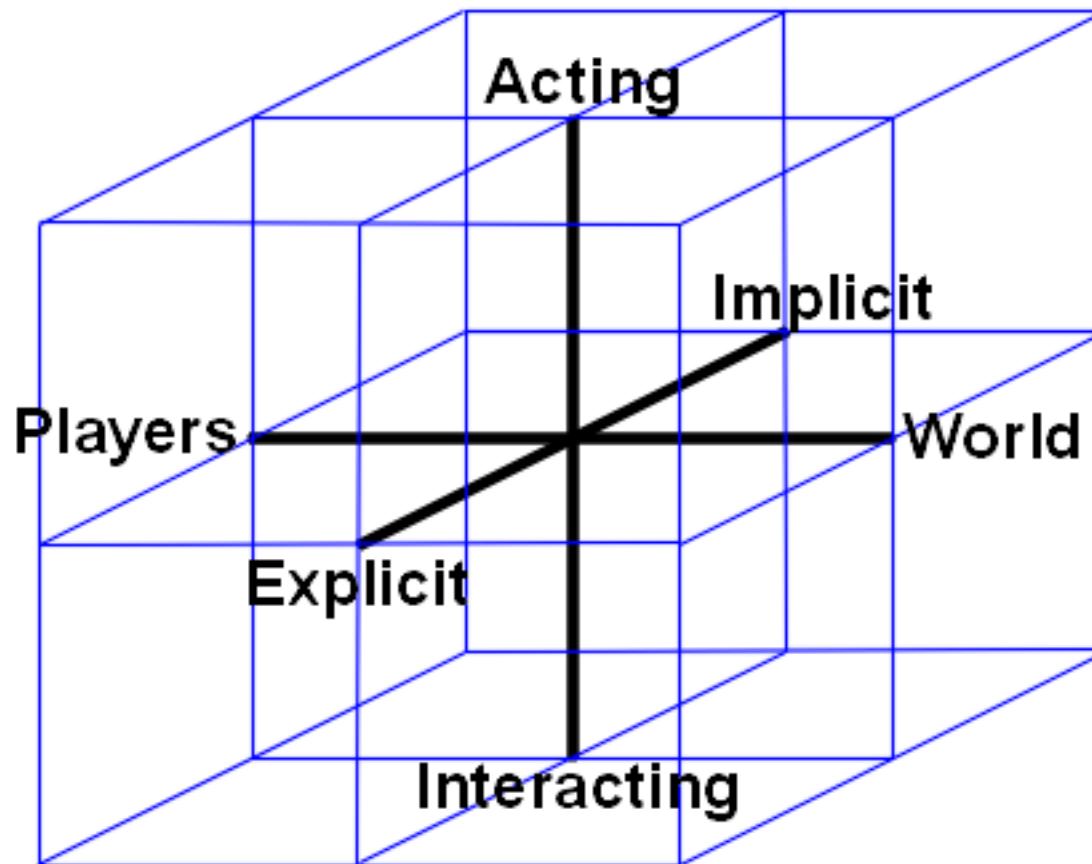
- OPPORTUNISTS – **IMPLICIT** ACHIEVERS
  - SEE A CHANCE AND TAKE IT
  - LOOK AROUND FOR THINGS TO DO
  - IF THERE'S AN OBSTACLE, DO SOMETHING **ELSE**
  - FLIT ABOUT FROM IDEA TO IDEA
- PLANNERS – **EXPLICIT** ACHIEVERS
  - SET A GOAL AND AIM TO ACHIEVE IT
  - PERFORM ACTIONS AS PART OF A LARGER SCHEME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

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

SOCIALISERS

- NETWORKERS – **EXPLICIT** SOCIALISERS
  - 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** SOCIALISERS
  - INTERACT WITH PEOPLE THEY ALREADY KNOW WELL
  - DEEP/INTIMATE UNDERSTANDING OF THEM
  - ENJOY THEIR COMPANY
  - ACCEPT THEIR LITTLE **FOIBLES**...

- GRIEFERS – **IMPLICIT** KILLERS
  - 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** KILLERS
  - 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

- HEY! IT'S **MASLOW'S** HIERARCHY OF NEEDS!

SELF-ACTUALISATION

ESTEEM

LOVE/BELONGING

SAFETY

PHYSIOLOGICAL
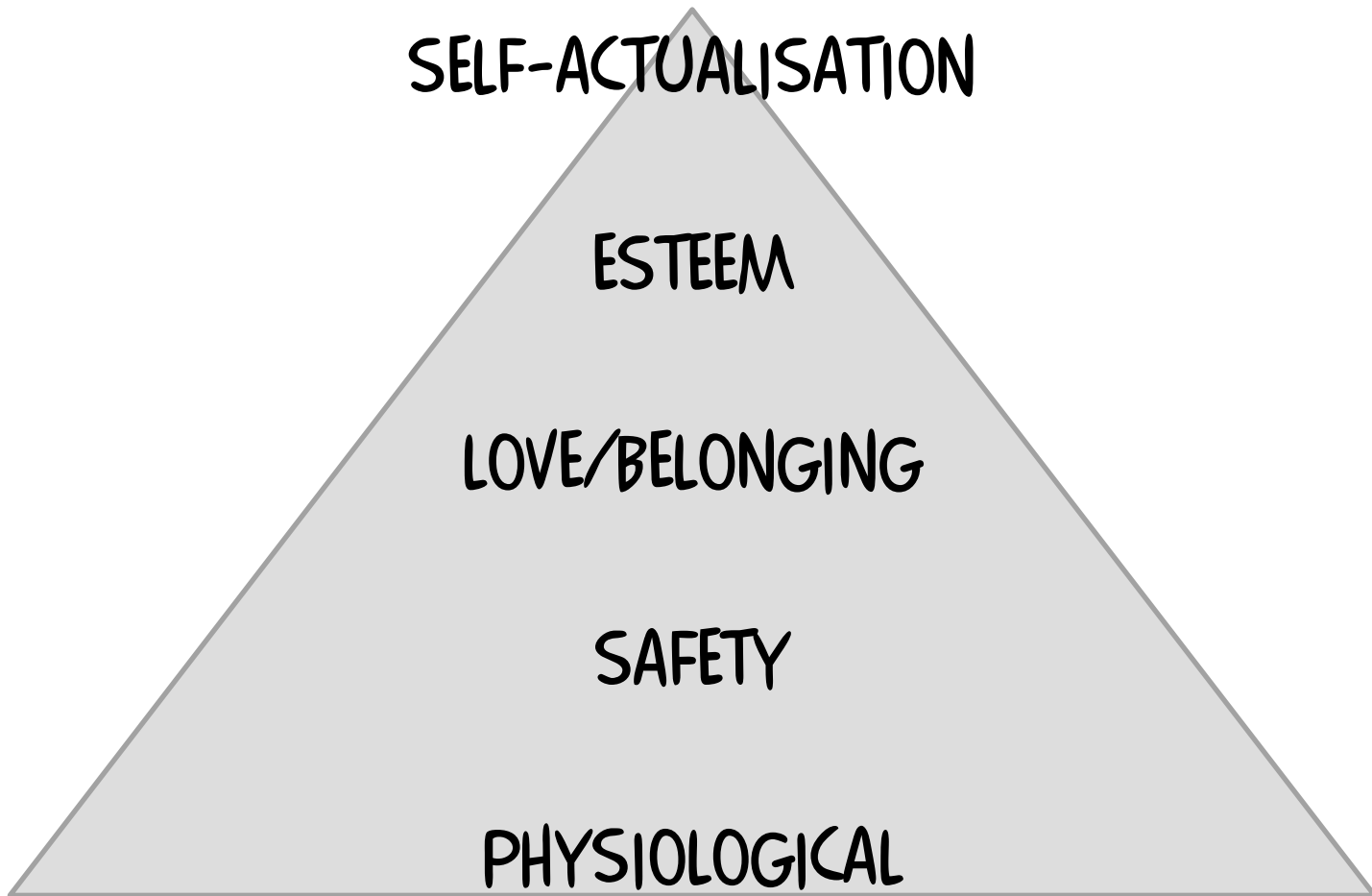
- OK, WE NOW HAVE AN **8-TYPES** MODEL
  - SADLY, TOO **MANY** FOR PEOPLE TO REMEMBER...
- ALTHOUGH THIS **CAN** EXPLAIN THE TWO SUB-TYPES OF KILLER, IT STILL HAS THE **OTHER** TWO FAULTS OUTSTANDING
  - IT SAYS **NOTHING** ABOUT CHANGES IN PLAYER TYPE OVER TIME
  - IT STILL DOESN'T TELL US **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY MMOS
- LET'S CONSIDER **CHANGES** IN PLAYER TYPE FIRST...

- IT'S **LONG** BEEN KNOWN THAT PLAYERS **CHANGE** PLAYING STYLE OVER TIME
  - SINCE **BEFORE** THE PLAYER TYPES CONCEPT EXISTED!
- IN *MUD:*
  - 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
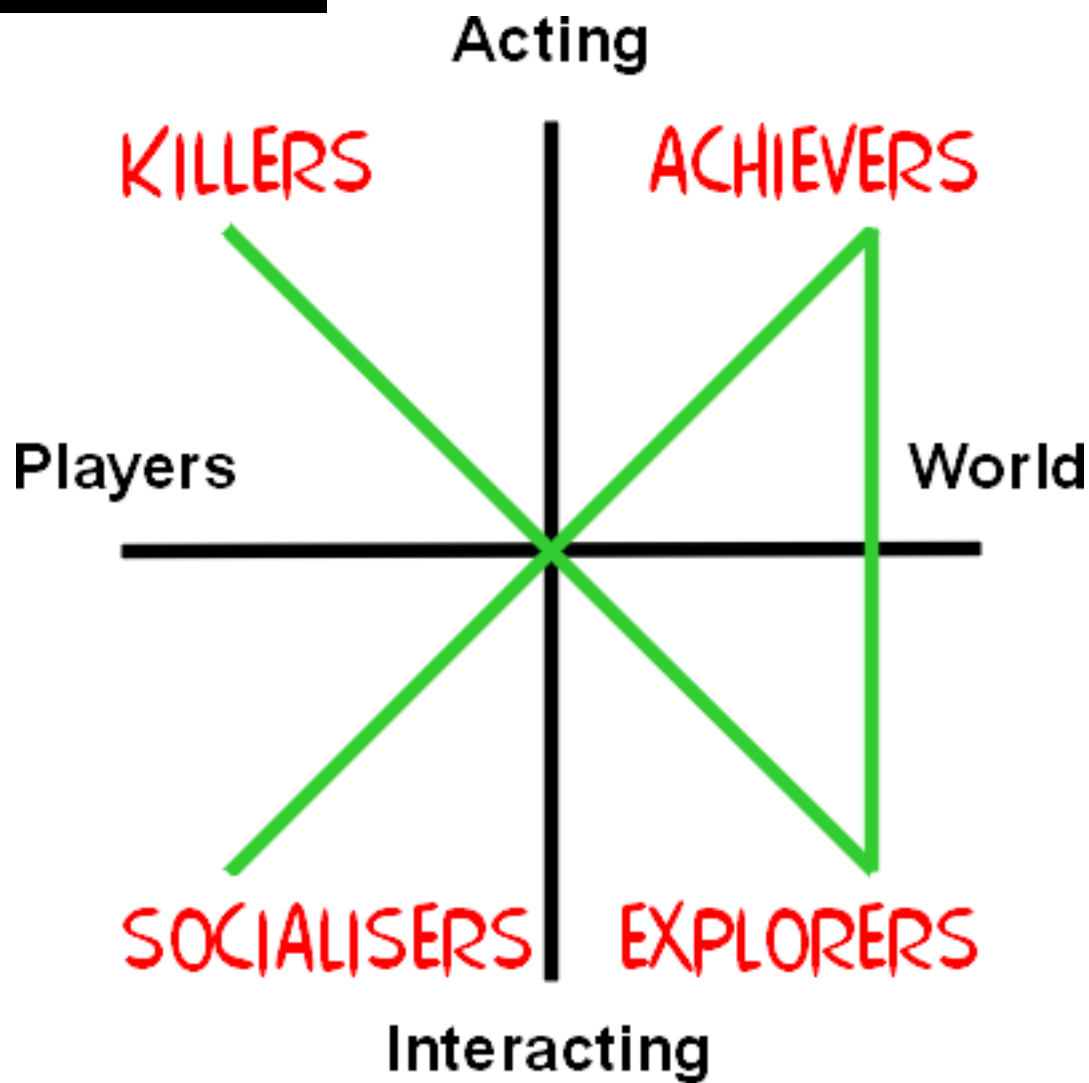
- THERE ARE 3 **OTHER** SEQUENCES THAT ONLY SHOW ON THE **3D** GRAPH
  - I'LL **SPARE** YOU THE DIAGRAMS - THEY'RE MESSY
- ALL SEQUENCES START OFF **IMPLICIT**, THEN GO **EXPLICIT**, THEN RETURN TO **IMPLICIT**
- WE CAN **COMBINE** THE SEQUENCES TO GIVE **DEVELOPMENT TRACKS**

| GRIEFER | NETWORKER | POLITICIAN | FRIEND |
| OPPORTUNIST | SCIENTIST | PLANNER | HACKER |
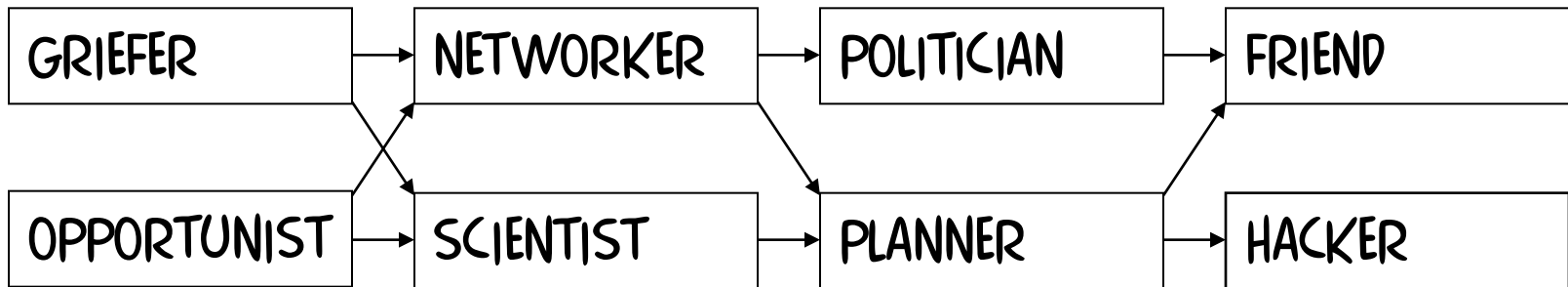
- PLAYERS START BY DETERMINING THE **BOUNDARIES** THAT GOVERN THEIR ACTIONS
- NEXT, THEY STRING TOGETHER **MEANINGFUL SEQUENCES** OF PRIMITIVE ACTIONS
- THEN THEY **APPLY** WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED
- UNTIL EVENTUALLY THEY **MASTER** IT AND IT BECOMES **SECOND NATURE**
- THIS SOUNDS A BIT "SO WHAT?", BUT IT'S THE **KEY** TO UNDERSTANDING **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY MMOS

PIVOT!

- 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"

- IT'S ROOTED IN THE **HUMAN PSYCHE**
  - FROM A UNIVERSAL NEED TO EXPLAIN THE SAME, FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF **SOCIAL**, **WORLDLY** AND **OTHER-WORLDLY** REALITIES

- IT'S 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*, ...

- OH, AND **MMOS!**

  – NB: THESE AREN'T MENTIONED IN CAMPBELL'S BOOK...

- THE HERO'S JOURNEY ISN'T **JUST** AN AGE-OLD FORMAT THAT LEADS TO EXCITING STORIES
  - THAT'S ONLY AT THE **SURFACE** LEVEL
- **BENEATH**, IT'S SOMETHING MORE PROFOUND: A PATH TO **SELF-ACTUALISATION**
- BY UNDERTAKING **YOUR** HERO'S JOURNEY, YOU CAN BECOME YOUR **TRUE** SELF — THE **HERO**
  - THE **YOU** YOU REALLY ARE, RATHER THAN THE **YOU** PEOPLE **WANT** YOU TO BE
- IT'S A **SEARCH FOR IDENTITY**
  - **YOUR** IDENTITY

- THE HERO'S JOURNEY CONSISTS OF A NUMBER OF **STEPS**, TAKEN IN **ORDER**

- THE **ONLY** WAY TO BECOME A *BONA FIDE* HERO IS TO **COMPLETE** THE HERO'S JOURNEY

- IN **STORY** FORM, YOU ONLY EXPERIENCE A HERO'S JOURNEY **VICARIOUSLY**
  - **YOU** DON'T BECOME A HERO, LUKE SKYWALKER DOES

- HOWEVER, PLAYING AN MMO GIVES A WAY THAT AN **ORDINARY** PERSON CAN **UNDERTAKE** A HERO'S JOURNEY

- THE BASIC **OUTLINE** OF THE **H'S J** IS:
  - SOMETHING IS **WRONG** WITH THE WORLD
  - THE WOULD-BE HERO NEEDS A **THING** TO FIX IT
  - THE WOULD-BE HERO GOES TO A WORLD OF **DANGER** AND EXCITEMENT TO **GET** THIS THING
  - THE WOULD-BE HERO **RETURNS** TO THE MUNDANE WORLD **WITH** THE THING
  - THE WOULD-BE HERO **FIXES** THE PROBLEM WITH THE THING HE SPECIFICALLY WENT TO THE OTHER WORLD TO GET IN ORDER TO FIX THE PROBLEM
  - AT **THIS** POINT, THE **WOULD-BE** HERO FINALLY BECOMES AN ACTUAL, *BONA FIDE* **HERO**

PHASES

- THERE ARE MANY **SIMPLIFIED** VERSIONS:
  - VOGLER'S 12 STEPS, COUSINEAU'S 8 STEPS, ADAMS LEEMING'S 8 STEPS, SIMPLIFIED VOGLER'S 5 STEPS
- CAMPBELL'S **FULL** VERSION HAS **17** STEPS, SPLIT INTO **3** PHASES:
  - **DEPARTURE** – SET IN THE **MUNDANE** WORLD IN WHICH YOU LIVE YOUR NORMAL LIFE
  - **INITIATION** – SET IN THE **OTHER WORLD** WHERE YOU GO FOR YOUR ADVENTURE
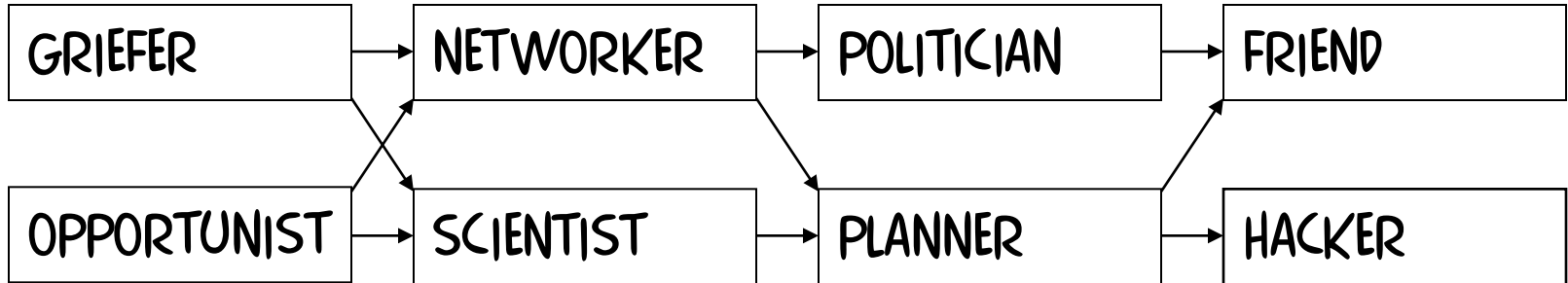 - **RETURN** – THE, ER, RETURN **TO** THE MUNDANE WORLD **FROM** THE OTHER WORLD

- 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 AND A RENEWED SENSE OF **SELF**
- **REALITY** IS THE "MUNDANE WORLD"
- THE **VIRTUAL WORLD** IS THE "OTHER WORLD"

- THE **CALL** TO ADVENTURE
  - ADVERT, NEWS SITE, SHELF UNIT, RELATED GAME, ...
- **REFUSAL** OF THE CALL
  - EXPENSE, TIME, FEAR OF INADEQUACY, SOCIAL LIFE, ...
- **SUPERNATURAL** AID
  - A FRIEND WHO ALREADY PLAYS, POPULAR IP, ...
- CROSSING OF THE **FIRST THRESHOLD**
  - INSTALLING THE CLIENT SOFTWARE, SIGNING UP
- THE **BELLY** OF THE **WHALE**
  - CHARACTER GENERATION SYSTEM

- THIS IS THE **DEVELOPMENT TRACKS** DIAGRAM FROM A FEW SLIDES AGO:

| GRIEFER | → | NETWORKER | → | POLITICIAN | → | FRIEND |

| OPPORTUNIST | → | SCIENTIST | → | PLANNER | → | HACKER |

(GRIEFER → NETWORKER, OPPORTUNIST → NETWORKER, GRIEFER → SCIENTIST crossing, NETWORKER → POLITICIAN, POLITICIAN → FRIEND, NETWORKER → PLANNER, SCIENTIST → PLANNER, PLANNER → FRIEND, PLANNER → HACKER)

- THE **ROAD OF TRIALS**
  - PLAYER FINDS THEIR FEET
  - **OPPORTUNIST/GRIEFER** STEP
- THE MEETING WITH THE **GODDESS**
  - PLAYER SEEKS KNOWLEDGE
  - **NETWORKER/SCIENTIST** STEP
- WOMAN AS THE **TEMPTRESS**
  - TRANSITION FROM LEARNING TO DOING
  - IS THE PLAYER IN IT FOR THE **LONG HAUL?**
  - (REQUIRED TO SEPARATE TWO EXPLICIT STEPS)

- **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**
  - YOUR MANIFESTED **SELF-ACTUALISATION**
  - WHICH THE BOON IS SYMBOLIC OF ANYWAY

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

- MASTER OF THE **TWO WORLDS**
  - YOUR **VIRTUAL** SELF AND YOUR **REAL** SELF ARE **ONE**
  - THE VIRTUAL WORLD IS A **PLACE** LIKE ANY OTHER
- **FREEDOM** TO **LIVE**
  - PLAYERS CAN FINALLY BE **THEMSELVES**
  - THEY'LL KEEP THEIR ACCOUNTS **INDEFINITELY**
- SOME *MUD2* PLAYERS ARE STILL PLAYING AFTER **25+ YEARS**
  - SO FAR!

- **WHY DO** PEOPLE PLAY 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 TO **PURSUE** THAT AIM THEY REGARD AS **FUN**
  - ALSO VERY **COMPELLING** [**NOT** ADDICTIVE]
- **THAT'S** WHY THEY PLAY VIRTUAL WORLDS
- IT'S **ALWAYS** BEEN WHY THEY PLAY THEM

- MMO DESIGN IS AN **ART** FORM

- BACK IN **1970S** ENGLAND, PEOPLE LIKE ROY TRUBSHAW AND I WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO **GO** TO UNIVERSITY

  - **1 IN 7** OF THE POPULATION DID, ALMOST ENTIRELY MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASS

  - (IT'S NOW 1 IN 2)

- ROY IS FROM WOLVERHAMPTON, HE SOUNDS LIKE A **FACTORY WORKER**

- I'M FROM YORKSHIRE, I SOUND LIKE A **PEASANT**

- HOWEVER, 1970S SOCIETY NEEDED **ENGINEERS**
  - IN PARTICULAR, **COMPUTER SCIENTISTS**
- MIDDLE CLASS PEOPLE DIDN'T **WANT** THEIR CHILDREN TO BE STUDYING SUCH TECHNICAL, **UNINTELLECTUAL** TOPICS
- SOME PROGRESSIVE UNIVERSITIES **DID** SEE IT AS A *SUBJECT OF THE FUTURE*, THOUGH
  - **ESSEX** WAS SUCH A UNIVERSITY
- VERY **CLEVER** WORKING CLASS PEOPLE WERE THEREFORE **ABLE** TO GET A **PLACE** ON A COMPUTER SCIENCE DEGREE

- ROY AND I **RAGED** AGAINST THIS!
- WE WERE **MARKED** BECAUSE OF OUR **BACKGROUND**, ACCENTS, PARENTS, POVERTY
  – EVERYTHING **HELD** US **DOWN**
- MOST **OTHER** (NON-COMPUTING) STUDENTS **DISPARAGED** US
- THE REAL WORLD **SUCKED**
- SO: WE WROTE A **BETTER** ONE
- WHAT CAUSED YOU TO **RISE** IN *MUD* WAS YOUR OWN **ABILITY** AND STRENGTH OF **CHARACTER** (OR LACK THEREOF)

- IN THE **REAL** WORLD, WHO WE **WERE** WAS DETERMINED BY **OTHER** PEOPLE

- **WE** WANTED TO BE **OURSELVES**

- WE SAW THAT THE **SAME** WAS INDEED TRUE FOR **EVERYONE**
  - **NO-ONE** WAS FREE, **EVERYONE** WAS IMPRISONED BY SOCIETY
  - **FEW** HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO **ESCAPE**

- WE MADE *MUD* AS A WAY TO **FREE** PEOPLE, SO THEY COULD BE AND BECOME **THEMSELVES**

- MY DAD WAS A **GAMER**, MY MUM WAS A **STORYTELLER**
- MY DAD WAS A **GAS FITTER**, MY MUM WAS A **SCHOOL MEALS COOK**
- WE **EXISTED** ON A **COUNCIL ESTATE**
- WE **LIVED** IN OUR IMAGINATIONS!
- IN MY FORMATIVE YEARS, I SAW **MISERY** AND **INJUSTICE** IN THE WORLD AROUND ME
  - I WANTED TO MAKE A **BETTER** WORLD
- **SO I DID**

- WHAT DOES ALL THIS **SAY** ABOUT "CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF BEING HUMAN"?

- IT SAYS THAT THROUGH **PLAYING** MMOS, PEOPLE **CHANGE** THE WAY THEY CONCEIVE OF **THEMSELVES**

- BY PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE **ELSE**, THEY DISCOVER THEIR OWN **TRUE** SELF

- MMOS AREN'T ABOUT DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF WHAT IT **MEANS** TO BE HUMAN

- THEY'RE ABOUT **BEING** THE HUMAN YOU **ARE!**