Artificial time: virtual worlds, myths and imagination

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Abstract

In her article "Another Time, Another Space: Virtual Worlds, Myths and Imagination" Beatrice Bittarello performs a reappraisal of the issue of Virtual Worlds using an interdisciplinary approach. She argues that Virtual Worlds existed before the introduction of the Internet. To back up her argument she outlines a history of literary and visual pre-Internet Virtual Worlds, all of which represent an alternative, mythical, and (often) religious space. She goes on to argue that finding a way of "reaching" Virtual Worlds is the key to the re-conception of (online) Virtual Worlds today. Many elements of literary Virtual Worlds can thus also be linked to contemporary examples of Virtual Worlds on the Internet. She stresses the importance of visual aspects, even though the imagination and the mythopoeic activity of the players play a key (and integral) role in Virtual Worlds on the Internet.

Keywords

virtual worlds, cyberspace, myths, imagination

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Another World' was never officially released nor leaked. Some people were so passionate about this groundbreaking game that they reverse engineered the DOS executable. This was possible partly because the binary was small (20KB). Why so small? Because ANOTHER.EXE was not the game itself but just a virtual machine: Hosting bytecode, Providing system calls. The bytecode performs all the game logic with its own opcodes but uses syscalls for "heavy" stuff like drawing, playing music, sound and managing assets. To implement only the virtual machine for the I