GAMES AS THEATER FOR SOUL:
AN ARCHETYPAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE OF VIRTUAL GAMES

A dissertation submitted

by

SUSAN MALLARD SAVETT

to

PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

This dissertation has been
accepted for the faculty of
Pacifica Graduate Institute by:

Dr. Aaron Kipnis, Advisor

Dr. Allen Koehn, Dissertation Coordinator

Dr. Jeffrey Howard, External Reader

UMI Number: 3686802

UMI®
Dissertation Publishing

UMI 3686802

ProQuest®

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

DECEMBER 5, 2014

ABSTRACT

Games as Theater for Soul:
An Archetypal Psychology Perspective of Virtual Games

by

Susan Mallard Savett

Millions of people are spending billions of hours each *week* playing digital games. These astonishing numbers point to a vast reservoir of psychic material that has been relatively unexamined by the field of depth psychology. Yet, in a realm of virtual games where image is primary and fantasy is played out, soul (psyche) is clearly present in its various disguises.

Through play and fantasy, unconscious content of the psyche is able to express its deep longings. Hypnogogic landscapes of video games provide immersive realms in which players enact psychological dramas. However, to date most psychological research of game experiences has been primarily empirical analysis within cognitive behavioral psychology and neuroscience. The question of soul-making within games is rarely approached.

In this qualitative interdisciplinary study of game studies and depth psychology, the relationship between digital games and psyche is explored through the lens of archetypal psychology. The overarching goal is to address whether the constructs of archetypal psychology provide an adequate psychological framework for understanding the phenomena of digital game worlds.

This study looks primarily to archetypal psychologist and Jungian psychoanalyst James Hillman, to ground the research in depth psychological concepts of archetype, image, and soul. Hillman's four concepts of personifying, pathologizing, psychologizing,

and soul-making, as conveyed in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), provide the guideposts for the structure of interviews with four prominent game narrative designers, fieldwork discussions, and hermeneutic investigation of the literature.

The results of this dissertation demonstrate games as a virtual theater where psyche can play; the psychological necessity of personification and regression through fantasy; the role of archetypes in the creation process of game experiences; and the importance of archetypal influences within game realms for broader and richer context for soul's participation. In addition, this study provides initial languaging allowing archetypal psychologists and game designers to enter into both game analysis and exploratory conversations, resulting in deeper meaning-making in gameplay.

This work introduces depth psychologists to the important domain of digital games for soul and suggests to game designers a new access path as game designs evolve in new directions.

Keywords: Archetypal psychology, Jung, Hillman, videogames, pathology, soul.

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this work to one of the original code writers for the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD)—my father, Lt. Colonel Joseph M. Mallard, United States Air Force. Thank you for the love and enduring support you give me.

Acknowledgments

I am in deep gratitude to those who encouraged and supported me through this academic quest. As in the games we play, life is about the challenges, failures, and successes, but most of all it is about the people with whom one journeys and imagines new possibilities.

To my academic team: Dr. Erika Rogers, my dissertation coach and mage with a unique blend of a PhD in computer sciences from Georgia Institute of Technology and a master's degree in depth psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute. She was my perfect guide on building structure and staying on course, while making me laugh and occasionally wear silly hats along the way; Dr. Glen Slater, who spent many hours over coffee discussing James Hillman's work and debating the impact of digital realms on psyche; Dr. Aaron Kipnis, who challenged me to reach for my goal and believed in my capacity to tackle this topic; Dr. Allen Koehn, who guided me with his wit and kindness; Dr. James Hillman, who, as the Senex and Puer of archetypal psychology, provided a path for exploration; and, from the world of game studies, Dr. Jeffrey Howard, who spent many GDC (Game Developer Conference) sessions with me. His understanding of the magic of game design, his intrigue since a teenager with C. G. Jung, and his willingness to share in this labyrinth of discovery provided me an extraordinary gift. I thank all of you for your brilliance.

To my GDC community for their contributions to this research: Susan O'Connor, Richard Dansky, Evan Skolnick, Steve Williams, Lev Chapelsky, Tom Abernathy, and the former MIT Gambit cohort of Matthew Weise, Clara Fernandez-Vara, and Konstantin

Mitgutsch, as well as the other rowdy, playful members of the GDC Game Narrative Summit. Thank you for welcoming me into your tribe.

To my wise friends and teachers who were always there for me: Kathryn LePage, Drew Boomer, Jungian psychoanalyst Robert Bosnak, Jennifer Selig, Sandra Easter, Janet Forbes, Kathleen Guiles, Donna Bernard, Steven Phillips, and in memory of Joan G. Grant, my dear friend who told me I *had* to finish. Joan, this is for you.

And most importantly, to my three eternal best friends who encouraged and sacrificed along the way, I give my deepest gratitude and love: my incredible husband Bruce Savett, my daughter Lauren Michelle Savett, and my son Joseph Macallan Savett. Without you I may never have been able to jump.

Table of Contents

The style used throughout this dissertation is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition, 2009), and *Pacifica Graduate Institute's Dissertation Handbook* (2014-2015).

List of Figures

Chapter 1
Introduction

"Just as the body has its evolutionary history . . . so too does the psyche."
(Jung, 1952/1976), p. 29 [*CW* 5, para. 38])

Technological virtual realms have become part of our evolutionary path of the

psychic experience as our human embodiment is distributed beyond the skin through

"digital immateriality" (Hansen, 2006). As we live in a technological textured lifeworld

(Ihde, 2002, p. xviii), our ontology is altered with the augmentation of virtual spheres.

Our essential orientation in the world is shifting in time, space, matter, and psychic

energy. Technological virtual states hold tremendous possibility to become vibrant

alchemical vessels for symbolic representation as traditional boundaries dissolve and new

ways of connection unfold. Possibly the most significant effect is the potentially altering

way that psyche (soul) plays within the dimension of virtuality.

Virtual realms change our lived experience and radically shift consciousness

through our relation with each other and with embodied reality. Depth psychologist

Wolfgang Giegerich (2007) claims that "living with the World Wide Web amounts to a

revolutionary change in man's essential orientation in the world over against our

inherited predominant orientation" (p. 311). Virtual world phenomenologist Mark

Hansen indicates that through technics, embodiment is now a *collective individuation,*

because human embodiment "no longer coincides with the boundaries of the human

body" (2006, p. 95). Digital realms are potentially unique vessels for the collective

consciousness and unconsciousness of our times. As virtual realms are increasingly

inhabited, not only is the phenomenological perspective of embodiment challenged, but

also the psychological and evolutionary alteration of the individual to the collective and

to the unconscious. The phenomenon of psychic life was previously held within the container of the physical body, but now there might potentially be a new vessel for psychic energy.

The examination of virtual realms, such as digital games, through the lens of psychoanalysts and archetypal theorists C. G. Jung and James Hillman's work potentially provides essential meaning-making to understanding of the transformation occurring to the collective psyche. Technological virtual worlds appear to provide a rich environment for archetypal energies to present themselves in the symbolic language of image. This study examined whether there is an explosion of psychic content from the unconscious that is not only amplified through the images, but also dynamically encountered by the individual and, possibly even more significantly, through collective collaboration.

Within the creation of phenomenological worlds in code, several predominant themes emerge among the virtual world design theorists: meaning-making, community and the collective, ubiquity, myth, play, fantasy, and the imaginal. When the attention is held and contained with interactive imagery, virtual world designers are "allowing players to occupy an ontological position somewhere between incarnation and imagination" (Perron & Wolf, 2009, p. 167). Potentially, virtual game worlds are building new myths that are consistent with old myths that have been forgotten. Individuals "explore aspects of themselves that the real world represses . . . [plus] virtual worlds offer more than mere personality exploration; they offer a mythical cosmos in which a personality can find a reason to exist" (Castronova, 2007, p. 201). The remarkable mythical realm of virtual worlds allows not only an access *into* the myth, but also participation for the individual and the collective, resulting in a potential meeting

ground between conscious and unconscious and a new dimension for manifestation of archetypes in symbolic representation. Fantasy images, such as fairy tales, "are the purest and simplest expression of collective unconscious psychic processes" (1970/1996, p. 1), wrote Jung's assistant, the Swiss Jungian psychologist and scholar Marie-Louise Von Franz. "They represent the archetypes in their simplest, barest, and most concise form. In this pure form, the archetypal images afford us the best clues to the understanding of the processes going on in the collective psyche" (p. 1).

This virtual landscape for psyche begs for interdisciplinary attention to shared symbolic meanings, ritual, and myth within virtual human sociality. "Whatever our deepest shared fantasies may be, we will be able to pursue them in cyberspace together, all day, every day, world without end" (Castronova, 2007, p. xv). This new dimension for the encounter with archetypal energies necessitated returning to the foundations provided by depth psychologists Jung and Hillman for insight, and to further evolve the work of archetypal psychology to include the implications of the virtual vessel holding collective psychic energy in an intermediate realm between mind and matter, digital and material, conscious and unconscious within binary impulses.

Relevance of the Topic for Depth Psychology

Three billion hours a week are spent playing digital games, and by October 2010, over 5.93 million years of gameplay time had been spent in one virtual game, *World of Warcraft* (2001), with over 12 million subscribers, according to game studies theorist and activist, Jane McGonigal at the Game Developers Conference (GDC) 2011 Serious Game Summit. She places the time frame in perspective by citing that the first human ancestors stood up 5.93 million years ago. With such magnitude of hours and players, one has to

pause to consider what is occurring to draw so many hours of attention within mythic realms of virtual games. Archetypal psychologist Hillman explained, "The power of myth, its reality, resides precisely in its power to seize and influence psychic life" (Hillman & Kerenyi, 1991, p. 90). Gameplay in mythic realms is seizing and influencing 21st century psychic life on an epic scale.

For millennia, storytelling of dreams, myths, and fantasies has provided a vehicle for meaning-making, for informing the culture of the potential generative and destructive forces of archetypes. Now, through virtual games, these fictional realms are not merely passive but are dynamic and vivid encounters. Video game designers yield more than a tale; through code, a dimension of immersion and transmutation occurs as players embody the role of enactment.

The field of depth psychology would benefit by participating with digital game designers in new terrain by exploring the deeper implications of the world that is being shaped virtually. Of course, approaches into this vast realm are as varied as there are views. The viewpoint I explored in the research process is from the lens of the archetypal psychology. Jung stated, "Just as the body has its evolutionary history . . . so too does the psyche" (1952/1976), p. 29 [*CW* 5, para. 38]). Is psyche evolving within virtual space? Are virtual games vessels for psyche? Do virtual games provide a theater for Soul? This dissertation applied the body of work from Jung and Hillman in archetypal psychology to digital game realms to see what remained true in their theories and where the gaps remain.

Examining the virtual gaming phenomena from a depth psychological perspective of the lens of archetypal psychology leads to a deeper exploration into the act

of gameplay. Although archetypal psychology established its roots in psychoanalysis, it connects to the wide "culture of western imagination" (Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 13) by extending its application to all cultural products. The content of virtual games such as alchemy, fairy tales, and myth are important elements within Jungian thought known as personified processes (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 147).

Do virtual games provide landscapes for the virtual soul to wander? Are designers the current-day alchemists who transmute matter into digital "spirit" and mediate access for the collective unconscious? Virtual storytelling can offer so much more than mere interaction of player with game: it's a journey into rich psychical landscapes filled with collective unconscious content. Knowingly or unknowingly, do virtual games manifest archetypal forces from the unconscious?

Game designers reside on a unique axis from which their work and their relationships with the imaginary realm can create profound psychic containers. In *Exodus to the Virtual World* (2007), Edward Castronova reflects, "Whatever our deepest shared fantasies may be, we will be able to pursue them in cyberspace together, all day, every day, world without end" (p. xv). At this pivotal point in our culture, digital games hold tremendous influence not only over the gaze, attention, problem-solving skills, and collaboration of players, but most importantly, over the creation and engagement of new myths, lore, expectations, and possibilities.

Jung postulated that archetypes "direct all fantasy activity into its appointed paths" (1959/1990, [*CW* 9, para. 136]). Hillman further commented on the movement of the psychic process:

These paths are mythological . . . we see that fantasy flows into particular motifs .

. . and constellations of persons in actions . . . . These patternings appear in myths

the world over, and in literature, art, scientific theories, and theological doctrines;

also in dreams . . . and in the delusional systems of the insane . . . . Within these

fantasy-images are the archetypal persons of myths. Their interrelations are the

structural principles of psychic life. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 23)

Do virtual games allow ways in which to engage with the "gods" in a more mediated

realm through virtual enactments and participation with myths of our times?

Despite the vast amount of time spent within technological virtual realms in

recent years, little work has been done with examining the depth psychological

components of psychic life—and those that have been primarily targeted for and by depth

psychologists. And yet, a radically alternate way of being has infused our existence.

Although much work has been accomplished by cognitive psychologists and

neuroscientists in tracking the effects of digital gaming and contributing to the design of

the new mediums, little has been written from the perspective of archetypal psychology

to apply and develop the cultural theory further.

In archetypal psychology, just as in digital virtual realms, the image is of primary

importance. The imaginal realm, as it plays out in dreams and in sacred encounters

(Corbin, 1969/1989), may or may not be the same as the images "manufactured" in

technological binary landscapes. But are there correlations? What are the differences? Is

this a reflection of "soul" in our technological textured world? Are technological virtual

realms a "middle ground" of reality, or a border of an outer perimeter of reality?

With estimates of 3 billion hours spent per week playing digital games (McGonigal, 2011), there begs the consideration of the ensoulment of virtual containers and potential personified "psychic presences" evoked within (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 12). Something is transpiring here.

The massive attraction and energy spent in digital games create a need to explore whether there is a relationship between the virtual images of games and the fantasy images of psyche which occur in "daydreams and night dreams, and which are present unconsciously in all our consciousness, to be the primary data of the psyche" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xviii). Hillman further stated: "Fantasy-images are both the raw materials and finished products of psyche, and they are the privileged mode of access to knowledge of soul" (p. xviii). Like Jung, Hillman considered images "to be the basic givens of psychic life . . . organized in archetypal patterns" (p. xviii). The images formed within the imaginative encounter reveal fundamental archetypal forces present within the individual and the collective.

> To take an archetypal perspective in psychology leads us, therefore, to envision that basic nature and structure of the soul in an imaginative way and to approach the basic questions of psychology first of all by means of the imagination. (p. xix)

The myriad of fantasies, mythic names, and content of digital games reads like a course in depth psychology: *Aion* (2009)*, Ashen Empires* (2207)*, Dark Age of Camelot* (2001)*, Darkfall* (2009)*, Demon's Souls* (2009)*, Eve Online* (2003)*, Final Fantasy Mystic Quest* (2010)*, Legend of Mir* (2009)*, State of Decay* (2013)*, Halo* (2001)*,* and *Tabula Rasa* (2007), to name a few of hundreds of titles. Archetypal themes dominate the realm of digital games: Anima and animus, the hero's journey, alchemy, quests, shadow, mages,

and psychic spells are cast within the virtual encounter. The myths of ancient past have resurrected within the collective throughout the virtual landscape. The archetypes may have found a new container for encounters in which the virtual game may allow a mediated realm. For the brand of psychology that coined the terms "collective" and "collective unconscious" and emphasizes the importance of myth, images, and archetypes, it is essential to further the depth psychological journey in this new dimension of being.

This dissertation attempts to provide some initial observations and potential languaging to bridge archetypal psychology with game design theory. Not only is the topic of psyche within technological virtual realms important for depth psychology, but conversely also the rich perspective that depth psychology brings is important to those who create and encounter technological imaginary realms: the game designer, the developer, the players, and to all others who "lean into" the conversations that raise the question of soul within virtual realms.

Just as the notion of a virtual world is an evolving concept, so is the notion of its role as psychic container. We do not have a "comprehensive" depth psychological understanding of the relationship of the phenomena of technological virtual worlds and psyche. In fact, one might argue whether we even have an "initial" understanding of the dynamics of psyche and technological virtual realms. This dissertation does not address all the vast possibilities and depths of archetypal psychology as a lens into technological virtual realms. It is rather an attempt of initial engagement through the perspective of virtual game worlds.

The term *technological virtual* realms may seem jarring at first for those readers within the field of game studies and game players. Whereas *digital realms*, *digital games* and *videogames* may seem more appropriate terms from a game studies perspective, *virtual realms* and *virtual games*—either created through technological or psychic imaginal spaces—address more accurately game space from a depth psychological perspective. The inherent semantics of the word *digital* implies a precise meaning of a digit, or to be true to current coding, a binary absolute. *Virtual* implies ambiguous realms that are nonmaterial and within the realm of image and imaginal.

Not only does archetypal psychology provide a structure in which to examine psychic content of the 21st century's world of virtual gaming, but also the research reflects back to archetypal psychology the impact of mercurial technological shifts that are beyond the theoretical concepts of Jung, Hillman, and other depth psychologists rooted in the 20th century.

Researcher's Interest in Topic

My fascination with the ability of code to be creatively shaped became evident in my 18 years as a technical software consultant when I traveled the country in the application of relational database systems for large engineering projects. As a result of years in the software industry I find researching with virtual game developers remarkably familiar and comfortable. Through the scripting of code—the weaving of binary impulses into patterns—unlimited possibilities exist. It is only limited by the ability to imagine.

During my professional career as a relational database consultant at the technology firm, Oracle Corporation, I worked with both developers and executives to envision future functionality and possibility of data within corporate databases. I

participated in a great diversity of projects—from nuclear reactors, to the production of satellites, to Disney theme parks, to oil companies' tracking of global seismic movement for discovering potential oil fields, to the executives concerned with tracking and altering the price of oil at pump.

After years working with relational databases I felt a compulsion to consider the deeper implications of digital technology in relation to the profound shift in the human experience. As I witnessed my own children engaged in the worlds on the other side of their computer screen, my curiosity and concern were piqued. To gain a depth psychological perspective to the implications of the increasing alteration to psychical relations through virtual mediated realms I pursued a doctorate at an institution steeped in the traditions of Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung, James Hillman, and Sigmund Freud. Pacifica Graduate Institute challenges one to reflect upon the recurrent patterns of psychic energy in behaviors, beliefs, symptoms of the individual and the culture. Depth psychology, as a discipline, reflects on what lies below the surface of psychic manifestation.

Through depth psychological theories I pondered the integration of the digital world with the psychological world within individuals and within cultures. I began to ask questions. Can virtual images facilitate bringing the cultural unconscious into consciousness? Does virtual gameplay tend to human longings not from merely a behavioral cognitive standpoint but to the underlying instinctual impulses and the desire for meaning-making? Are virtual worlds a form of collective dreaming?

The fieldwork and research has focused on the application of depth and archetypal psychological practices to explore the implications of this shifting landscape. In order to

further understanding within the dynamic industry of virtual games, I focused my

research on the developers who create hypnogogic landscapes for players to wander. By

focusing directly on the developers, the research benefits twofold: it gained insight from

their breadth of experience both as professional developers and as players of digital

games.

During the course of fieldwork, I initially set out to investigate whether

technologists felt they had a role as "creationists" of the future reality. I interviewed

technologists and visionaries who model and shape participatory virtual worlds. The

research included a combination of attending Virtual Worlds EXPO, a virtual worlds

developers conference, and online immersion within virtual sites, including social

networking sites, MMORGS (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Games), and gaming

blogs in preparation for attending and interviewing developers of game worlds.

While interviewing game developers, I noticed their "leaning into" the interview

as if it were the most intimate, private, and urgent conversation they could have—as if

something deep within needed to be spoken and touched. It was as if I had tapped into an

underlying concern that was not being spoken about: the placement of soul in the virtual

realm. The "arrogant stance," with which I am so familiar from past decades of doing the

technological circuits of conferences, is often softened. I noticed a pause and a reflection

as designers considered the affects of virtual worlds upon the soul. My awareness of "the

field" surrounding the conversations made me understand the need to continue the

research.

To further inform and establish an interdisciplinary focus to balance the academic

theory of the research, I continued to engage the community of virtual game developers

to gain the perspective of the gaming industry. With the international Game Developers Conference (GDC) in San Francisco, the GDC Online in Austin Texas, the International Game Developers Association (IGDA), and the Virtual Worlds Expo I have been able to meet and attend sessions with key game designers, developers, artists, writers, and executives within the industry. Over a 4-year period I participated in seven GDC conferences for research and to meet with game designers.

The GDC, Game Developers Conference, is the premier developers conference series solely for professionals within the game industry. The speakers are lead developers from major industry game design labs. The conferences specialize in connected games, including MMO (massive multiplayer online), casual, virtual worlds, and social networking games. The forums allow programmers, designers, producers, writers, and other professionals to exchange ideas and shape the future of the interactive gaming industry. Researching the industry through accessing the industry specialist developed my understanding of the current challenges, perspectives, and future of designing virtual games (GDC, 2011).

Throughout my participation at GDC conferences I sat in over a hundred sessions to learn and enter into dialogue around the changing landscape of game play and its impact on our culture. The sessions provided opportunity to speak with developers of major games such as *World of Warcraft* (2001), the largest MMORPG (massive multiplayer online role playing game), the science fiction universe of *Eve Online* (2003), the psychological thriller *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* (2011), and the first person shooter series, *Halo* (2001). I met and talked with the pioneers of the digital gaming industry such as Nolan Bushnell, the founder of Atari, and Richard Bartle, the co-creator

of the first multiplayer real-time virtual world, MUD1 (1978), and author of the seminal

book *Designing Virtual Worlds* (2004). The breadth of my experience within this unique

community of developers allowed me to further explore the conversations of this

explosive realm of psyche and code.

Statement of Research Problem and Question

   Research problem. The realm of digital games and its compulsions had left me

pondering how soul might be present and examined. The problem arose, however, in *how*

would one research "soul" within the cultural medium of virtual games. The first

challenge was to find a depth psychological approach into the 21st century's realm of

virtual games. How could one discuss and investigate "soul" in the digitally and

dynamically mediated "art form" in the gaming industry?

   Whereas some depth psychologists have dismissed the virtual game realm as

"soulless" (D. Frederickson, personal communication, August 2, 2011), I was perplexed

by how over three billion hours per week (McGonigal, 2011) spent in an imaginary realm

could be considered "soulless" and not infused with psychic energy. Virtual games are a

unique cultural medium for myth, fantasy, personification, and pathology.

   Many depth psychological concepts are at play within the textually rich images of

digital gaming, and psyche presents itself through the hypnogogic landscape of virtual

games. Depth psychological concepts relevant in the virtual gaming experience include

such topics as projections, archetypes, complexes, pathologies, fantasy, myth, instinctual

impulses, symbol, personas, shadow, alchemy, collective consciousness, unconscious,

and cultural symptoms. However, to date most psychological research into the virtual

gaming experience has been empirical analysis within cognitive behavioral psychology

and neuroscience. The question of "soul-making" and meaning-making is rarely approached.

A key problem occurs in *how* one investigates the phenomenon of gaming in terms of "soul-making," which requires not only an understanding of the fore-mentioned depth psychological concepts but also requires languaging and a way into the discussion between game designers and depth psychologists. Part of this problem is to develop the languaging to ask the right questions and to determine what types of questions to ask of the designers, of the players, and even of the game images.

Hillman's seminal work, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), provided not only a foundation but also a means through which I could attempt to explore "soul" within virtual games. It was not until my third or fourth reading of Hillman's work that I realized Hillman describes a potential means by which to encounter soul within the realms of game space and be a guide to enter into conversations around the slippery concept of soul. As Hillman indicated, soul is messy (1975/1992). It descends into darkness where we avoid casting our eyes. In a realm of virtual games where image is primary and fantasy is played out, soul (Psyche) is present in its various disguises. How could one approach the archetypal impulses within the virtual mediated realm of gaming?

The purpose of this qualitative interdisciplinary study of depth psychology and game studies is to explore one aspect of technology's potential influence on psyche: namely, the relationship between digital games and the psyche through the lens of archetypal psychology. The overarching goal was to discover whether the constructs of archetypal psychology provide an adequate psychological framework for understanding the phenomena of digital game worlds.

Research question. Hillman's "ideas necessary for the soul-making process" (1975/1992, p. xv) structured the journey of this research quest as a way to enter into both the games and into exploratory conversations with game designers as an access path for deeper, contextual meaning-making. During the course of research I attempt to answer the following research questions.

1. Using the interpretive lens of archetypal psychology, can we understand the phenomenon of virtual game worlds as a potential theater for soul?

2. Does the framework of James Hillman's archetypal psychology, as outlined in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), provide an appropriate and adequate means to investigate this phenomenon?

The investigation was designed for "moving from outside in . . . from the surface of visibilities to the less visible . . . [in] a process of *deepening*" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 140) into the examination of virtual games through four concepts of archetypal psychology of personifying, pathologizing, psychologizing, and soul-making.

Research includes interviews with four prominent game narrative designers for reflection of the four key concepts of archetypal psychology in current video games. The research explores the application of theories of archetypal psychology to uncover relevancy, gaps, and the potential of a depth psychological lens into 21st-century realms of virtuality. This dissertation works to situate archetypal psychology as a viable means to reflect on games as a means of soul-making. In addition, it demonstrates the use of *Re-Visioning Psychology* (Hillman, 1975/1992) as a method to investigate the phenomenon of digital games to explore meaning-making.

Definition of terms.

  Virtual games. For the purposes of this research I used the term *virtual games* to designate digital gaming—which may also be referred to as video games, computer games, virtual worlds, social networking games, and other forms of digitally mediated games using image, sound, and interactivity to create immersive worlds of play. At times, I also used the term *technological virtual worlds*, which included, but was not limited to, virtual games.

  I chose the term *virtual games* as my predominant term of representation due to the implications of the etymological root of the Latin word *virtus* meaning potency, courage, excellence, and efficacy. In the mid-1400s it meant "being something in essence or fact, though not in name" and also "that which is not physically present and yet represents a force, power, or effect" (Virtual, n.d.). Virtual also has meaning within optics of an image being formed, but not actually, as in a mirror. Whereas the computer orientation of virtual is "not physically existing but made to appear by software," other definitions bear interesting similarities to the nature of archetypes and archetypal images discussed within this research, such as virtual "being such in essence or effect though not formally recognized or admitted" (Virtual, 2015). I will further discuss the significance of the term virtual within the body of the dissertation chapters.

  Depth psychology. The word *psychology* literally means the word (logos) of the psyche (soul). The origination of the field of psychology during the late 1890s and early 1900s was considered a response away from the Church and a move towards understanding the human behavior as a science. Sigmund Freud, Eugen Bleuler, and Carl Gustav Jung worked extensively to establish the field of psychology as a component of

the scientific medical community. Their work centered on the understanding and development of theories of "the unconscious." After years of a close working relationship, Jung split from the elder Freud to further the theories of the unconscious to include the "collective unconscious." One of the major differences of depth psychology from the behavioralist and cognitive psychologies is the belief that the understanding of human behavior cannot be reduced to mere measurable behavioral and cognitive responses.

Depth psychology focuses on "the unconscious levels of the Psyche—the deeper meanings of the soul" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xvii). Depth psychology, like its practice of psychoanalysis, is an investigation of unconscious phenomena and tends to explore what lies below the surface of behaviors, conflicts, dreams, social dynamics, and cultural aesthetics.

Archetypal psychology. Archetypal psychology is a derivative of the Jungian school of depth psychology. Initially identified by Hillman in early 1970s, archetypal psychology situates itself within the cultural realm of Western imagination. The foundational roots of archetypal psychology include the work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), the French philosopher Henri Corbin (1903-1978), and American psychoanalyst James Hillman (1926-2011).

Archetypal psychology is a lens within depth psychology that facilitates understanding of the archetypal forces that reside beneath our conscious world. In *Archetypal Psychology* (1983/2004), Hillman explains: "The primary, and irreducible, language of . . . archetypal patterns is the metaphorical discourse of myths" (p. 14). He states that within archetypal psychology, "to study human nature at its most basic level,

one must turn to culture (mythology, religion, art, architecture, epic, drama, ritual) where these [archetypal] patterns are portrayed" (p. 14). It seeks to acknowledge the universality, the timelessness, the irreducibility, the emotionality, and the animation of soul (p. 70). It is an aesthetic reading of the phenomena of life rather than a behavioristic, cognitive, quantitatively measured perspective.

For archetypal psychology, image and myth are central. "The image is a self-limiting multiple relationship of meanings, moods, historical events, qualitative details, and expressive possibilities" (Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 21). According to Hillman (p. 26) archetypal psychological content manifests in image work not only through therapies but also in art, movement, and even within play.

Psyche. A central concept to depth psychology is that of psyche. Psyche has been translated within Western psychology to imply the "mind"; however, the etymological root of the Greek word is "soul." Jung and Hillman's use of the word *psyche* expands the meaning to be the totality of both conscious and unconscious psychic phenomena. Psyche, according to Jungian and Post-Jungian thought, is interpreted as being soul, returning to the original Greek meaning for the word. Hence, the words *soul* and *psyche* are interchangeable in this study.

Soul. For the purpose of this dissertation I will defer to archetypal psychologist Hillman's definition of soul as a reflective perspective rather than a thing. Soul "mediates events and makes differences between ourselves and everything that happens" (1975/1992, p. xvi). Soul-making is the reflective moment "between the doer and the deed" (p. xvi). Hillman states, "by 'soul' I mean the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation" (p. xvi). Following the

philosophical roots of Heraclitus, soul is associated with depth as in downward travel into the depths of one's soul.

Hillman's definition of soul encompasses several key concepts. First, soul makes meaning possible; it is "the deepening of events into experiences" (1983/2004, p. 28). Secondly, the significance of meaning that soul makes possible is derived from a "special relationship with death" (pp. 28-29). And thirdly, by "soul" Hillman means "the imaginative possibilities within our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and fantasy—that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical" (p. 29). For archetypal psychology, metaphor is soul's language, "transposing meaning and releasing interior, buried significance" (p. 33). Soul works through the imagination, fantasy, myth, cultural symptoms, and metaphor to reveal itself.

Soul, as described by Freud, Jung, and Hillman, returns to the roots of Neo-Platonism and Romantic philosophy for meaning of soul, which provides "a relativization of the human within the cosmic scheme of things" (Hopcke, 1989/1999, p. 38). By this foundation, "soul" is not limited to any specific religious traditions but rather provides a broader context of what is inherent within life.

Archetype. Archetypes, as defined by Hillman and Jung, are the agency that organizes and structures psychic energy into specific patterns to inform psychic life. Archetypes are "the deepest patterns of psychic functioning" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xix). These patterns of energy affect both individual and collective behavior. "They are viewpoints that rule our ideas and feelings about the world or about ourselves" (Avens, 1980/2003, p. 42). Archetypes can be thought of as "partial personalities" and, as

described by Jung, are "inborn dispositions" or "identical psychic structures common to all men" (1952/1976, p. 158 [*CW* 5, para. 224]). Archetypes are patterns of psychological impulses and are considered universal. They are "the primary forms that govern the psyche" and are manifested in "physical, social, linguistic, aesthetic, and spiritual modes" (Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 13). The archetypes are inherited modes of psychic functioning and possibilities.

Image. Virtual worlds are constructed primarily though images and the dynamic manipulation of the image. From an archetypal psychological perspective, the concept of image is not only the physical representation but also a message-bearer. "An image presents a claim—moral, erotic, intellectual, aesthetic—and demands a response. It is an 'affecting presence' . . . offering an affective relationship" (Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 25). It is impacted with meaning (p. 26). Images may present themselves from the collective unconscious as an expression of soul. "Fantasy-images are both the raw materials and finished products of psyche, and they are the privileged mode of access to knowledge of soul" (Hillman, 1975/1992 p. xvii). The source of images is the activity of the soul whether they are dream-images, fantasy-images, or poetic-images (Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 18).

Myth. "Myths are stories of archetypal encounters" (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 2000, p. 95). The myth reflects archetypal structures, themes, and experiences. Jung explains, "Myths are original revelations of the pre-conscious psyche, involuntary statements about psychic happenings" (1959/1990, p. 154 [*CW* 9, para. 261]). Myths provide a metaphorical expression of lived experiences, conscious or unconscious. For archetypal psychology, myth opens the questions of life and is imaginative reflection for

culture (Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 31). Myths weave story around the functioning of the archetypes within our lives.

Symbol. Symbols are a manifestation of archetypes; they are images that "express archetypal constellations of meaning and emotion" (Hopcke, 1989/1999, p. 29). Symbols are a representation, or a language, of the unconscious. Symbols "anchor unconscious energies in form, giving shape to the archetypal contents which they adapt to the social values and cultural norms of the day" (Izod, 2001, p. 20). In other words, through symbols, potential transformation may occur by bringing awareness to unconscious content. "Symbols enhance consciousness by bringing it into fuller relationship with the unconscious" (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 2000, p. 150). The symbol resonates with the energy of the archetype.

Summary

The dissertation is organized by first providing in Chapter 2 an overview of interdisciplinary literature of archetypal psychology and game studies. Chapter 3 investigates the role of games as theater and the imaginal space of play. Chapter 4 addresses the methodology and procedures employed for the investigation of the research. Chapter 5 presents the results of the application of *Re-Visioning Psychology* (Hillman, 1975/1992) to the interviews of the participants and the resulting interpretations. Finally, Chapter 6 is a culmination of reflections and interpretations of observations throughout the research process. Examining the game industry from an archetypal perspective, it addresses the dominant archetypes creating the game play and resulting game mechanics, potential language for transformational games, and the difference of fantasy and imagination and its implications on game experiences. It also

presents a model of the correlation of archetypal principles to the structure of theater and

of game design.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

As one begins examining the role of psyche within virtual games, one soon sees that it requires an interdisciplinary scholarly study beyond the field of depth and archetypal psychology. In order to convey meaningful research on the application of archetypal psychology to virtual gaming, extensive consideration is given to the scholarship within the field of games studies. Using a hermeneutic process of circling within the literature to weave the disciplines of virtual game studies with depth psychology, the research pays particular attention to the role of image, myth, and meaning-making.

To locate the work of this study in the fields of depth psychology and game studies, this interdisciplinary dissertation literature review is organized according to the following categories: (1) Archetypal Psychology, (2) Jungian Theory on Symbols and Images, (3) Jungian Film Theory, (4) Video Game Design Theory, (5) Virtual Realm Phenomenology, (6) Depth Psychological Perspectives on Technology, and (7) Games as Cultural Containers.

The first sections, (1) Archetypal Psychology and (2) Jungian Theory on Symbols and Images, present the theoretical foundations for this body of research. The literature then addresses in section (3) Jungian Film Theory, given that film is a cultural medium most similar to virtual games as entertainment, often created with large production teams, using image and story to convey cultural myths.

The literature review shifts to focus upon (4) Video Game Design Theory, to discuss the structures and experiences within virtual games and includes both practical

and theoretical implications of virtual game design. This section does not, however, examine the complex mathematical and theoretical discourse of game theory, which lies beyond the scope of this body of research. The following section of the Literature Review, (5) Virtual World Phenomenology, explores theories presented by theorists of the larger aspect of the phenomenological experience of virtuality. The Literature Review proceeds to give an overview, in section (6), of Depth Psychological Perspectives on Technology. The final section, (7) Games as Cultural Containers, investigates the role of game play as a cultural and psychological encounter.

Literature Relevant to the Researcher's Theoretical Approach

  Archetypal psychology. The study, *Games as Theater for Soul*, employs the theories of archetypal psychologist James Hillman's (1926-2011). Hillman, an American psychologist, was the founder of the post-Jungian school of thought archetypal psychology that integrates the fields of psychology, philosophy, mythology, cultural studies and art. Hillman studied with Jung at the C. G. Jung Institute and received his doctorate at University of Zurich in 1959. He served as the Director of Studies at C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich until 1969. Author of more than twenty books translated into twenty-five languages, Hillman work examines historical, cultural, and archetypal roots emphasizing the role of imagination and the human soul. In 1972 Hillman was invited to present at the Dwight H. Terry Lectures at Yale University. His resulting book, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992)*,* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1976. As a deconstructionist, Hillman challenges literal-minded interpretations and suggests that pathologies are not merely something to be cured but a means to increase insight into the workings of the human and cultural soul. Taking a polytheistic approach to envision the

multiplicity of archetypal figures operative in present-day situations, Hillman's writings provoke the expansion of one's perspective.

Re-Visioning Psychology (Hillman, 1975/1992) is the cornerstone piece of literature for this research project. Hillman's work not only attempts to provide a definition of soul, but also speaks to the importance of the role of fantasy images as expression of soul, as both "raw materials and finished products of psyche" (p. xvii). Hillman lays out an archetypal method "to discover [a work's] root metaphors and operational myths" (p. 169), whether the cultural manifestation is art, mythology, drama, or ritual, as in virtual games.

Hillman opens *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992) by explaining that archetypal psychology "harks back to the classical notions of soul and yet advances ideas that current psychology has not yet begun to consider" (p. xv). Although the initial intent of this book was to "re-vision" psychological practices in the therapy room, for the purposes of this dissertation I apply Hillman's theoretical approach to the interpretation of virtual games to attempt to yet again advance ideas that current psychology "has not even begun to consider" (p. xv). Hillman, like Jung, acknowledges that psyche moves and encourages psychology to evolve along with it.

In *Re-Visioning Psychology* Hillman lays out four ideas necessary for the soul-making process. Initially presented in four lectures at the Dwight Harrington Terry Lectures at Yale University, Hillman grappled with how to define, how to describe, and how to write about "soul." Hillman explores our psychological culture through "accumulated insights of the Western tradition, extending from the Greeks through the Renaissance and Romantics to Freud and Jung" (1975/1992, p. xv). The resulting work,

Re-Visioning Psychology, provides four guideposts for envisioning "soul" in current cultural experiences: Personifying (Imagining), Pathologizing (Falling Apart), Psychologizing (Seeing Through), and Dehumanizing (Soul-making).

Hillman defines soul as a perspective that "mediates events and makes differences between one's self and everything that happens. Between us and events, between the doer and the deed, there is a reflective moment—and soul-making means differentiating this middle ground" (1975/1992, p. xvi). Soul is the "unknown component, which makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences" (p. xvi). Hillman's definition of soul as a perspective is not directly tied to a religious definition of soul as a noun but rather as a verb in which the action, the reflection, the turning of events into experiences is the act of soul-making.

Hillman cites 3rd-century philosopher Plotinus, in *Enneads* (IV, 3, 12), who says, "the souls of men, seeing their images in the mirror of Dionysus," shows the "ability of the soul to divide into many parts, and that its portions and phases reflect the various images of divine persons" (1975/1992, p. 14). During the research process this dissertation explores whether images in digital games space might allow people to enter into personified states of being.

> When the dominant vision that holds a period of culture together cracks, consciousness regresses into earlier containers, seeking sources for survival which also offer sources of revival . . . an escape from contemporary conflicts into mythologies and speculations of a fantasy world. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 27)

Hillman's comment supports my proposal to examine virtual fantasy worlds as containers for psyche.

Soul's perspective, according to Hillman, shows us "the imaginative possibilities . . . through reflective speculation, dream, image, and fantasy—that mode, which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical" (1975/1992, p. xvi). Hillman, following Jung, considered fantasy images to be "both the raw materials and finished product of psyche" (p. xvii). Hillman argued "we need an imaginal ego that is at home in the imaginal realm" for it is through the imaginal that "the ego can undertake the major task" (p. 37) of having to learn of the laws and necessities of the complex and no longer be condemned to the reductive label of pathology.

Re-Visioning Psychology (1975/1992) demands the perspectives of who and what we are as humans in our culture, looking to the source of attitudes about self, religion, science, culture, and morality. "Our individual fantasies and images, whether we moralize and repress them, diagnose and imprison then, exploit and betray them, drug and mock them" (p. 225) depends upon the imagination of our culture. In the closing remarks of *Re-Visioning Psychology*, Hillman suggests that we need to "build new imaginal arenas . . . theaters for the images . . . new imaginal processions for the driving mythical fantasies that now over-run us" (1975/1992, p. 225). It is on that note that I proposed my research on virtual games as theaters of the soul.

In *The Dream and the Underworld* (1979) Hillman provides further elaboration of unconscious content in images, dreams, and shadows of the psyche, building an extension to the works of Freud and Jung on dreams. Hillman reveals how psyche guides through the underworld via the imaginal state of dream to present images of the "world of ghosts, spirits, ancestors, souls, daimones" (p. 40), invisible by nature and yet essential "statements from the chthonic depths" (p. 40) of soul. This piece of theory further

explores the ego-soul relationship, the importance of fantasy and imagination, and the bridge between the day-world and the imaginal, and "all the hiding invisibilities that govern our lives" (p. 202). Although the dream image is an unmediated expression of the unconscious content and the virtual game image is a mediated creation of the game design team, I remain open to the possible correlations of the hypnagogic landscape within the game space as an expression of the chthonic depths of psyche.

Archetypal Psychology, Volume 1 (1983/2004) succinctly outlines Hillman's key concepts within archetypal psychology. Definitions within this book provide the foundation for discussion in the dissertation of image, soul, metaphor, fantasy, archetypal image, imagination, polytheism, and psychopathology. Hillman, in this short introductory book, situates archetypal psychology as belonging "to all culture, all forms of human activity" (p. 13). Hillman's believes that in order to understand human nature one must turn to cultural manifestations of art, mythology, drama, and ritual, which portray archetypal patterns (p. 14). This book also provides a guide to the work of C. J. Jung, Henry Corbin, and Adolf Portmann in context to the development of archetypal psychology, as well as a lengthy reference to current scholarship within the field. It is a concise, informative, and comprehensive introduction to archetypal psychology.

Jungian theory on symbols and images. In order to grasp the phenomenon of virtual games from an archetypal psychological point of view, one needs to ground the theoretical literature in the works of C. G. Jung, the Swiss doctor who as a young man was an associate of Sigmund Freud. Jung's extensive work on psychological functions lays the foundation for analytical and archetypal psychology. Jung's writings are a central

focus of critical literature in understanding the role of image, symbol, myth, archetypes, and the unconscious.

For the purposes of my research, the following volumes of Jung's *Collective Works* provide key insights to the 21st-century phenomenon of the psyche within virtual game space: *Symbols of Transformation* (1952/1972), *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959/1990), *Psychology and Alchemy* (1952/1953)*,* and *The Spirit in Man, Art,* and *Literature* (1923/1978)*.* These volumes provide the foundational perspective for the consideration of virtual games as theaters for the soul.

Although written a century ago, Jung's insights in *Symbols of Transformation* (1952/1976) are essential to the role of the imaginal realms of fantasy dream as vehicles for the expression of the unconscious content of the individual and the culture. It is my belief that Jung's commentary may be applicable today and may provide a fresh approach to the images and fantasies within 21st-century virtual games.

By encountering the images of virtual gaming when viewed from the perspective of Jung's writings, we acquire a broader view of the psychological dynamics. On the interpretation of cultural phenomenon Jung stated, "The secret of cultural development is *mobility and disposability of psychic energy*" (1952/1976, p. 16 [*CW* 5, para. 17]). Jung's concept of fantasy in the following statement sheds light on the current day extensive number of hours spent in the fantasy play of virtual games.

> [We all] go through a phase when archaic thinking and feeling once more rise up in us, and that all through our lives we possess, side by side with . . . directed and adapted thinking, a fantasy-thinking which corresponds to the antique state of mind. Just as our bodies still retain vestiges of obsolete functions and conditions

in many of their organs, so our minds, which have apparently outgrown those

archaic impulses, still bear the marks of the evolutionary stages we have

traversed, and re-echo the dim bygone in dreams and fantasies. (Jung, 1952/1976,

pp. 27-28 [*CW* 5, para. 36])

Archetypal images within virtual games may be a means by which gamers access from

the unconscious content of primal impulses, primordial images, and cultural content too

painful to confront directly but which need to surface in fantasy, myth, and symbols.

The totality of all those primordial images . . . express the "extraordinarily potent"

. . . . What we seek in visible human form is not man, but the superman, the hero

or god, that quasi-human who symbolizes the ideas, forms, and forces which grip

and mould the soul. These . . . are the archetypal contents of the (collective)

unconscious, the archaic heritage of humanity. (Jung, 1952/1976 pp. 177-178

[*CW* 5, para. 259])

Could the roles of the characters and the virtual landscapes in virtual games be

"extraordinarily potent" expressions of archetypal impulses? It is my belief at this point

that Jung's observations may provide a valid means by which to understand virtual games

as potent carriers of not only cultural but also deeply instinctual archetypal content. In

fact, Jung stated: "One might describe the theatre . . . as an institution for working out

private complexes in public" (Jung, 1952/1976, p. 35 [*CW* 5, para. 48]). The format of

the virtual game worlds provides another format for encountering constellated archetypes

that seize not only the individual's complexes, but collective complexes as well.

Jung's observations and writings are too vast to discuss at length within the literature review of this dissertation. However, during the research I draw upon the analytic writings of Jung within the chapters and analyses of digital games.

It should be noted that although Hillman based his archetypal psychology on much of Jung's work, he also at times split from Jung. One difference is seen in Jung's method of amplification of an image to gain understanding of the unconscious content as compared to Hillman's objection to potentially concretizing the image while attempting amplification. For the purposes of this research, when conflicting ideas occur, I remained open to the possibilities of both Jung and Hillman's theories. The discovery process within the research was allowed to unfold and determine which approach is appropriate in the realm of games interpretation.

In addition to working with the original writings of Jung, the research also employed literature from Jungian and post-Jungian scholars to deepen and clarify the understanding of the roles of archetypes, symbol, myth, fantasy, and image. Such literature includes *Jung and the Alchemical Imagination* (Raff, 2000); *Imagination is Reality: Western Nirvana in Jung, Hillman, Barfield and Cassirer* (Avens, 1980/2003); *Complex, Archetype, Symbol* (Jacobi, 1959/1974); *A Guided Tour of the Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (Hopcke, 1989/1999); *Projection and Re-Collection in Jungian Psychology: Reflections of the Soul* (von Franz, 1980/1995); *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (von Franz, 1970/1996); *The Archetypal Imagination* (Hollis, 2000); *Working with Images: The Theoretical Base of Archetypal Psychology* (Sells, 2000); and *Inner Works: Using Dreams and Creative Imaginations for Personal Growth* (Johnson, 1996).

Literature Relevant to the Topic

  Jungian film theory. Jungian film theory provides a view into Jungian analytical thought as applied to another technological medium of images: film. The similarities of film as a moving image to virtual games include entertainment and story-telling as well as production similarities of large, creative production staffs, development time spans up to multiple years, commercialization, and sequels. Both may be considered as art and as a cultural expression of current zeitgeist. The differences should also be noted: a gamer enters into the space, dynamically altering and interacting with others, whereas a moviegoer is more of a passive participant. Because Jungian theorists have drawn much attention to film, the virtual gaming field benefits from a close examination of that which applies to this most recent image medium.

  John Izod in *Myth, Mind and the Screen: Understanding the Heroes of Our Time* (2001) demonstrates how Jungian theory is applicable to media studies through "analysis of the text." Focusing on "the expression of deep-seated needs and desires . . . inextricably bonded to the formation of myths" (p. 7), Izod dips into Jung's recognition of the affect exercised by the unconscious (p. 7). Referencing film as "media texts," Izod examines the content with the cultural dimension of analytic psychology, demonstrating how films are "reworking myth and adapt[ing] it to the needs of our time" (p. 15). Izod's statement of the phenomenon of the fantasies presented on the screen creates an environmental "filter through which the unconscious alters and dissolves images and narrative events" (p. 17). His interpretation of Jung's work, especially of the transference of energy between consciousness and unconsciousness, the psychological investment, projections, the potential for new meaning, the making available to the conscious mind

symbols rooted deep in the unconscious through the medium of the image—all inform the topic of the "media texts" of digital games. Izod demonstrates the application of Jungian analysis to film and its impact on the audience through presenting examples of specific films, television shows, and pop stars.

Another important piece of the literature is Susan Rowland's book *C. G. Jung in the Humanities: Taking the Soul's Path* (2010). Rowland emphasizes the importance and relevance of Jungian theory in our culture today. Her book suggests that the lens of Jung "offers a new way to look at the twenty-first century" (p. 1), for we need "Jung's efforts to wrench modern life away from one-sidedness" (p. 2). One important emphasis is Rowland's discussion of how art in particular re-animates the myths in audiences. "Art incarnates psychic exchanges between the known world of collective culture and the unknowable unconscious energies . . . . So a work of art is a method of incorporating the individual in the collective *at both conscious and unconscious levels"* (p. 60). Rowland cautions readers of the "enchantment" by technology, but she also sees its potential in "enabling us to creatively splice together new and ancient forms of consciousness" (p. 164). Rowland's writings integrating current cultural dynamics of art, film, and technology substantiate the placement of Jungian theory in present-day culture.

Rowland cites post-Jungian film critic, Don Frederickson, and his essay "Stripping Bare the Image" in *Jung and Film* (2001), suggesting that the images on the Internet "stupefies rather than engages the human psyche" (Rowland, 2010, p. 69). Frederickson challenges that it is "an addictive media that exploits myth to fake depth" (p. 69). Rowland argues that on some level she still sees "a spark of the Jungian creative unconscious is never quite extinguished." On some level, even with Hollywood

capitalism, she claims something remains "autonomous and can be rescued" (p. 70). This notion of dead, flat myth arguably is a point of investigation and consideration while viewing virtual games.

In addition to the work of Izod and Rowland, the literature *Jung & Film II; The Return Further Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image* (2011), edited by Christopher Hauke and Luke Hockley, and lectures of depth psychologist Glen Slater (2008) inform the relation between the mediated spaces and soul-making.

Video game design theory. During the literature research I noticed several emerging themes among the authors: meaning-making, community and the collective, the ethical responsibility of designers, play, and myth. Each of these topics provided vital insights to the potential bridges between the fields of digital game design and depth psychology. Each laid the foundation for the research problem, and each posed questions for entering the active imaginal realm with designers to explore the creative process of designing virtual worlds. The following writings revealed the similarity of the creative worlds of virtual games and the virtual space of active imagination as both incorporate image, play, nonphysical space, archetypal influences, myth, and meaning-making.

Possibly what is most interesting about books on digital game design is that they not only tout their own industry, but each of them, on some level, carries a profound understanding of the inherent deep psychological movements of meaning-making through the game space. Possibly, this is due to the fact that authors tend to be reflective and are by their very nature meaning-makers, so their lens may slant into what heightened potential is present within gaming, As a result of this "validation" of my research topic, it also leads me to recognize the need investigate the perspective within

gaming literature. But for the sake of this phase of literature review, I have focused on leading game theorists in the field and their insights into the components of the game and the moving intent of designing epic adventures. Although there is something playful in the tone of their writing, there seems to be a common thread of ethical responsibility as well. I have met many of these writers over the past few years, had conversations with them, and sat in sessions in which they have presented. I am most struck by their passion for game designers to guide the way, through their creative imaginations as well as their willingness to play.

Richard Bartle, who in 1978 co-created the first virtual world, MUD (Multi-User Dungeon), begins his influential book *Designing Virtual Worlds* (2004) with the statement, "Virtual worlds are places where the imaginary meets the real" (p. 1). Bartle's book is clear, concise, and yet broad in scope, touching base on all the central principles of design and infused with wisdom and insight. Bartle's 740 pages provide a thorough foundation of the game-design process, its effect on players, ethics, and the implications of the artistic worlds created and inhabited. *Designing Virtual Worlds* provides basic descriptions and definitions of the virtual game world used throughout the research.

Bartle claims, "Virtual worlds are not 'just a game,' they're something entirely new" (2004, p. xxi). Although virtual worlds are imaginal realms for encounters with mythical forces, one must remember the underlying structure of what is involved in the design and production of virtual game worlds. Bartle succinctly outlines in his book the essential components and processes necessary to create an arena of code for players to immerse within. The production is a highly "complex design activity" (p. xvii). Similar to the production of film, the cultural media of virtual games can require extensive and

highly specialized development teams, known as Dev Teams, and a production period of several years. Unlike film, when the product is released the production and maintenance of the virtual realms becomes very labor intensive to support the extensive number of players immersed in the game. Virtual-world development teams consist of designers, programmers building the code of virtual worlds, artists, sound engineers, operation staff, and producers.

"To create a virtual world is to create a piece of software. That's not all it is, of course—it's creating a community, a service, a place" (Bartle, 2004, p. 83). The extensive collaboration creates a realm that speaks to the senses and to the imagination (p.119). Characters are conduits that enable players to act and interact with the world itself and with other players. Although characters exist only within the virtual world, the decision to enter that world and to remain in that world is entirely the preserve of players (p. 126). Bartle outlines the types of players in four categories: Achievers, Socializers, Explorers, and Killers. Bartle further outlines subdivisions of game play activity into Planners, Scientists, Hackers, and Opportunists.

Immersion is the "sense the player has of being *in* a virtual world" (Bartle, 2004, p. 154). The degree of immersion is placed in perspective to the conceptual and emotional barriers. The representation in the virtual world deepens as the levels of identification move from player to avatar to character to persona. Most players "easily identify with the object they control" (p. 155). The character becomes "an extension of a player's self, a whole personality that the player dons when they enter the virtual world" (p. 155). Bartle indicates the deepest level of immersion is when the persona of the player is in the world. "You're not role-playing a being, you *are* the being; you're not assuming

an identity, you *are* the identity; you're not projecting a self, you *are* that self . . . .*You are there"* (p. 155). This occurrence is the moment where the player and character merge. Bartle contends that merging is the reason that people go to virtual worlds, for it is that moment that they "stop playing the world and start living it" (p. 156). At this point rises the question of the location of psyche as the borders between the realms blur and dissolve into one.

Immersion removes the barrier between player and virtual world. Bartle claims that "it's not immersion itself that is intoxicating; rather, it's what immersion helps deliver: identity" (2004, p. 157). Bartle provides an excellent description of immersion and the effects, which informed interpretations in discussions of personifying, pathologizing, and the role of fantasy and imagination. Bartle writes on the importance of being able to behave, experiment, discover, and grow into different aspects which are most admired to "equip them [players] to behave a similar way in real life" (p. 158). For Bartle, the importance of identity exploration within virtual worlds is essential, and that for some people without that opportunity the world is very empty (p. 188): "The celebration of identity is the fundamental, critical, absolutely core point of virtual worlds" (p. 159).

"Virtual worlds provide people with a mirror. In a virtual world, you *can* see yourself" (Bartle, 2004, p. 164). Bartle holds the designers responsible by pointing out that they have control over this. "They provide the ideals" (p. 164) and the potential to guide the player to greater maturity through the task of progression.

Life in the virtual world is defined through Advancement (character attributes, levels, skills, skill organizations), Character Generation (appearance), Virtual Body

(survival, sensing the virtual world), Groups (fellowships, parties, clans, guilds), Combat, and Crafting. Combat is particularly interesting for it addresses opposition, consequences, death, and the hero's journey. Death can be permanent, temporal, or alternative through resurrection, ghosts and spirits, and insurance (for example, accumulating favors from "the gods") (Bartle, 2004, p. 421). Bartle provides clear structure and descriptions of the game play as the structure to investigate individual games for the archetypal-psychological principle of image, archetypes, myth, and symbol within the game space.

The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses (2010) by Jesse Schell consists of the hundred lenses to use for consideration while designing a game. Schell contends that game design improves by reflecting on the design process from as many perspectives as possible. By considering insights from as many different fields such as psychology, anthropology, mathematics, film, music, and many other perspectives Schell gives practical fundamentals for the design of games. He discusses topics from the role of the subconscious (Schell's terminology) to the role of chance. Throughout this classic book Schell describes the essence of play, games, illusions, challenges, and fun; in essence, the power of games. As a result, Schell's insights are infused through the body of this research.

Another important source on game design is *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* (2004) by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman. Organizing their work according to four fundamentals of game design—core concepts, rules, play, and culture—Salen and Zimmerman position what games are defined as today and what they could become. The authors grapple with the limits of the emerging field of theoretical systems and a lack of developed discourse in the field of game studies and most importantly with

the discrepancy of vast potential of the medium and mainstream delivered goods with limited verbs, actions, and creativity (p. x). "The real domain of game design is the aesthetics of interactive systems" (p. xi) and shaping the experience to generate meaningful play.

In *Exodus to the Virtual World: How Online Fun is Changing Reality* (2007), Edward Castronova addresses the fact that "time and attention are migrating from the real world into the virtual world" (p. 7), and this is significantly altering patterns of daily life. He argues that the migration of the gaze determines where attention is migrating. He proposes that the gaze becomes the location; hence as millions gaze into virtual worlds, they migrate from the physical into the synthetic realm, now equally real and viable as the physical. He observes that "20 to 30 million people live in worlds of perpetual fantasy" (p. xiv), and interestingly argues that the migration of time and energy is like the emergence of a new country. He contends virtual worlds are, therefore, new lands—new lands that allow people to form new societies at will, a new frontier for alternative communities. He states that with the explosion of space "before our eyes and under our virtual feet, we can expect all kinds of new thoughts to emerge" (p. 19). Through this process Castronova boldly predicts that the real world needs to adapt to the "new cultures being founded on the other side" (p. 19) of reality. Castronova cites changes to economics, governance, social structures, and most importantly the myths and lore of culture.

Castronova supports his theory through his lens as an economist and public policy analyst, focusing on and evaluating domains such as consumption activities and attention—where human behavior plays. His observations of the migration indicate "that

the rules of the game are being redesigned" (2007, p. 89) and the designers of virtual

worlds are creating social orders. He warns that current political debates do not take into

consideration the changing social order and there is "no understanding of what video

games in general are about to do to society" (p. 187). According to Castronova, the

designers have a responsibility to understand the impact of games in altering the

boundaries of reality.

In the final pages of *Exodus to the Virtual World: How Online Fun is Changing

Reality,* Castronova (2007) displays remarkable insight when he deepens his analysis of

the migration into virtual worlds to reveal shifting social orders, economic, public policy,

and psychological implications for millions of virtual game players. Gamers "explore

aspects of themselves that the real world represses . . . [as] virtual worlds offer more than

mere personality exploration; they offer a mythical cosmos in which a personality can

find a reason to exist" (p. 201). He turns to Carl Jung's, Joseph Campbell's, J. R. R.

Tolkien's, and Bruno Bettelheim's writings on the need for fantasy to provide meaning

for human life. Fairy tales—precursors of virtual worlds—serve very deep psychological

purposes. Castronova sees virtual worlds as building new myths that are consistent with

the old myths that humanity has forgotten. He eloquently contends that virtual worlds

"are the most vibrant of vessels, carrying revered moral traditions into the future" (pp.

206-207). His move to depth psychological considerations of meaning-making, myth,

archetypes, and the collective provide a vital link to the body of work this dissertation.

Another provocative piece of literature for consideration is *Why Video Games are

Good for Your Soul* by James Paul Gee (2005), professor at the University of Arizona. As

the title implies, Gee explains how the pervasive role of digital gaming in our modern,

complex society is helping us make meaning; he discusses the role of violence within many video games.

> If people are to nurture their souls, the need to feel a sense of control, meaningfulness, even expertise in the face of risk and complexity. They want and need to feel like heroes in their own life stories and to feel that their stories make sense. (p. 4)

Gee focuses on the possibilities of transforming learning within video games, as "they hold out immense promise for changing how people think, value, and live" (p. 6). Like Castronova and Bartle, Gee touts the new frontiers of virtual worlds even though we do not yet know where they will lead: "All of us in the complex modern world are frightened of risk and the unknown. But that, I argue, is the disease of the soul that good games can help alleviate, though, of course not cure" (2005, p. 6). Hillman might argue that the world of fantasy and pathology does in fact do more than merely alleviate the symptoms of the soul. However, Gee does proceed to say:

> There are escapes that lead no where, like hard drugs, and escapes like scholarly reflection and gaming that can lead to the imagination of new worlds, new possibilities to deal with those perils and pitfalls, new possibilities for better lives for everyone. Our emotions and imagination—our souls—need food for the journey ahead. (pp. 6-7)

This statement, so well said by Gee, reflects Hillman's understanding of the power of the imaginative realm for reflection. In fact, Gee even states, as Hillman does, that it is our imagination that comprises our souls.

Through examining specific games, such as *Tetris* (1984), Gee demonstrates that the "patterns we humans find are true and meaningful" and the "patterns we find are still part and parcel of survival and daily life [show us that] . . . . We desperately seek to find patterns that we hope will lead to explanations and interventions" (2005, p. 14). In fact, Gee astutely recognizes that a strategy game such as *Tetris* "models one of our deepest human desires: to solve problems by finding patterns inside a safe world in which there is a clear and comforting underlying order" (p. 15). Possibly these patterns are the archetypal patternings such as the goddess Hestia provides. Gee demonstrates through the game space of *Tetris* an "escape into the very desire for order, control, and workable solutions . . . a desire often frustrated in life, but never in *Tetris*. In *Tetris*, we understand our successes and failures" (p. 15). This escape into a manifestation of the archetypal impulse within a game to compensate for daily life is an example of how soul is being tended through the game.

Whereas Gee accounts for these satisfying gameplay phenomena by the way they "fit so well with human minds and offer alleviation from social ills" (2005, p. 15), we also could demonstrate how they fit into the needs of the soul, the needs of the archetypal understanding. Although in *Why Video Games are Good for your Soul* (2005), Gee does not specifically reference archetypal psychological principles in his argument, he does indicate the same wisdom when he lauds the game's ability "to make people more reflective about both thinking and society." One might call that psychologizing or seeing through. Throughout the remainder of the book Gee gracefully cites games and movements within them that provide expression for soul. This book provides an excellent

model for how one can explore soul within the realms of virtual games, even without the languaging of depth psychology.

     Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World (2011) by Jane McGonigal is provocative book about how alternate realities of virtual games fulfill human needs. Based upon her dissertation work at the University of California, Berkeley, McGonigal ties her work into the premises expressed by Edward Castronova in his work, *Exodus to the Virtual World: How Online Fun is Changing Reality* (2007). McGonigal focuses on how games improve life through cooperation, coordination, and co-creation as players develop skills of shared concentration, mutual regard, synchronized engagement, and collective commitment (2011, p. 268). She theorizes that the development of these skills paves the way for solving problems of the future, allowing for "massively collaborative study of a problem" (p. 314). Games are more than escapist entertainment (349), she avers: "We are wrapping real problems inside of games . . . . We are inventing new solutions to some of our most pressing human challenges" (p. 351). McGonigal (2011) provides insight to the data tabulating the number of hours and years immersed within game space; she envisions it as an evolutionary process, with over 3 billion hours spent per week, representing over 5.8 million years of game time. Could the perspective from increased consciousness of collaboration for problem solving by a shift of consciousness created in the perspective of the game space be what Hillman speaks of as soul-making?

     McGonigal's theory are explored in context with Hillman's discussion of the change of consciousness and perspective within soul-making in which he cites, as an illustration, the dramatic change that took place during the Renaissance in terms of

discovering "perspective" in their art form: this artistic shift was reflective of an overall shift in consciousness that transpired as a soul-making move. Of course, this raises the question, in light of McGonigal's book: What perspective? What consciousness? What soul-making is occurring through virtual games?

McGonigal's dissertation for the University of California, Berkeley, *This Might Be a Game: Ubiquitous Play and Performance at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (2006), is a compelling and coherent academic work on the history of gaming and the role of game play. She attends to the importance of the insights of philosophers, psychologists, and anthropologists who consider play as a "highly consequential ritual" (p. 2). Her interpretations of Johann Huizinga's expanded notion of play in digital realms provide insight for my own interpretation of the reconfiguration of knowing the world through play in technological realms.

The Video Game Theory Reader 2 (2009), edited by Bernard Perron and Mark Wolf, provides a scholarly investigation of the developing field of video gaming studies. The collection of essays provides a rich theoretical perspective of virtual game systems, designs, and play from 16 designers. Video game studies is an emerging academic field of study that crosses 40 disciplines and theories from economics to psychoanalysis, from mathematics to Subcreation studies.

In "Gaming Literacy: Game Design as a Model for Literacy in the Twenty-First Century," Eric Zimmerman argues that literacy of the 21st century is moving beyond "the ability to understand, exchange, and create meaning through text, speech, and other forms of language." He implies that gaming literacy is "increasingly crucial for work, play, education and citizenship in the coming century" (2009, p. 24). Gaming literacy focuses

on the ability to understand and create specific kinds of meanings through bending and breaking the rules. This literacy focuses upon the system: understanding the world as dynamic sets of parts with complex, constantly changing interrelationships. It is about the process of dynamic relations: "Systems are only meaningful as they are inhabited, explored, and manipulated by people" (p. 27). Zimmerman clearly favors the "*ludic attitude* that sees the world's structures as opportunities for playful engagement" (p. 27). Through play, through blending and breaking rules, the systems of our daily lives may be understood.

What is inherently refreshing in game literacy is that it is about creating a set of possibilities within the design rather than constructing an object. Zimmerman claims in his premise that games are "well-suited for studying how meaning is made" and that game design is the "investigation of the possibility of meaning" (2009, p. 29). He strongly believes that virtual games have much to offer in our complex world:

> Rather than focusing on what happens inside the artificial world of a game, gaming literacy asks how playing, understanding, and designing games all embody crucial ways of looking at and being in the world. This way of being embraces . . . game design instinct to continually redesign and reinvent meaning. (p. 30)

Lars Konzack, in "Philosophical Game Design" (2009), extends Zimmerman's belief that designers should live up to the challenge of presenting worlds and ideas in a new way, by proposing that they should create games which confront us with philosophical challenges. He cites virtual worlds such as *SimCity* (1989), *Black and White* (2001), and *BioShock* (2007) as examples. He challenges the industry to not focus merely on immersive

experiences, but instead on how to express and present philosophical and metaphysical ideas. Konzack sites strategic games in which the player "has to open his heart (and reflexes) to the experiences" as well as the mind. He demonstrates that strategy-simulation games based on underlying worldviews are about learning of inherent, unstated rules so that the player can actively partake in exploring social theories from multiple perspectives and try out different strategies. In essence, Konzack advocates social modeling through the gaming landscape. He proposes that good games are a series of complex ethical choices, which result in several different consequential storylines.

In examining virtual worlds, the act of play is a powerful force, allowing for creativity and fantasy. The role of play is an *encounter* with fantasy and the imaginal. Mark Wolf in *The Video Game Theory Reader 2* contends that when the attention is held and contained with interactive imagery, designers are "allowing players to occupy an ontological position somewhere between incarnation and imagination" (Perron & Wolf, 2009, p. 167). Wolf's declaration is quite revealing in the potential present within virtual states. Upon further examination of Wolf's work, we find that he reveals his exploration of Subcreation, originally established by J. R. R. Tolkien. Subcreation refers to the process of world-building through human creation, but relies on God's *ex nihilo* as the overseeing power (p. 384). Wolf is one of the few writers who consider the underlying theological implications of the virtual players experience in the creative process. Although he does not go into depth to support his argument in this text, further investigation of his work is merited for the purpose of exploring whether the sacred is or can be present within the creative process of virtual worlds in context to the questions of this dissertation.

Clara Fernandez-Vara's dissertation for Georgia Institute of Technology, *The Tribulations of Adventure Games: Integrating Story into Simulation Through Performance* (2009), provided significant insight to the concept of video games as a form of theater, with the players' participation in the simulated world of the game becoming a performer. Thus, Fernandez-Vara argues that the goal of game design is for the player to re-enact the embedded story and solves the drama of the puzzle (p. 218). The structural elements within the game design are "therefore at the service of the player so she can traverse the game successfully" (p. 281). Fernandez-Vara's main premise is "playing video games constitutes a performance" (p. 4) with rules, special time, and occurs in a ritual space. She explores theatrical performance theory in accordance to Richard Schechner's work *Performance Theory* (1988/2003) in context to video games. The performative act conditioned by the rules and goals of the game and conducted within the games fictional world. The intersection between the imaginary world and the rules is where the game takes place (p. 5). Fernandez-Vara lays the foundation within game studies to compare the structure of the video games to that of the theater. Her work is discussed extensively later in Chapter 3 and is an important element in building the case for consideration of viewing digital games as a form of theater. Other leading theorists on the role of games as theater that inform this research include Brenda Laurel (*Computers as Theatre,* 1993), Janet Murray (*Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, 2000), and Marie-Laure Ryan ("Beyond Myth and Metaphor – The Case of Narrative in Digital Media", 2001, July).

Academic and game designer Jeff Howard's book about the labyrinthine nature of games, *Quests: Design, Theory, and History in Games and Narratives* (2008),

investigates the importance of the quest in game design to "unify both meaning and action" (pp. xii-xiii) according to the principles of the hero's journey concept presented by Joseph Campbell, as well as in the work of Vladimir Propp, Northrop Frye, and W. H. Auden. Howard brings to the field of game studies *Game Magic: A Designer's Guide to Magic Systems In Theory and Practice* (2014), in which he addresses how to create games that embody richer and deeper mystical and magical systems. Magic systems within games are pervasive and yet often present hollow, repetitive tasks. Howard seeks through this book to re-enchant magical play within code. He interconnects history, technology, and occult magic systems to create intricate magic systems. Howard deftly applies the central idea that "magic is programming, and programming is magic" (p. 179) to move designers forward into creative and metaphysical possibilities. An ardent scholar of alchemy, Jung, and the occult Howard both envisions and lays a path of possibilities into other realms for game designers.

Clive Thompson in *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology is Changing Our Minds for the Better* (2013) provides an excellent discourse on how digital tools are augmenting our reality, and he asserts that the "transformation is rippling through every part of our cognition—how we learn, how we remember, and how we act upon that knowledge emotionally, intellectually, and politically" (p. 6). From multiplayer online games, a collective intelligence of gamers is formed (p. 148) through which collaboration and the ability to figure almost anything out. Thompson argues that "the collective smarts of players produced a cognitive arms race—with designers forced to produce ever more immense and complex imaginary universes" (p. 149). "Crowd wisdom," "mass collaboration," and "collective decision making" abound (pp. 150-153). With the Internet

and online games "the obsession of the masses" are exposed, where previously one could pretend that they did not exist (p. 153). Thompson cites Pierre Levy's book *Collective Intelligence* (1994) in a profound acknowledgement of the collective mind: "We participate in larger groupings when there's something there that enhances our individual humanity" (p. 172).

Other game study books that informed the research and interpretation of the game play include *The Well-Played Game: A Player's Philosophy* (De Koven, 2013), *Half Real: Videogames Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds* (Juul, 2005), *The Art of Failure: An Essay on the Pain of Playing Video Games* (Juul, 2013), *Game Work: Language, Power, and Computer Game Culture* (McAllister, 2004), *Video Game Spaces: Image, Play and Structure in 3D Worlds* (Nitsche, 2008), *Game Design Theory and Practice* (Rouse, 2005), and *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction* (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith, & Tosca, 2008). For an enlivened account from the players' perspective, see journalist and academic Tom Bissell's insight-filled book, *Extra Lives: Why Video Games Matter* (2010).

Additional gaming literature. A tremendous additional volume of literature in magazines, lectures, blogs, and other media has crossed my investigation. The volume is so substantial that for the purposes of this dissertation I only include a few brief examples. However, within the dissertation, materials from those sources are called upon when appropriate.

Industry publications such as *Game Developers Magazine* contain articles that included in the chapters interpreting the games. For example, Steve Theodore, Pixel Pusher, wrote a piece on fantasy art, "Conan the Illustrator: The Life and Work of Frank

Frazetta" (2011, pp. 44-46). He writes of the emotional use of art to reflect "obsession with primal power and violence" and "outsized sensuality," as seen in "masses of twisted, boiling curves" as well as oversaturated palettes as seen in "enhance[d] . . . melodrama. . . . to underline their emotional tensions." Accessing industry publications provide insight to the use of art such as comic illustration in the creation of the images within the games.

Damion Schubert, a lead systems designer of BioWare Austin's game, *Star Wars: The Old Republic* and *Zen of Design,* provides another piece in *Game Developers Magazine* on the game-play activity of griefing [sic] in a "testosterone-drenched game" (p. 48). In "Good Grief!: Designing for the Darker Side of Multiplayer*,"* found in *Design of the Times* (September 2011), he explains, "Griefing is about power. Killing a player 20 times in a row by spawn camping him is addictive fun not because you win the deathmatch, but because he can't stop you" (p. 48). Schubert's short article on the act of griefing succinctly articulates game-play motivation of designer and player. These two examples are to demonstrate material within the innumerable sources of literature that informed the research of this dissertation. The literature within these types of publications is invaluable in providing insight and voice to the designers whose primary focus is gaming content.

Virtual worlds phenomenology. As we migrate our attention to virtual worlds, the study of virtual world phenomenology is an important component for both virtual game studies as well as the consideration of its impact upon psyche. Virtual worlds challenge and extend the phenomenological existence beyond the physical realm into the non-physical realm. Dimensions of being, relation with time, space and place have extended through the attachments of our tools. Bodily ways of knowing have been

augmented through technology. The new dwelling place cultivates change in the state of being in new dimensions and form; shifting from being-in-the world to being-online. The habitation within this dwelling calls consideration of one's awareness of our participation, our union, and our agreement with the world landscape. Our removal from the landscape affects our knowing (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2006 p. 61).

The evolutionary impact of virtual worlds of the Internet on society and the individual is explored within the following list of key cornerstone authors within the field of study on the sociological affects from the threat of technology creating a part human-part machine being to the possibility of a vehicle for furthering the most worthy human endeavors: Wiener (1954), Turkle (1994), Blackmore (1999), Jenkins (2006), Weinberger (2002), Rheingold (2002), Feenberg (2002), Writer (2008), and Kelly (2008). These leading social commentaries discuss the evolutionary process, the creation of new world paradigms, and the bifurcation of being. However, in reading these authors, the concept of the role of soul is not addressed and is a lacuna, the gap, within the body of literature on virtual realms.

In the works such as *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media* by Mark Hansen (2006) and *Postphenomenology and Technoscience: The Peking University Lectures* by Don Ihde (2009), phenomenology is re-examined in the context of the realms within virtual states. Hansen examines the contemporary phase of human technogenesis, the coevolution of the human with technics, such as virtual interactions. He focuses on the essence of embodiment based upon the philosophies of Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh (2006) and the current incorporation of technics within embodied life. Hansen accurately describes our contemporary cultural state of being with the term "bodies in

code" to "designate embodiment as it is necessarily distributed beyond the skin" (2006, p. x). The embodied life extending beyond the skin challenges the rethinking of the concepts of traditional psychological theories.

Hansen argues that even within virtual reality, the vital and indispensable role of embodiment is present in the human experience. In *Bodies in Code* Hansen analyzes "the deep correlation between embodiment and virtuality" (2006, p. x) and how the virtual has been absorbed into everyday life, hence part of the phenomenological existence. The technologized lifeworld does not leave the body behind but rather augments embodiment. Hansen suggest that by actualizing "the potential of digital (virtual reality) technologies" the lifeworld is modified (p. 29), forging new patterns of embodiment.

Hansen cites a pioneer of interactive media, Myron Kruger, who believes that *enactive* potential "extends the body's power to construct space and world" (2006, p. 26). The body-transcendent space of virtual worlds, according to Kruger, is "extending our evolutionarily accomplished interface with the world" (p. 27). Hansen points out that expansion of the body schema facilitate new kinds of world-construction. As designers prototype the phenomenological experience of the visitor to the virtual world rather than merely the technical functions, the psychic space opens up. The visitor of virtual space, according to Hansen, has a "newfound capacity for expanded agency" (p. 36) as their "evolutionary realized heritage" (p. 27). Hansen's declaration of the necessity to incorporate the concept of embodiment beyond the boundaries of the skin is instrumental to the research of this dissertation, particularly with the tie back to the designers' creation of phenomenological worlds in code.

At what point does one move from being "the visitor" to an immersed component integrated into the virtual space? Hansen does not delve into the "agency" left within the virtual space when the human withdraws from the immersion. The affects, and the avatar, remain influencing the virtual space for other members.

Hansen discusses in depth the convergence of biosocial with the technical through the work of the French bio-techno-phenomenologist Gilbert Simondon, who studied with phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty. Simondon observed individuation as an ongoing and interminable process of physical and social. The human being is "endowed with a collective dimension" (Hansen, 2006, p. 85). Simondon correlates the individuation with technics as a quasi-autonomous domain of being where "technical objects are like living beings in that they must be understood from the perspective of the genesis or progressive individuation" (p. 85). Technics participate in human evolution and are able "to constitute a medium for the biologically and psychically individuated human being to interpenetrate nature" (p. 86). Most profound is Simondon's claim:

> Through technical activity, the human creates mediations, and these mediations are detachable from the individual who produces and thinks them. The individual expresses itself in them, but does not adhere to them. The machine possesses a sort of impersonality, which allows it to become the instrument of another human. The human reality that it crystallizes in itself is alienable, precisely because it is detachable. (cited in Hansen, 2006, p. 86)

Hansen extends Simondon by further asserting that by connecting to the primordial *ecart* technics "can facilitate the convertibility that allows biologically and psychically individuated human beings to participate in a *transindividual* collective individuation" (p.

86). Hansen and Simondon's insightful work provides a major contribution to research by expanding Merleau-Ponty's conception of intercorporeity of the body schema (1945/2006).

Virtual reality becomes a technical interface to the world. Hansen eloquently captures the phenomenological nature of the human presence in the virtual environment and ones capacity to act within it becomes a function of the technical distribution of one's "embodied disembodiment (or disembodied embodiment)" in the "technical epoch of digital immateriality" (2006, p. 91). The individual embodied movement within the virtual environment is "exteriorize (or distributed) in the technical traces created by his or her intervention to the image space" (p. 92). The image space of game space is both embodied through movement of the player and yet the player remains physically disembodied.

Hansen radically claims that embodiment is a *collective individuation,* given that human embodiment "no longer coincides with the boundaries of the human body, a disembodiment of the body forms the condition of possibility for a collective (re)embodiment through technics. The human today is embodied in and through technics" (2006, p. 95). This declaration deepens and challenges not only phenomenological perspective of embodiment but also the psychological and evolutionary alteration of the individual to the collective.

American philosopher Don Ihde, in *Bodies in Technology* (2002), provides an important philosophical work considering the affect of virtual reality on phenomenological perception, addresses how perception has been augmented "as we live in our technological textured lifeworld" (p. xviii). Who, what, and where is one when

crossing the threshold into a binary virtual world are the questions explore in his study. Having previously read this work, I elected to further follow Ihde's reflections in his most recent publication, *Postphenomenology and Technoscience: The Peking University Lectures* (2009). Ihde provides an in-depth historical context of both phenomenology and technology, addresses the variations of embodiment and lifeworld as a result of technology. Hence, he coins the term *postphenomenology*. Embodiment is a perspectival perception, changing from the point of view.

Ihde quotes Hans Achterhuis, a leading philosopher of technology, on the need for philosophy to move beyond a "dystopian cast to . . . interpretations of technology" (Ihde, 2009, p. 21), stating: "The issue [now] . . . is to understand this new cultural constellation, rather than to reject it nostalgically in demanding a return to some prior, seemingly more harmonious and idyllic relations assumed to be possible" (as quoted by Ihde, p. 21). A co-evolution exists of technology and society. The intentionality of technology can be called an "interrelational ontology." Furthermore, Ihde contends, "technologies can be the means by which 'consciousness itself can be mediated'" (p. 23). Postphenomenology probes and analyzes the role of technologies in context to understanding embodiment and perception in social, personal and cultural life. In his book he tracks the "amplification of human power" throughout history. Based upon Merleau-Ponty's work, Ihde declares embodiment or bodily intentionality extends through the "artifact into the environing world in a unique technological mediation" (p. 36). Ihde refers to this as "embodiment relations." Ihde points out that embodiment has different roles and shapes in the history of the sciences, with postmodern technologies are more and more active and constructive versus more passive interrelations of the past. His

premise is that with change in technologies, the ideas of the philosophers change. In sum, Ihde's states, phenomenology is altered as technology extends the human interaction with the lifeworld. He provides valuable commentary of how technological visual images give voice to the Unheard (capitalization used by Ihde), which is a cross-disciplinary theme of Jung's dream and active imagination images.

   Depth psychological perspectives on technology. Depth psychologists which have addressed the subject of technology and soul include Giegerich's *Technology and the Soul* (2007), Romanyshyn's *Technology as Symptom and Dream* (1989), Brien's chapter "A Psychology for the Age of the Internet" in Kittleson's *The Soul of Popular Culture* (1998, and Melander's "Paradox Neverending: Psyche and the Soul of the Web: A Conversation with Derek Robinson" (2008). Schulman's *Living at the Edge of Chaos: Complex Systems in Culture and Psyche* (1997) integrates depth psychology, altered states of consciousness, and ritual to examine new paradigms for postmodern psychology. Whereas the depth psychologists address the discussion of soul within technology, many focus on the shadow aspects and the lack of soul. The body of work written does not engage with the potential within virtual worlds of technology to be a potentially unifying component in which soul may be vibrantly present.

   Depth psychological work exploring the affect and interrelations of technological movements written by students at Pacifica Graduate Institute include Gina Lynn Roberts's dissertation *Cyberspace and Virtual Reality as Subtle Body: A Depth Psychological and Phenomenological Perspective on the Soul of Technology and Technology of Soul* (1998), Janiel Page Swarthout's dissertation *The Gods of Silicon Valley: Finding Mythical Meanings within the Technologies of the 21ˢᵗ Century* (2003),

and Almog Shanun's master's thesis *A Phenomenological Research Project Using a New Role-Play Intervention* (2011).

Roberts, in *Cyberspace and Virtual Reality as Subtle Body: A Depth Psychological and Phenomenological Perspective on the Soul of Technology and Technology of Soul* (1998), attempts to demonstrate that computer technology holds "the potential to re-ensoul matter and heal the splits in Western consciousness" (p. v.). By examining embodiment, the subtle body, the intermediary place for the imaginal, she argues that a transformation of energy and consciousness occurs leading to emergence of a new self and creation. Roberts's attempts to demonstrate that the immersive world potentially reunites psyche as it engages in mythic imagination. Roberts's theory is fascinating and echoes my research.

The hermeneutic body of work touches base on many relevant topics such as the diffusion of boundaries between human and machine, alchemical correlations with cyberspace, and the emergence of Self. Although written over ten years ago, much of her research remains valid today, even in the event of radical advancements within technological realms. Roberts's ambitious work provides a historical foundation of depth psychological perspective on technological evolutionary influences and a "menu" for future dissertation topics to investigate in depth. Roberts was successful in covering multiple touch-points between technological worlds and depth psychological theory and in doing so wrote a remarkably commendable work. As a result, the dissertation *Cyberspace and Virtual Reality as Subtle Body* provides an encyclopedia format of relevant topics as a reference.

Swarthout's *The Gods of Silicon Valley: Finding Mythical Meanings Within the Technologies of the 21st Century* (2003) is a brilliant examination of metaphorical consciousness within technological advancements. As a former consultant within the technological world, Swarthout expands upon Robert Romanyshyn's writing on the metaphorical perspective and way of being in the world. She invites one to "be imaginatively involved in the phenomena of new technologies by eliciting the images and stories that dwell therein" (2003, p. iii). She bases her study on Hillman's, Giegerich's, and Jung's examination of "archetypal content embedded within images and fantasies" to the current techno-society and argues that new technologies are "literal, synthetic manifestations of mythological visions such as unity and redemption" (p. iii). Her premise is that the underlying myths behind the technologies are the "shaping agents of the future" (p. iv). Although her work examines the archetypal influences within the creation of technological realms her depth psychological lens to the field provides insight to the discussion of virtual space.

Swarthout's work is well argued, insightful, and very rich in correlating depth psychological principals of myth, image, and archetypal influence to technological progress. From her research on media studies of Marshall McLuhan to exploration of world of spirit versus the world of machine with in the works of Margaret Wertheims's *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* (1999) and William Stahl's *God and the Chip: Religion and the Culture of Technology* (2001)*,* Swarthout analyzes the techno-culture of the West and successfully integrates her scholarly research back to the depth psychological perspective through the lens of metaphor. Her brilliant examination of mythological

patterns guiding techno-society provides light in context to Greco mythology, Christianity, and film.

Swarthout's explorations provide a solid scholarly foundation for the further work attempted in this dissertation. *The Gods of Silicon Valley* (2003) dissertation shares much of the similar research areas of this dissertation. However, this dissertation endeavors to examine the relationship of the technologist in the design process of the metaphorical representation of our physical realm with the nonphysical realm. It extends the depth psychological lens to focus on interviews of virtual game designers.

Almog Shanun's master's thesis, *TTRI*: *A Phenomenological Research Project Using a New Role-Play Intervention* (2011) is an excellent overview from an archetypal psychology perspective the role of imaginal realm in play. Shanun examines the place of role-playing games (RPG's) as a means of therapeutic table role-play intervention for adolescents. His work provides a rich application of archetypal theory, group therapy, and play as therapy as a means of seeing through to conscious and unconscious compulsions. Shanun cites the work of Bertha Mook (2000) as a source to understand the differences between Jungian and non-Jungian play therapy. From a Jungian perspective, play activates the healing the psyche to heal by activating archetypal images (p. 23). Play is also "a tool that is used for understanding the unconscious" (p. 23), particularly sand play, "which involves creating images of the unconscious through play" by manipulating characters in sand. For the sake of therapy, the imaginal play occurs as nondirective and is conducted in the safe container to express uncomfortable and unconscious content. Through play one witnesses the "patient's unconscious intrigues" (p. 20), as it expresses the needs of the psyche. Shanun's work traverses the roles of myths and fairytales, the

puer, active imagination, fantasy, and dreams as means by which the psyche paints a story and allows the therapist "a glimpse into the participants soul" (p. 41).

Additional dissertations reviewed at Pacifica Graduate Institute include Pohn's *Playing the Cosmic Game: Exploring Play's Archetypal Aspects Through the Kaleidoscope of Culture* (2006), which examines the role of active imagination in play and the Internet. Pohn is deeply informed through the work of Tarnas, Goodchild, and Romanyshyn, yet the focus is on play. Hathaway's *Psyche's Virtual Reality: A Psychological Exploration of Self-Doubt in the Experience and Structure of the Post-Modern Self* (2001) is focused on the individual paranoid-schizoid development of self. A more recent work is Freeman's (2009) *The Internet: A Web of Disconnection*, which examines the shadow aspect of disconnection when one goes online.

Games as cultural containers. A discussion of virtual gaming would not be complete without visiting foundational literature on the nature of play and games in context to cultural reflection and psychological development. Game and play theories are approached from many disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychology, mathematics, and economics. For the purpose of the research, in addition to the literature mentioned within the virtual game design theory section of this review, I focus on Johann Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (1938/1955), and the French philosopher Roger Caillois's *Man, Play and Games* (1958/1961), in which he extends and argues with Huizinga's theories on the relationship of society with play and games. The research investigated psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott's work *Playing and Reality* (1971), discussing shared playing and cultural experiences (p. 69), and depth psychologist David L. Miller's book *Gods and Games* (1970/1973), which acknowledges

games as "the place where serious ideas are played with so that new knowledge and understanding may arise" (p. 13). These scholars examine the importance of play and games prior to the advent of digital games and yet lay foundational understanding to the basic psychological and social needs within play. Although not within the scope of this dissertation, discussion is merited on how the theories presented on play in the 20th century have been altered in the mediated virtual realm of the 21st century.

Johann Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (1938/1955) is the seminal book upon which current game study theorists turn as the foundation for gaming discussions. *Homo Ludens,* which means "Man the Player," defines play, and Huizinga indicated that it is an essential nature of the human, stating that "play is primary" (p. 46) and that learning comes from the "primeval soil of play" (p. 23). "We have to conclude, therefore, that civilization is, in its earliest phases, played. It does not come *from* play like a baby detaching itself from the womb: it arises *in* and *as* play, and never leaves it" (p. 173). This notion of play's power in the formation of civilization centers play as a critical act of learning and defining reality.

Huizinga (1872-1945), a Dutch history professor, was a contemporary of Freud and Jung. In 1933 Huizinga presented "The Play Element of Culture" lectures in Zurich, Vienna, and London that then became the foundation for his book. His writings reflect on topics with a shared sensibility of the nature of man, poesies, ritual and myth, and civilization development. When reading Huizinga, it is immediately apparent of Freud and Huizinga influence on one another. The following commentary on metaphor and personification by Huizinga is an example.

As soon as the effect of a metaphor consists in describing things or events in terms of life and movement, we are on the road to personification. To represent the incorporeal and the inanimate as a person is the soul of all myth-making and nearly all poetry. (1938/1955, p. 136)

The shared influences, rooted in the same intellectual time period and circles as depth psychology, is also demonstrated in Huizinga's comment: "For archaic man, doing and daring are power, but knowing is magical power. For him all particular knowledge is sacred knowledge—esoteric and wonder-working wisdom, because any knowing is directly related to the cosmic order itself" (p. 105). Since the theories of Huizinga are foundational within game studies, his theories therefore serve as a bridge between the blending of the works of depth psychologists and virtual game developers. Many game theorists (Laurel, Schell, Juul, Sicart, McGonigal, Bartle, Fernandez-Vara, Salen & Zimmerman) and performance theorist (Schechner) utilize the work of Huizinga within their theories. Huizinga's foundational work on play is so prevalent within these fields that at times Huizinga is not cited. This dissertation primarily references the original source on play, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (1938/1955).

Literature Review Summary

The diversity of literature reviewed for this research project presented a broad and rich context of ideas for consideration of games as a theater within which to engage the soul through play. Due to the diversity across disciplines, and the attempt for greater understanding of this relatively new mediated realm of digital play, the volume of material gives many perspectives for consideration. The body of work attempts to blend depth psychological content of psyche's movement through imaginal realms, the

phenomenology of virtuality, the psychological necessity of play, and the design of structured play within digital games. The goal of the investigation was to reflect on psyche's movement as it migrates through different levels of virtual space: that of the soul, that of the digitally virtual, and that in play.

The literature spans over a century of thought. It is my belief that with such diversity of perspective from pre-digital world to current digital world gives insight to the process of grappling with the shifting dynamics of our humanity being augmented through technological augmentation of the digital space. Through reflection back to the insights of Jung and Hillman in the 20th century and examining the nature of play as a vehicle in which civilizations move forward, one is able to place another lens onto the examination of digital games. Although this literature review does not cover every potential contributor of depth psychology, or address other fields of psychology and neuroscience, and does not cover every potential literature on the creation of mediated entertainment spaces of film and games, this body of work serves as a beginning point of entry into the discourse of virtual games as a potential theater for soul.

Chapter 3
Video Games as Theater

The primary aim of this chapter is to examine across multiple disciplinary fields the notion that virtual games are correlated with the space created in theater. This chapter lays the foundation to understanding how virtual games may be considered as a container, such as a theater, to contain a place of space, a place away from the daily world, where the imaginal can be encountered.

Like the traditional theater, video games too are a theater. The author creates, the crew builds scaffolding and sets, and lines are practiced over and over. Lights dim, curtains are drawn, and the play performance begins. On the stage the drama unveils. Actors and audiences, for this moment in time, immerse themselves in the imaginal world of the stage.

Within the closing summary of *Re-Visioning Psychology*, Hillman suggests that we need to "build new imaginal arenas . . . theaters for the images . . . new imaginal processions for the driving mythical fantasies that now over-run us" (1975/1992, p. 225). Jung had described the theatre "as an institution for working out private complexes in public" (1952/1976, p. 35 [*CW* 5, para. 48]). Now, at this point in time, other mediated realms are born: game worlds on computers have created a new institution for engaging psychological complexes. In this chapter I argue that the emergence of virtual realm for play and imagination is a form of a new imaginal arena, in essence a theater, in which to encounter driving mythical fantasies. This chapter first begins by examining, from a game studies perspective, how video games share components of traditional theater performance theory. Game study literature reviewed validates the notion of digital games

as a form of theater. In addition, this chapter addresses theoretical structures of play and game space, and reflects on the phenomenology of virtual space as a container.

Theater as a Place of Seeing and Knowing

Theaters are a place for seeing through to truths behind the metaphors of the human spectacle. Plato began casting shadows of truths upon of the walls of the cave for theatrical performance. Within Plato's Cave the realities of truth were so bright that no human could look directly at them (Schechner, 1988/2003). Shadows cast on the wall were the root metaphors of the human condition. Since Greek theater there has been an epistemological bonding of "seeing" with "knowing" in the Western traditions (p. 338).

From etymological roots, the word *theater* indicates a realm for seeing through to obtain greater knowing and understanding, and a compelling gaze of curiosity. It stems from the Greek word *theatron: thea* is *sight*; *theasthai* is *to view*; *theauma* "a thing compelling the gaze, a wonder"; *theorem* is a *spectacl*e, a *speculation*. Theater is a cognate with "theorem" and "theory." The Indo-European root of *dhau* or *dheu* "to look at" is considered related to *theauma* (Schechner, 1988/2003, p. 337).

Since the Renaissance, finer and finer observation instruments have been developed for sight and to increase knowing: Galileo's telescope to the Hubble Space Telescope; microscopes to the super-colliding super-conductor particle accelerator. From the *camera obscura* first envisioned in 1685 by Johann Zahn to daguerreotypes in early 1800s, from static photographs to moving film in early 1900s, from space satellites in the outer sphere of earth in mid-1900s to the inner pockets of our clothes with cell phones' digital cameras and digital realms—all facilitate the quest for seeing and knowing which are inexplicably bound together with human psyche.

Only at a distance is an object seen where there is space between the object and the observer, to allow that which is being observed to take shape perceptually and to see things in perspective (Schechner, 1988/2003, p. 338). When an object is brought close to the face it becomes blurry and out of focus, as it is often within the daily dramas of one's personal life, where it is difficult to understand from multiple points of view.

Karl Kerenyi, a reknowned classical philologist, explained that Greek theater "offers its spectators a divine standpoint in that it allows them to participate in such a penetrating vision. The spectator sees in the king the guilty fugitive while he is still ruling and governing" (1944/1976, p. 46). Kerenyi referred to this function of theater as "seeing through" in which the theater exposes the ironies of divinities, of gods and their mercilessness. Later in this dissertation the concept of "seeing through" appears as a psychological move by archetypal psychologist Hillman (1975/1992). The term "seeing through" was adapted from Kerenyi by his student Hillman to discuss the means through which psychological meaning is made.

The Greek theater of Plato and Aristotle in ancient times was a seeing place, full of spectacle. "The goal of the shows was to determine winners and losers—both in the dramas and in the competitions among actors and poets" (Schechner, 1988/2003, p. 339). And yet, the Greek theater had an underlying implication of a divine vision. Theater, from the Greeks to all forms of current mediated theater, has created places for seeing and saying. "What marks this kind of theater (and after it, film, TV, and possibly the Internet) is its specularity, its strategies of 'gazing'" (p. 338). Video games mark yet still another kind of theater to capture the gaze, like the shadows on the wall of Plato long ago.

Video Games as Theater

  The stage of a theater is a virtual world (Laurel, 1993, p. 17), just as well as the virtual world of a game is a stage of theater. "The technical magic that supports the representations, as in the theatre, is behind the scenes" (p. 17). Brenda Laurel, the first PhD in Interactive Narrative, is a computer interface theorist and game designer who described computers as inherently a theater environment in *Computers as Theatre* (1993). Laurel brings together the interaction of computer and human as a performance. The theatrical arena of the interface combines the role of the human actor with the role of computer as actor (p. 7). Laurel states, "Interface design should concern itself with representing whole actions with multiple agents [*sic*]. This is, by the way, precisely the definition of theatre" (p. 7).

  Using dramatic theory for human-computer activity, the computer-human interaction generates emotional feelings that are brought to center stage. Laurel's applied dramatic theory and technique for orchestrating action within the theatrical space and orchestrating human response through experience, form, constraints, and engagement is the same regardless of the theater's virtual or physical state. "For the actor and audience alike, the ultimate 'reality' is what is happening in the imaginary world on the stage—the representation" (Laurel, 1993, p. 16). In the theater of video games the players are both the audience and the actor, joining the action on the stage to *become* actor. The notion of passive observer as in traditional theater disappears.

  Janet Murray (2000) further espouses the model of theater as a stage for culturally mediated storytelling within virtual realms. Murray witnessed her graduate students at MIT Media Labs as being "half hacker, half bard" with "the spirit of the hacker . . .

causing the inanimate circuits to sing . . . and the spirit of the bard . . . [as both] eternal

and irreplaceable, telling us what we are doing here and what we mean to one another"

(p. 9). She names the immersive storytelling environment in which the player participates

"cyberdrama." Storytelling in games is experienced within a multiplicity of genres, from

the shooter game genre to the most elaborate quests of adventure games. Cyberdrama,

according to Murray, carries the timeless role of the storytelling bard into a new

dimension.

> Enacted events have a transformative power that exceeds both narrated and
>
> conventionally dramatized events because we assimilate them as personal
>
> experiences. The emotional impact of enactment within an immersive
>
> environment is so strong that virtual reality installations have been found to be
>
> effective for psychotherapy. (2000, p. 170)

The imaginative involvement of the participants in the cyberdrama elicits the strong sense

of emotional relation to the images and action, creating a sense of entitlement as well as

potential catharsis.

Theater—whether on the physical stage or virtual stage—attempts "to amplify

and orchestrate experience" and has "the capacity to represent actions and situations that

do not and cannot exist in the real world, in ways that invite us to extend our minds,

feelings, and senses to envelop them" (Laurel, 1993, p. 32). Referencing Aristotle's

discourse *Poetics,* Laurel claims that the encounter with code elicits psychological

responses, viewing the human-computer activity as a poetics (p. xix). Immersion, or

entering the enchanted space and donning a mask within the game's symbolic dramas, is

referred to "structuring participation with a mask" (Murray, 2000, p. 112). Donning the

mask gives shape and form to the tension and anxiety as one navigates through the virtual maze, moving into "another order of perception" (p. 112). Whether the participation consists of immersion within a theater or within a game, the players' agency—the enactment—enables the possibility of transformational experience (Murray, 2000).

Performance theory. Clara Fernandez-Vara (2009) examined playing videogames based on the process of theatrical performance model in depth while at Georgia Institute of Technology and MIT Gambit Labs. By employing the performance-model theory of Schechner's book *Performance Theory* (1988/2003), Fernandez-Vara demonstrates that playing videogames constitutes a performance.

> Performance studies devotes itself to how human action takes place and in what context. In semiotic terms, the field deals with performance as a process of making meaning on the part of the originators of the activity and their audience. (2009, p. 57)

Most importantly, Fernandez-Vara also extends the parallels of performance theory framework to game-design framework by correlating three "performances": theater, computer code, and basic game structure.

Performance theory as described by Schechner (1988/2003) employs the structure of imaginal play from Huizinga's seminal book on play, *Homo Ludens: A study of the Play Element in Culture* (1938/1955). Huizinga describes the nature of "temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart" and notes that the act of play as "cast[ing] a spell over us; it is 'enchanting', 'captivating'" (p. 10). Play components, such as in the arena of the theater or the arena of games, possess the following characteristics: they are a voluntary activity; they are not part of ordinary life,

but rather a stepping "into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own" (p. 8); they exist within certain limitations of time and within a defined limitation of space; they have rules which create an absolute order that "determine[s] what 'holds' in the temporary world circumscribed by play" (p. 11). Within imaginal states of play, objects may possess a special value. Fernandez-Vara points out that games possess the same qualities of performance activities, and therefore by extension, "playing videogames constitutes a performance" (2009, p. 4) and "allow[s] us to identify videogames as another type of performance activity" (p. 58).

Digital games embrace the quality of theatrical mimetic narration based on actions and the enactment by both the computer and the player. "In the mimetic model, the computer is not a storyteller but a character who interacts with the user in such a way that the user will regard their interaction as a story" indicated Ryan in "*Beyond Myth and Metaphor: Narrative in Digital Media*" (as cited in Fernandez-Vara, 2009, p. 54). In essence, the game computer game code is ensouled as a personified character who *plays* and participates with the player.

Games as performative media. Theatrical performance consists of three components: Dramatic Text, Performance, and Mise-en-Scène (the interaction with the audience in which meaning-making is experienced). Fernandez-Vara (2009, pp. 60-70) compares these to the three components of computer software: the *Code*, *Runtime,* and *Interaction*. Theater and games both are containers with scripted action. Code created by the game designer team is parallel to the dramatic text of playwright and director, runtime is performance, and interaction of the computer with the user is parallel to the interaction with audience.

The code of the videogame works like the text of a play: it is the pre-set data that

the software is based on, and it is at the core of the computer software. . . . During

runtime, the computer becomes a performer, as Ryan pointed out ("Beyond Myth

and Metaphor: Narrative in Digital Media"). The computer is following the rules

of the performance as set by the code. . . . Similar to the mise-en-scène of a play .

. . theatrical performance does not happen without an audience, interactive

applications (as is the case of videogames) may run but are not functional until

there is input from the interactor. (pp. 72-74)

To emphasize the nature of video games as performative media, similar to that of theater,

Fernandez-Vara further employs the formal approach of game structure known as MDA,

namely Mechanics, Dynamics, and Aesthetics. The paper "MDA: A Formal Approach to

Game Design and Game Research" was presented in in 2004 at *AAAI-04 Workshop on*

Challenges in Game AI by Hunicke, LeBlanc, and Zubek (as cited in Fernandez-Vara,

2009, pp. 73-74) and demonstrated that the MDA model is applicable to all game

formats, including board games, and not limited to digital games.

In *Figure 1*, Fernandez-Vara demonstrates the parallels of the components within

traditional theater, digital media, and games.

THEATER	Dramatic Text	Performance	Mise-en-Scène
DIGITAL MEDIA	Rules	Runtime	Interaction
GAMES	Mechanics	Dynamics	Aesthetics

Figure 1. Parallels of theatrical performance, digital media, and games. Adapted from "The Performance Framework for Videogames" in *The Tribulations of Adventure Games: Integrating Story Into Simulation Through Performance* by C. Fernandez-Vara, 2009, p. 74. Reprinted with permission.

Within this figure, game mechanics are parallel to theatrical dramatic text and computer code of digital media, game dynamics are parallel to the theatrical performance and digital media runtime, and the aesthetics are the parallel to the computer interaction of the audience/player and theatrical meaning-making (Mise-en-Scène) of the audience.

Mechanics are the design counterpart of rules, similar to the rules in a sporting event, and they establish how the player may perform within the game and which objects may be used. "Mechanics are the various actions, behaviors and control mechanisms afforded to the player within a game context (Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek)" (Fernandez-Vara, 2009, pp. 74-75). Huizinga stated, "All play has its rules. They determine what 'holds' in the temporary world circumscribed by play" (1938/1955, p. 11). Rules are imposed onto imaginal play space to provide structure and to create the container by defining the borders of the play. The "magic circle" of play space is defined through the rules (Huizinga, 1938/1955). Each action a player makes within the magic circle of video

games is bound within the game mechanics' rules, verbs, algorithms, and data structures in the game engine.

Dynamics are the performance, which unfolds within the game based on how the mechanics—the rules—are performed. They are the behavior set in motion in the runtime and "are producing specific movements and behaviors with the objects of the game. As the player understands the dynamics, she comes up with different strategies" (Fernandez-Vara, 2009, p. 75). The dynamics are the interaction between the player and the mechanics. It is the merging of the runtime behavior with the player behavior, or, in other words, the dynamic response of the coded script with the player.

Aesthetics become "the desirable emotional responses evoked in the player, when she interacts with the game system" as defined by Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek (2004). Aesthetics also include the emotional outcomes incurred after the immersion in the game. Aesthetics are the meaning-making and the potential catharsis experienced. The aesthetic experience may elicit a wide landscape of sensation, fantasy, challenge, fellowship, discovery, expression, submission, tension, resolve, prowess, or a multitude of responses within the player (p. 76). Whereas the game designer *creates* the mechanics, the player *experiences* the aesthetics. The player is an actor, along with the computer and other players, as well as the audience experiencing the drama. The game player has dual roles both as the avatar immersed within the game and as a member of the audience witnessing the play on the stage of the video screen.

The figure *Performance Framework for Videogames* (Fernandez-Vara, 2009, p. 74) provides an excellent visual of the layers of components and their relationships, each creating the underlying structure of the imaginal worlds of video games. However, it

should be noted that game mechanics of digital games are comprised of elements such as space, objects, attributes, states, actions (the verbs—what players can do), rules, skill, and chance (Schell, 2010). The game mechanics of digital games are discussed further in Chapter 6.

The idea of digital games as theater is more than a metaphor drawing parallels between the two forms of entertainment. One might claim that video games are an evolution of theater. The game designer is the scriptwriter envisioning the dramatic text; the lead designer directs the development team—building the scaffolding and shaping the magic circle of the dramatic text into lines of code, painting the artistic backdrops, encoding the rules line by line. Lines are practiced over and over until the performance begins and the players, virtual and human, perform in a dynamic event of the game. The drama unveils, each affecting the other, immersed in the imaginal world of the play on the stage.

Imaginal Spaces of Play

"Play amplifies the elements within life through its imaginal world" (Huizinga, 1938/1955, p. 9). The nature of the activity of play is vital to understanding the nature of the role of video games within our culture. The importance of play to civilization and its evolution is often overlooked. In *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element of Culture* (1938/1955), Huizinga emphasized the qualities and necessities of play that shape culture. From an archetypal perspective, play is the realm of manifesting the imaginal. Huizinga states, "In play there is something 'at play' which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play means something" (p. 1).

The etymological root of the word *play* is *plega* or *plegan,* which means "rapid movement, a gesture, a grasp of hands, clapping, playing on a musical instrument and all kinds of bodily activity" (Huizinga, 1938/1955, p. 38). It also means "to vouch or stand guarantee for, to take a risk, to expose oneself to danger for someone or something . . . to bind or engage oneself, to attend to" (p. 39).

Huizinga explains that in "this intensity, this absorption, this power of maddening, lies the very essence, the primordial quality of play" (1938/1955, pp. 2-3). Huizinga indicates that play resists all logical analysis and interpretations. It cannot be reduced. "Play is irrational" (p. 4). Play is primary to culture. "The great archetypal activities of human society are all permeated with play from the start" (p. 4). Huizinga elaborated on significance and necessity of play:

> Now in myth and ritual the great instinctive forces of civilized life have their origin: law and order, commerce and profit, craft and art, poetry, wisdom and science. All are rooted in the primaeval soil of play. . . . The fact that play and culture are actually interwoven with one another was neither observed nor expressed, whereas for us the whole point is to show that genuine, pure play is one of the main bases of civilization. (p. 5)

Play is "a stepping out of 'real' life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own" (p. 8). The enactment of play is a transformation into the imaginal. It is "an intermezzo, an interlude in our daily lives" (p. 9).

Play creates order. "Into an imperfect world and into the confusion of life it [play] brings a temporary, a limited perfection" (Huizinga, 1938/1955, p. 10). And yet, "inside the circle of the game the laws and customs of ordinary life no longer count. We are

different and do things differently" (p. 12). The child in fantasy, or the player within a videogame, is creating an image of self that is different from what one really is: more beautiful, more sublime, more dangerous, and more courageous. One is "transported beyond himself" (p. 14). Jung also referenced how children think in such ways where everything is saturated with a mythical sensibility. "They too animate their dolls and toys, and with imaginative children it is easy to see that they inhabit a world of marvels" (1952/1976, p. 21 [*CW* 5, para. 24]).

Play amplifies the elements within life through its imaginal world. Huizinga describes the elements of play like a theater in which the players become in essence actors dressing up in masks and disguising themselves from others and, more importantly, from their own selves.

> The "differentness" and secrecy of play are most vividly expressed in "dressing up". Here the "extra-ordinary" nature of play reaches perfection. The disguised or masked individual "plays" another part, another being. He *is* another being. The terrors of childhood, open-hearted gaiety, mystic fantasy and sacred awe are all inextricably entangled in this strange business of masks and disguises. (Huizinga, 1938/1955, p. 13)

Huizinga's discussion of the importance of play's amplification as a life function is particularly significant in its language as it resonates with that of depth psychologists Freud, Jung, and Hillman. The parallels to Huizinga's treatise on play resonate with Jung and Hillman's works on archetype. Play is primary: it cannot be reduced, it is irrational, it amplifies, it transcends, and it brings order through its rules.

It [play] adorns life, amplifies it and is to that extent a necessity both for the

individual—as a life function—and for its society by reason of the meaning it

contains, its significance, its expressive value, its spiritual and social associations,

in short, as a culture function. The expression of it satisfies all kinds of communal

ideals. It thus has its place in a sphere superior to the strictly biological processes

of nutrition, reproduction and self-preservation. (p. 9)

Play, as described, with its instinctual impulse, is primordial, metaphorical, and

possessing an "as-if" quality to amplify life, and is a necessity for both individual and

cultural function. It contains qualities of an archetype, or at the least play is the arena for

archetypes to perform.

Play, games, sports, theatre and rituals have five main characteristics in common,

according to Huizinga, (1938/1955): an ordering of time distinct from "ordinary" life, a

unique performance space, special value attached to objects, non-productivity in terms of

economic value, and rules. Schechner references Huizinga's characteristics of play for

the performance for theater (1988/2003). These qualities allow us to identify digital

games as another type of performance activity (Fernandez-Vara, 2009; McGonigal,

2006). The imaginal world of performance occurs separate from everyday life within the

"magic circle," the sacred space of play (Huizinga, 1938/1955). During the progression

of the play "all is movement, change, alternation, succession, association, separation . . .

. Once played, it endures as a new-found creation of the mind, a treasure to be retained by

the memory" (p. 9). Through play a spell is cast, enchanting the players into its unique

realm of aesthetics.

Play is a form of primal motion, according to the philosopher Hans-Georg

Gadamer (1986/1998). There are no passive viewers. He focuses on the underlying

principle of motion in play, but also the importance of "free space." Depth psychologist

David Miller (personal communication, August 4, 2011) spoke of an encounter with

Gadamer in which they discussed Miller's book *Gods and Games* (1970/1973) that had

incorporated Gadamer's theories. Gadamer explained to Miller in the conversation that

he (Miller) got a core concept of play wrong. He needed to consider the movement of a

wheel of a bicycle in order to grasp the true essence of play. The play that creates the

motion of the bicycle is attributed to the free space of the gap between the wheel and the

frame that enables the wheel to turn. If one tightens the bolts too tightly, Gadamer

explained, it eliminates the free space and the wheel is prohibited from rotating. Gadamer

emphasized the definition of *play* to be the space that allows objects to move and flow.

Play is the free space that allows room for psychic movement to explore imaginative

possibilities.

Gadamer's explanation for the necessity of space in play resonates with the

relevance of personification within play to gain distance and space. The role of

personification within games as described by Hillman (1975/1992) explains the

movement of psyche through the imaginal personifying by the creation of space to detach

"the adhesion of parts" and to gain distance from one's problems.

> It [personifying] is a way of gaining distance. This *separatio* (in the language of
>
> alchemy) offers internal detachment, as if there were now more interior space for
>
> movement and for placing events, where before there was a conglomerate

adhesion of parts or a monolithic identification with each and all, a sense of being

stuck in one's problem. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 31)

The role of personifying within games—and in theater—is the movement of psyche

through the imaginal personifying by the creation of space. By detaching the

"conglomerate adhesion of parts" a distance is gained from one's problems. Psyche is

allowed space to separate, to play, to move, and like the next step of alchemy, to dissolve

into a new, flowing movement within the temporal space of play.

Hillman argued that psychic space grows by taking any and all events into

imagination (1975/1992, p. 69), whereas Gadamer emphasized the importance of space to

enable movement. Hillman spoke of broadening the boundaries of psychic space through

filling it with imagination, and Gadamer spoke of the need for lack of restrictions within

the space for the freedom of psychic motion. In videogames, the player both navigates

and interacts with the entities and objects contained in the space as defined by the rules,

and manipulation within the space shapes the interaction that takes place in it. Stepping

into the boundaries of the magic circle of the game (Huizinga 1938/1955; Salen &

Zimmerman, 2004) manifests as

the space that separates the play activity from the real world, and within which the

rules of the game are in effect. In videogames, the space is virtual, i.e. it is a

simulated physical space which can be inhabited. Thus the constructed virtual

space is also a space of performance. (Fernandez-Vara, 2009, p. 157)

The arena, the screen, the temple, and the ritual—each contains an element of isolation, a

special place, forbidden, with special rules of entry and rules of participation. Games

exist as playgrounds, a temporary world "dedicated to the performance of an act apart" (Huizinga, 1938/1955, p. 10).

Play, according to Joseph Campbell, is the basis for the meaning-function of myth. The logic of play and the logic of myth are based on the logic of "as-if" (Miller, 1970/1973, p. 20). Campbell in *Masks of God* (1959) described the enlivening quality of the game of "as-if":

the world of the gods and demons, the carnival of their masks and the curious game of 'as if' in which the festival of the lived myth abrogates all the laws of time, letting the dead swim back to life, and the 'once upon a time' become the very present. (p. 21)

Campbell indicated the importance of the "as-if" metaphor in imaginal games and play that "frees our mind and spirit . . . from the bondage of reason, whose laws do not apply beyond the horizon of human experience" (as cited in Miller, 1970/1973, p. 20). Through play one is given the opportunity to explore multiple ways, multiple dispositions to be in relationship with the juxtapositions that life presents. Acting "as if" "is so universal that even the play of animals sometimes seems animated by a touch of freedom, especially when they playfully pretend to attack, to start back in fear, to bite" (Gadamer, 1986/1998, p. 125). In the animal world within play behavior obeys instinctual decrees. Play has no passive viewers (p. 126) but rather is an active, dynamic engagement with the rules, whether they are instinctual or the rules of the game. It is the enactment of the dramatic text of life's dramas. It is the performance within the environment in which the individual steps into to enact "as if." It is an arena for archetypes to cloak the players in the masks and disguises of beings.

Archetypes, Metaphors, and Personification. Archetypal theory is central to Jungian traditions. Jung saw archetypes as constructing the foundation of the collective unconscious—a phylogenetic layer—"which incorporated the entire psychic potential of humankind" (Stevens, 2006, p. 75). The archetypes form a "dynamic substratum . . . developing a unique array of psychological characteristics . . . . In other words, the archetypes of the collective unconscious provided the basic themes of human life on which each individual worked out his or her own set of variations" (p. 75).

Archetypal psychology views the world with a metaphorical lens, through which new perspectives are created. It offers a way of seeing the underlying psychological functions. Metaphorical viewing of the world allows one to enter into new relationship, expands one's boundaries of perception, interpretation, and ultimately one's consciousness.

> *Archetypal psychologizing means examining our ideas themselves in terms of archetypes* [*sic*]. It means looking at the frames of our consciousness, the cages in which we sit and the iron bars that form the grids and defenses of our perception. By re-viewing, re-presenting and re-visioning where we already are, we discover the psyche speaking imaginally in what we have been taking for granted as literal and actual descriptions. There is a psychic factor, an archetypal fantasy, in each of our ideas which may be extracted by insighting for it. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 127)

The request to investigate one's psychological stance within archetypal fantasies challenges the psyche's position of both content that is dormant and content that is actively possessing interpretation and relationship with daily activity. As one "re-views"

through alternative archetypal lenses, "re-presents" activity through alternative archetypal dynamics, one "re-visions" creating futures that transcend "the cages in which we sit and the iron bars that form the grids and defenses of our perception" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 127). Metaphorical lenses, as espoused in archetypal psychology, enhance the dimension and quality of being present in daily lives and at their best allow awareness of patterns of thinking and being which determine actions and responses to events. Those "patterns," the *archai,* may be called archetypal impulses, complexes, or instincts, but the essential nature of patterns of thought and behavior demonstrates the way they determine how one encounters the world and what choices of participation are considered as possibilities within the encounter. "Metaphors," according to Hillman, "are more than ways of speaking; they are ways of perceiving, feeling, and existing" (1975/1992, p. 156).

In gaming terms, archetypes are the rules, and other aspects of game mechanics determine options available for action (agency) and what imaginal landscape will surround the psychological process within the game space. The metaphorical viewpoint is determined though and by the game mechanics, determining the patterns available to the player to resolve the problems and quests placed before them. It specifies the lens, the archetypal lens, the metaphorical lens through which the player will enact.

When an archetype grips an individual or culture, reality is interpreted, or seen through, by that one angle with its particular limited set of options available. In essence, being in the grips of a given archetype or set of archetypes can blind one to other metaphorical views—other mechanics—to interpret the world at hand. One is in the narrow framework of an illusion, unable to view the event from other metaphorical perspectives.

The goal of archetypal psychology is to expand the imaginative possibilities through metaphor, to encounter new relationships with an event, seeing through to the deeper underlying implications for meaning-making, so that one's agency is not limited but expanded. In other words, the telos is to live, witness, appreciate, and enact more soulfully. "It is not what one sees but the *way* in which one sees" (Casey, 1974, "Toward an Archetypal Imagination," as cited in Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 19).

Personified archetypes present ethical and instinctual positions, and they convey a specific mode of thought and speech, making claims upon one's emotions (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 35). In essence they govern one's disposition at any given moment. Archetypes are described by Hillman as being "semantically metaphors" (p. 156) and consist of the following qualities: (1) they possess positive *and* negative poles; (2) they are known through images; (3) they are instinctual; (4) they are psychic and extra-psychic; (5) "they belong to the internal self-contradiction and duplicity of mythic metaphors, so that *every statement regarding the archetypes is to be taken metaphorically* [*sic*], prefixed with an 'as-if'" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 156).

One realm of manifestation with the archetypal impulses is experienced through the act of imaginal play. Another realm is felt in the course of daily living in which the archetypes are played out with consequences. Through the theatrical, personified imaginal world of the stage of play, there is a container for metaphorical encounters of the conscious and unconscious to perform.

Game Studies and Play. "Theater of games" is a term also used by Bernie De Koven in *The Well-Played Game* (2013) as being "scripted, and yet improvisational" (p. xvi). De Koven's work looks at all games, not just digital games, as realms of exploration

through a scripted format generated by the game design. In digitally mediated games, scripting the game requires tremendous levels of complexity. The relationship between players in pursuit of fun transcends the political, historical, social, and physical circumstances that divide individuals (p. xv). Players are given the opportunity and permission to enact in accordance with the theater of the game. In doing so, there is the ability to participate in a well played game, one in which each person is called to perform with excellence. The enjoyment provided in play, De Koven observed, is a "healing part of the human psyche" (p. xix).

When one is being playful, the play itself "lets you shut off the very force that gives you meaning, and you just play, without purpose, without meaning anything" (De Koven, 2013, p. 140). In this comment game theorist De Koven refers to "meaning" and "purpose" in context with life's daily challenges, values, and rules that one needs to attend to and by which to abide. The suspension of these in play gives space for pleasure. The player is able to "achieve excellence in something that ultimately doesn't matter" (p. 141). Players freely call forth new strengths, clever strategies, and twists within their performance, functioning best not only by the will to win but also—and more importantly—with the willingness to accept loss (p. 134). Within gameplay there is no risk to take risks. One is free to play. The task is to tap into one's ingenuity and resourcefulness.

And yet, entering a game world to play provides, paradoxically, an illusion of freedom and escape. It entails a temporary submission to the rules and the code generated by a design team. The individual is temporarily opting out of one set of rules only to submit to another. The psyche ironically travels from one mode to another, seeking relief

and expansion, but it still remains within restrictions and constrictions in the theater of the game. The artistic directors—the game designers—provide the script, the stage, the options available for action, the framework for archetypal expressions, and the imaginal landscape boundaries. The player submits into immersion.

Play is a part of games and conversely games are a subset of play. Rules comprise the organization of the designed system that enables play, and play is the human experience of that system (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 6). Hence, from an archetypal psychology perspective, one might consider the *ludus* as the rule bound Apollonian structure and aesthetic of the game stage (Dixon, 2009), and *paidia* as psyche's performance within the theater of the game.

One may argue that considering digital games as a "theater for the soul" is in its core not possible because they consist of heavy amounts of codification restrictions and control the psyche from free expression. There is of course the possibility that the free play of paidia becomes so heavily restricted that the archetypes become concretized within the code. If psyche's play becomes restricted as a result of tightening down the space by unimaginative and overbearing mechanics, the archetypes run the risk of becoming deadened stereotypes. Great game design requires the balancing of many elements, one of which is the provision for psyche's space to play.

Code is a beautiful word, for it refers not just to the digital mediated code of programming but also to the code of medieval knights who agreed to submit and enforce the code of kingdom. *Code* comes from the Latin root *codex,* which meant brown bark on which "the law" was etched. Players submitting to the code, the laws and tasks by which they embark on their journey, both set out by game designers, is in itself an archetypal

movement. The player self sacrifices to the play of the gods. "Deities create virtual worlds; designers are those deities," observes game designer Bartle (2004, p. 247).

All players within the performance embark on a journey the moment they enter into the magical, imaginal realm. The pleasure of entering the magic circle is in essence an act of submission, even though the player is "entering into a new, more enjoyable, set of rules and meaning" (Schell, 2010 p. 109), suspended away from and different than daily rules. "In a sense, all games involve the pleasure of submission . . . you are forced to suspend your disbelief . . . and your mind easily enters and stays in the game world" (p. 109). There are types of players: the achievers, the explorers, the socializers, and the killers (Bartell, 2004). The pleasures are rooted respectively in challenge, discovery, community (fellowship), and "imposing themselves on others." A well-designed game entices the player to experience pleasure within the magic circle. Another taxonomy, noted by game designer LeBlanc, includes eight primary pleasures that form the players' experience: sensation, fantasy, narrative, challenge, fellowship, discovery, expression, and submission (as cited in Schell, 2010, p. 109).

Games and play are "deeply human phenomena" (Zimmerman, 2013, p. viii). Gameplay is the experience of players within elegant rules and challenging systems. Play on all levels has an element of tension and solution (Huizinga, 1938/1955, p. 11). The players' joy in the theatrical game space comes with the opportunity for a brilliant performance, with moments of excellence and moments of failure. The victory is determined by the quality of play (De Koven, 2013, p. 4).

Summary

In summary, play is crucial to the development of the individual and to culture. It is not merely an activity for children, but a means by and through which evolution, learning, and skill development occur. The immersion into the imaginal world of the play is a vessel for psychological interludes from the daily world.

This chapter establishes a foundation for understanding the components of this dissertation research premise of games as a theater for human expression of cultural drama. The purpose of the chapter was to establish the historical roots of Greek theater as a place of seeing and knowing, to align video games with the premise of being a form of theater in which the computer and individual perform together, to examine performance theory to validate it as a viable means by which to demonstrate video games as a performance, and, most importantly, to introduce Fernandez-Vara's model, *The Performance Framework for Videogames* (2009, p. 74)*, to demonstrate the parallels between the components within traditional theater, digital media, and games. Her model will be readdressed in Chapter 6. The first half of the chapter demonstrates that the concept of games as a theater has been substantiated as a viable concept within the game studies discipline.

The second half of this chapter continues to build on the notion of games as a theater by introducing the significance of play within individual and cultural development through Huizinga's work. Huizinga's study describes the nature of play and the contribution of play to civilization and aligns the correlation of the magic circle of play as a realm of the imaginal. In doing such, the chapter delves into the role of metaphor within archetypal psychology and provides a short overview of archetypal psychology. I suggest

that Huizinga describes play as both an archetype and an archetypal vessel to hold psychological metaphors of the psyche. Hence, this chapter provides the foundational ground to consider games as a potential theater for the psyche—soul—from an archetypal perspective.

Chapter 4
Methodology and Procedures

Research Approach

Archetypal psychology and depth psychology are interested in what lies below the surface of psychological manifestation and in facilitating bringing the cultural unconscious into consciousness. This approach asks us to reflect upon the recurrent patterns of psychical energy in behaviors, beliefs, symptoms of the individual and the culture. The need for soul-making extends to all aspects of societal existence as Hillman has spent his career passionately pointing out: our politics, our arts, our psycho-therapy practices, and in our participation within society. As depth psychologists and social scientists, many of us are seeking the meaning of soul within our societal engagements. As depth psychology researchers, it is most relevant to invite the perspective of soul-making within the research process, "however intangible and indefinable it is, soul carries highest importance in hierarchies of human values" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xvi). Approaching research through the interpretive lens of archetypal psychology asks the researcher to attend to the ambiguities of soul's cultural expressions, which cannot be reduced to quantitative measurements.

Hillman declares "soul" as "a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself" (1975/1992, p. xvi). Hillman's approach to re-visioning psychology also lends itself as an approach to research. It is a perspective that guides researchers in "moving from outside in . . . from the surface of visibilities to the less visible . . . [engaged in] a process of deepening" (p. 140) the research experience. I propose that archetypal psychology in general, starting with Hillman's *Re-Visioning*

Psychology, can be an effective way to structure a dialogue with game designers on the meaning-making process of virtual game play.

Re-Visioning Psychology provides a clear and concise guide to the invitation of soul-based research. First, with Hillman's definition of soul as a perspective and then structurally, Hillman lays out four components to discovery, reflection, and ultimately soul-making within one's body of work: Personifying, Pathologizing, Psychologizing, and Dehumanizing (Soul-making). It should be noted that the use of the term *dehumanizing* as soul-making implies the act of shifting away from an ego-centered focus towards ensoulment. These four components provide structure for a hermeneutic approach to the research project; each turn, as part of an hermeneutic spiral, is a view into the research object, each deepens the quest for knowing and understanding that which is present, and each is an invitation to hold the perspective of soul as the subject is investigated. Hillman states that these four ideas are "necessary for the soul-making process" (p. xv). This approach of inquiry widens the implications of the research. Hillman suggests an archetypal approach "harks back to the classical notions of soul and yet advances ideas that current psychology has not even begun to consider" (1975/1992, p. xv). An archetypal psychological lens returns to historical roots and simultaneously revisions the subject.

Through archetypal psychology Hillman attempts to "discover and vivify soul" (1975/1992, p. xvi). He asks us to "imagine archetypes as the *deepest patterns of psychic functioning*, the roots of the soul governing the perspectives we have of ourselves and the world" (p. xix). Through tending the archetypes, the researcher needs to become aware of

the archetypes' "emotional possessive effect" (p. xix) upon both the research subject and the researcher.

Furthermore, Hillman's polytheistic perspective cautions the researcher to work from the "premise that there are many valid points of view toward any psychological event, and that these points of view have an archetypal basis" (1975/1992, p. xx). The process of the hermeneutic circle facilitates the circling around of the research subject, enabling and seeking to open to as many possible perspectives of the archetypal influences. This archetypal stance, with its radical attempt at allowing soul to hold the "imaginative possibilities in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation," is an essential, vibrant research approach, or as Hillman might state, a "research perspective" into deepening the understanding of the challenging aspects within our culture.

The four movements described in *Re-Visioning Psychology* create a unique approach, which allows the researcher to access, within deepening cycles, dimensions of cultural soul. With each turn, the perspective deepens. In fact, examining from a soul perspective holds the potential to deepen "events into experiences" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xvi). This, Hillman explains, is a definition of "soul" itself. And why invite soul into the research process? Without soul we run the risk of being distant, abstract voyeurs of society. Social researchers and depth psychologists need to be more. Hillman demanded of himself and those around him not to deny soul of its depths. An archetypal stance guides the researcher to adventure into an inner voyage, to expose, engage, reflect, and move deeper into the body of research. Whereas gamers work to "level up" within the game, this archetypal research approach will "level down" into the depths of the game.

Research Methodology

A hermeneutical research methodology will be employed for the research of this dissertation with three components: (1) Hermeneutics as a methodology to examine the cultural text of virtual games, (2) hermeneutics as a participatory inquiry methodology for engaging game designers as co-participants in the process of interpreting the cultural text of the virtual games, and (3) dialogical hermeneutics as a methodology to discuss soul-making with game designers using the language of archetypal psychology for interpreting interdisciplinary texts and transcripts. The following three sections address each application of hermeneutical methodology within the research project.

Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics, first used for the interpretation of sacred texts to discover hidden meaning, evolved into "an interrogation into the deepest conditions for symbolic interaction and culture" (Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2009, p. 1). Through this methodology I attempt to interpret the deeper conditions of the symbolic interaction within virtual games. The art of hermeneutics, as in all art, asks the researcher to be open to possibilities, to put together material in new provocative ways in search of meaning-making. The art of interpretation "unmasks what is hidden behind the objective phenomena" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 10). To honor the spirit of the art of hermeneutics, this dissertation at times excavates and follows threads through these seemingly unrelated disciplines, endeavoring to create a new perspective of the play of psychic dynamics and rapid development within technological virtual realms.

The very mercurial nature of the subject—examining the function of psyche in technological virtual space—requires certain flexibility in the methodology to reflect, re-examine, and synthesize meaning as it is dynamically shaped and altered. The process of

my analysis is in continual cyclical movement through depth psychological text, virtual gaming theoretical text, game theory text, virtual games as artistic text, and the text of the interviews. How I encounter the texts to discover how meaning is made might be altered as rapidly as the technological landscape is altered during the course of the research. I am not alone is these mercurial challenges. Fernandez-Vara, previously from MIT game studies program and now at NYU Center for Games, also states from her perspective of game research, **"**Games become a shape-shifting object of study" (2009, p. 3).

Hermeneutics methodology is particularly well suited for examination of both written text and the interactive mediated text of virtual realms that convey story, symbols, images, and games of current culture. Richard Palmer in *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* defines hermeneutics as "systems of interpretation, both recollective and iconoclastic, used by man to reach the meaning behind myths and symbols" (1969/1975, p. 33). Initially a method for interpreting Holy Scripture, the namesake of hermeneutics is Hermes, the magnificent Greek god who is the interpreter of messages between the gods and the human mortals.

> The term "hermeneutics" continued to suggest an interpretation, which discloses something hidden from ordinary understanding and mysterious. Ancient texts are, for moderns, doubly alien: they are ancient and they are in *another language*. Their interpreter . . . is a bridge to somewhere else, he is a mediator between a mysterious other world and the clean, well-lighted intelligible world in which we live and move and have our being. (Palmer, 2001, p. 1)

Reflection alters with each turn, just as a reflection within the mirror is continually altering with the movement of the subject gazing in the mirror. "The reflective-

interpretive process includes not only a description of the experience as it appears in consciousness but also an analysis and astute interpretation of the underlying conditions" (Moustakas, 1994, p.10). The act of bringing into conscious awareness the underlying dynamics is facilitated through traveling the hermeneutic circle.

The hermeneutic circle conveys a method of evaluations and returning to reflect from a new standpoint. The historical placement of myself, as researcher, and the historical placement of material from technological worlds are in constant transforming states. This dissertation attempted to be a container of reflection upon the changing mediums as I further integrated the concepts and phenomenology with the shifting landscape of virtual space as my position within the landscape was continually altered throughout the process. The original hermeneutic process of medieval monks was relatively stable, considering the medium of religious texts as well as their historical placement in time. In contrast, my subject was dynamically altered as I studied it, and my placement within my cultural experience are moving and altered continuously as a result of my work. The realities of who and where I am in placement to my landscape is altered through the rapid technological advancements within virtual space. As I proceed through research and time elapses, what was a mere theoretical possibility of a technological capability at the beginning of my research is now a reality in my encounters with daily life. I am different as a result and so is my topic of inquiry. The trickster spirit of Hermes was at work throughout the research.

Just as Hermes crosses ontological thresholds, the interpretive process mediates between depth psychology and digital materiality. Therefore, this dissertation is conducted with a hermeneutic approach of the traveler reflecting on the continuously

changing landscape. There is therefore no singular answer, no final viewpoint, but rather many possibilities.

Gadamer's view of hermeneutics in one in which the text studied is not determined through one interpretation but exists in a continual "complex, dialogical interplay between past and present" (Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2009, p. 12). Although Gadamer's discussion is viewing texts written in the past, such as Jung's and Hillman's texts, and interpreted in the present historical context, in the situation of this hermeneutical study the cultural text of virtual spheres are in the present. However, I contend that one way to encounter meaning-making and interpretation is to base an aspect of the inquiry on our historical past on a comparison of how we have known the world before and how, in this new, creative digital format, we continue to embark on meaning-making. Thus, the complex, dialogical interplay still exists, as Gadamer states, between past and present. In order to gain a richer understanding of the profound implications virtual spheres have with psyche, the historical perspective, ironically, provides a "fresh" view into technological virtual realms that radically and continually alter the human experience. In truth, that "history" supplies the parts upon which the whole of the current modalities of virtual realms are comprised. Through the in and out methodology of hermeneutic inquiry we may gain greater understanding by situating within historical perspectives.

Understanding our impulses comes from understanding our situatedness within historical culture. In *Truth and Method* (1960/2006), Gadamer stated:

There can be no doubt that the great horizon of the past, out of which our culture

and our present live, influences us in everything we want, hope for, or fear in the

future. History is only present to us in light of our futurity. (p. 9)

Gadamer encourages dialogical relationship with the past and "the fusion of horizons."

"Gadamer's dialectic is less a technique and more a consequence of existence in a world

full of gaps that create the desire for bridges" (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 83). However,

I would offer that, in the course of interpreting a new phenomenon, even though the

historicity provides a viewpoint for reflection, the inquiry is not only based on historical

considerations. In evolution there is an allowance for critical breakthroughs of awareness.

During the course of inquiry I hope to remain open to possibilities of the evolutionary

breakthroughs that exceed our historical references. I consider this perspective to be one

of the challenges during the research phase of this dissertation—that I remain open to the

unfolding of that which is being born through the suspension of prejudices (as in pre-

judging), to conditions previously unknown, and for which there is little context other

than to witness that which is being birthed with open eyes. It is my responsibility to

balance both the historical and the unprecedented new within the hermeneutic circle.

For the purpose of this dissertation I base my hermeneutical approach upon

Gadamer, but due to the nature of my topic I look at his methodology with a slightly

different twist in context to the role of historical reflection and the image. Whereas his

research approach is a "looking back into history of an object" and maintaining

awareness of one's position in history looking back, I am observing current virtual states

but bringing history forward by applying a fresh perspective upon texts written prior to

the advancement of virtual game worlds. I attempt to understand virtual spheres through

bridging theoretical concepts developed long before the conception of the cultural

phenomenon of digital immateriality. However, the application of the hermeneutic

inquiry is an excellent, flexible system that allows for a circling around to interpret

meaning, gain new perspective, and, in this case, provide fresh understanding for the

historical foundation of virtual psychic containers. My inquiry bridges the new and

seemingly alien nature of virtual spheres through dialogical reflection of both the past

and as well as the emergent present.

Gadamer acknowledges the challenge in the hermeneutic process: "prejudgments

that lead my preunderstanding are constantly at stake, right up to the moment of their

surrender—which surrender could also be called a transformation" (1960/2006, p. 38). It

is my desire that the discoveries along the path of inquiry grip me into "surrendering"

prejudgments of the mercurial virtual world to reveal and allow the truly "creative

interpretive act" (Giorgi et al., 1979, p. 180) to unfold, shed new light, and achieve fuller,

more meaningful understanding.

Gadamer's statement of hermeneutics as "an effort to grasp something vanishing

and hold it up in the light of consciousness" (1960/2006, p. 21) not only applies to the

origins of hermeneutical inquiry, but also alludes to my current attempt to reflect upon

the mercurial nature of virtual technology and the rapidly changing nature of this subject.

The attempt to translate, through Hermeneutic reflection, that which is elusive is a

meditative praxis of tending not only to the linguistic but also to the nonlinguistic

interpretation of the world and "lifting up of something out of the alien" (p. 15). Within

virtual realms, language has been augmented beyond linguistics, fully engaging players

interactively with images in dynamic motion of collective myths, communication, and symbols.

The relationship with the texts studied were changing as they were read multiple times to reflect upon the author/designer's intention and meaning, thereby allowing the content to be considered, noted, and reflected upon in the context of the exploration of the theories as well as the cultural objects of virtual spaces. The process of the movement between the theoretical text and the virtual text creates a cycle of continually asking new questions of the theory as well as the virtual space, digging deeper into the potential meaning of both the theory and the creation of the virtual game realm.

The process of asking the questions which emerge on the path of inquiry weaves a deeper relationship and understanding, even without the resulting answers, for each question creates a new turn, a new view of that upon which we gaze. The exciting act of questioning generates a new encounter into the material and opens up a new possibility. "The art of questioning is that of being able to go on asking questions, i.e., to 'think'" (Gadamer, 1960/2006 p. 330). Through questioning, the texts open up and reveal dynamics at play within the constructs of the creation of virtual realms. Each reading deepens into a new perspective to the subject through the allowance of new considerations.

In the course of evaluating texts, an essential act of weaving occurs. The hermeneutic circle becomes more than a mere circle drawn around a subject. The connections discovered become integrated as different strands of concepts interact, revealing patterns never seen before. Like weaving a fabric in which the loom holds the warp threads under tension to interweave new threads into a textured fabric, hermeneutic

research weaves newly textured interpretation of meaning into the circle of the research along with the continual movements, revealing the resulting intricate patterns amongst the tension of multiple perspectives of the subject.

Like the loom warp, the posing of questions allows the researcher to move back and forth in understanding: questioning the historical, questioning the interpretation of the historical from current placement in time, and then returning again and again with each theory within a text and with each reflection of its application to virtual realms. The colors woven within the fabric are the unique illuminations from different perspectives. The turning and turning of the hermeneutic circle through the material is a journey guided by Hermes, crossing boundaries into unknown territories for another view, shifting one's being in relationship to the inquiry.

Hermeneutic participatory inquiry. I employ a participatory hermeneutic perspective of inquiry for the interviewing process, which circles around the archetypal role of virtual games through an interviewing process with game developers. The process of inquiry used the four moves from Hillman's *Re-Visioning* to deepen the investigation of the game designer's contributions to and interpretations of the archetypal images presented within virtual games. Through their participation, the research assessed whether the application of theories of archetypal psychology uncovers any relevancy, gaps, and the potential of a depth psychological lens into 21st century realms of virtuality.

I employed a participatory hermeneutic inquiry to discover, from the perspective of virtual game designers, whether reflecting upon games through the lens of archetypal psychology provides fresh insight to the complex psychical components within virtual games. I selected designers in participation of this inquiry due to their unique position

and expertise as both designers and players with virtual games. I believe this participatory hermeneutic perspective held the potential to provide greater depth psychological insight into the image-filled labyrinths of the games. See Appendix B for diagram.

With a hermeneutic participatory perspective, "research is a reflective and communal act" (Herda, 1999, p. 5). I believe that the collaboration between myself, as depth psychologist researcher, and the participants, as experts in their field, produced a richer interpretation through the dynamics of mutual reflection. "In participatory research the researcher identifies the research problem and design and the participants contribute by discussing the issues, reflecting, and responding to the recorded interviews" (Herda, p. 14). This methodological approach of collaboration combined my knowledge of archetypal psychology and the psychic landscape as seen through the archetypal lens of Hillman and Jung with the designers' knowledge of game design and their extensive experience of play within virtual games. The research is a co-participation in which we guided one another through an interpretation process of meaning-making.

Ellen Herda, in her book *Research Conversations and Narrative: A Critical Hermeneutic Orientation in Participatory Inquiry,* views participatory hermeneutical inquiry within a critical hermeneutic tradition. For Herda, there is a responsibility in understanding and an agenda of action and change.

When we work together in a spirit of critique, understanding, and shared responsibility, we can appropriate a specified future. Such a future seems to call into consideration two primary points: understanding ourselves in communal life and changing the social and political relationships among various sectors and

members of our organizations and society, including the relationship between

researcher and members of the research population. (1999, p. 2)

The participatory research process of interpreting virtual games through an archetypal

lens appropriated greater understanding of the cultural phenomenon of virtual gaming,

and possibly changed designers' relationships to their virtual landscapes. That is to say,

that tending an archetypal eye, as described by Hillman, may have—or may not have—

impacted their soul-making process. That will remain to be seen, but I do not anticipate

such outcomes will be known with this initial research. My hope was that in engaging

participants in the hermeneutic process, the conversations touched places neither the

participants nor I had noticed before. For successful qualitative research "the trick in

observing is to get curious about things you hadn't noticed before" (Becker, 2007, pp. 88-

89), and sharing the hermeneutic journey of circling virtual games with my participants

was a fascinating and insightful process.

The protocol of a participatory hermeneutic perspective centers on mutual

learning: "Learning here is seen as the constant process of interacting, reflecting, and

transforming one's thought processes, and even one's philosophy, in addition to one's

ability to act in a responsible manner" (Herda, 1999, p. 129). Respect of the participants

is an utmost imperative throughout the inquiry process. "The risk and the personal

responsibility engendered in participatory hermeneutic research confirm the essential

tension in our inquiry between the society we live in and the one we could create" (p.

138). With roots in critical theory, the very nature of participatory hermeneutic inquiry

may effect change in the relationship of the co-participant researchers relationship to the

subject of virtual games under study.

A final note on participatory hermeneutical inquiry as outlined by Herda: She advises that the most critical element in this kind of research "requires a belief in your ideas in addition to a willingness to find out that you may be wrong about some dearly held prejudices" (1999, p. 96). It is with that attitude that I pursued this methodology approach of inquiry.

Hermeneutics dialogical inquiry. This study, *Games as Theater for Soul*, employs archetypal psychologist James Hillman's theories and definitions of soul as presented in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992). The lens of archetypal psychology grounds the research in depth psychological concepts, specifically around archetype, image, and soul. I refer to the four ideas presented by Hillman in *Re-Visioning Psychology* as the "four moves" of archetypal psychologizing and as "four turns" within the participatory hermeneutic inquiry. By modeling Hillman's work throughout the inquiry procedures, his theories provide guideposts for both interviewing virtual game designers and collaboratively interpreting virtual games, similar to the way in which Hermes left guideposts—piles of stone called *herms*—to point the traveler on one's path.

Hillman's theoretical format in *Re-Visioning Psychology* provides a conceptual framework in which to organize and provide descriptive language to help bring the data together, to provide structure to guide the complexity of the interactions, and to make sense of the ambiguity of psyche's presence within virtual landscapes. As mentioned previously in the Research Approach and the Literature Review, Hillman's work not only attempts to provide a definition of soul, he spoke to the importance of fantasy-images as soul's expression as both "raw materials and finished products of psyche" (1975/1992, p. xvii). By using the four terms as the structure for interpretation of psyche when

interviewing game designers, the investigation attempted "moving from outside in . . .

from the surface of visibilities to the less visible . . . [in] a process of *deepening"* (p.

140). Figure 2 is a diagram of the circling and deepening of the subject.
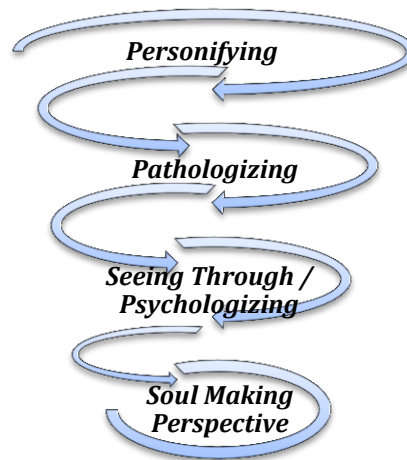
Figure 2. Hillman's four hermeneutic archetypal turns (1975/1992). Figure created by Susan M. Savett.

First hermeneutic turn: Personifying. According to Hillman, myth is

"polycentric, with innumerable personifications in imaginal space" (1975/1992, p. 33).

Personifying the "gods" through image and myth provides voice to the multiple

personalities of the psyche within. Personifying, which is in essence,

anthropomorphizing, occurs when "psyche presents its own imaginal dimensions,

operates freely without words, and is constituted of multiple personalities" (p. 33). The

literal components of the game-scape were investigated through interviews with

designers to discover deeper implications of the personification of the "gods"—or

archetypes—within the storyline, characters, levels, landscapes, and materials within the

game, noting how they "rekindle the imagination" (p. 3) such that the virtual game world may be ensouled.

Similar to Jungian methods of active imagination methods, this research methodology invited the images of the games to present themselves. Hillman states that through personifying psyche moves as "the spontaneous experiencing, envisioning and speaking of the configurations of existence as psyche presences" (1975/1992, p. 12). "Psyche presences" are noticed not merely as a character or a terrain but will be witnessed as an expression of polytheistic natures. The research notes the mythologems, the particular motifs, and attempt to identify various Mythemes (constellations of archetypes within the actions of the game). By identifying the "various styles of consciousness co-present in one scene" (p. 32) the interviews identify whether the virtual game enables any fragmented personality roles.

Second hermeneutic turn: Pathologizing or falling apart. The next turn of deepening inquiry during discussion of the game-scape images from Hillman's *Re-Visioning* is concept of pathologizing. Pathologizing is "the psyche's autonomous ability to create illness, morbidity, disorder, abnormality, and suffering in any aspect of its behavior and to experience and imagine life through this deformed and afflicted perspective" (1975/1992, p. 57). The images within the games provide a window into cultural symptoms.

In this stage the interviews pay particular attention to the pathologies present within the images and attempt to identify the symptoms of Psyche. Specifically, Hillman indicates symptoms to be illusions and depressions, overvalued ideas, manic flights and rages, anxieties, compulsion, and perversions. Hillman notes, "The psyche uses

complaints to speak in a magnified and misshapen language about its depths"

(1975/1992, p. 82). As a result, noticing and identifying pathologies present within a

digital game is essential for exploring how psyche may move within the virtual container

of a game.

By following the path of the symptoms, one is led down into the depths of the

soul (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 74). Hillman cites Hegel in explaining that it is through

"extreme derangement" that the soul is revealed and experienced. By allowing the

cultural images within the game to go beyond the rational into the madness of the

imagination, one is able to follow the rhythms of the soul. Then, "the psyche is telling us

about its lacunae, its gaps and wasteland" (p. 89). This hermeneutic turn will tend to the

symptoms within the fantasy, watching for the "deformations of human images" (p. 89)

and the "subculture deviation" (p. 77) within the game as a means to witness the "falling

apart" of reality. It is through the act of falling apart, or witnessing pathologies, that the

soul is able to revivify itself towards wholeness.

Third hermeneutic turn: Psychologizing or seeing through. Once the

personifications and pathologies present within the game have been processed, the

research will turn to the movement of psychologizing—or seeing through—in which the

overall parts are reflected upon with wonder and puzzlement (Hillman, 1975/1992, p.

140). This move is to re-investigate the facts, observe un-reflected action during the

game play, and notice the "dissolving the problem into the fantasy" (p. 135) through

projections in which the virtual game acts as a theater for the soul.

The movement of "seeing through" is a re-turn of the elements witnessed in the

previous turns of personifying and pathologizing, so that they now will be explored for

mythical patterns by re-examining the "parts" of the "falling apart" to see how they might be re-imagined or how the virtual game may "move from the apparent to the unapparent" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 140). Hillman would call this process "finding the hidden god" or unveiling further ideas. This step new questions and doubts emerge, as it was a step towards the discovery of new darkness and inadequacies within the imaginal realm of digital games for resolve and achieving meaning-making for the player.

Fourth hermeneutic turn: Dehumanizing or soul-making. The final hermeneutic turn is that of soul-making. Hillman refers to this as "dehumanization" to indicate a perspective not from the personal point of view of the ego but rather to embrace a more encompassing and transcendent expression of soul. Through the previous moves of slowing down to examine the personifications and pathologies, and the act of "seeing through" the images presented the research witnesses the soul-making. Hillman suggests that the depth of inquiry brings "a new relation with the image and closer participation 'in' its 'reality'" (1975/1992, p. 212) and "the simultaneous apperception of the soul's multiplicity, its several points of view coalescing as perspective" (p. 212). It is at this point that deeper meaning-making is possible.

Soul-making is about perspective, and the witnessing of the soul's multiplicity.

> The soul's multiplicity need adequate archetypal containers or . . . they wander in anarchy. Anarchy begins when we lose the archetype . . . having no imaginative figures to contain the absurd, monstrous, and intolerable aspects of our Protean natures and our fortunes. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 203)

The archetypal containers can be seen in the cultural expressions such as the arts. Hillman focuses the attention of soul-making to the understanding of the perspective— the way in which we see. By acknowledging that seeing is dependent on archetypal influences of the researcher's, the developer's, and the player's psyche, one is "obliged to take our analysis a step deeper, examining the perspective that determines perspective" (p. 212). By leveling down into the deeper layers of meaning within the game a new perspective may be gained.

In summary, although applying Hillman's four ideas presented in *Re-Visioning Psychology* as four turns within the hermeneutics procedural methods is radically different than many video game research methods of analyzing the game, some components remain the same, such as identifying the motifs, characterization, and movements within the virtual world game. The most challenging aspect of this work at this stage was to translate and clarify Hillman's complex notions of soul-making to research participants.

Research Participants

The participants in the research are individuals within the game development industry whom I previously met while attending the GDC conference, GDC Online, IGDA (International Game Developers Association), and the Virtual World Expo. I selected individuals from within the field of game design for their breath of experience as professional developers and players of virtual games.

The GDC, Game Developers Conference, is the premier international game developers conference series solely for professionals within the game industry. The speakers are lead developers from major industry's game design labs. The conference

specializes in connected games, including massive multiplayer online (MMO), casual, virtual worlds, and social networking games. The forums allow programmers, designers, producers, writers, and other professionals to exchange ideas and shape the future of the interactive gaming industry. Researching the industry through accessing the industry specialist develops my expertise in the current challenges, perspectives, and future of designing virtual games.

Through my presence at these conferences during the past several years I established access within the field of the game industry. Over 50 professionals within the gaming industry had indicated an interest and willingness to participate in research into the archetypal influences within the fantasy of video games. The participants selected were individuals who have primarily been involved in the writing of the narrative for games. I made a point to invite in at least one female within the interviewing process. However, the percentage of females present at the gaming conferences appears to be around 7% of attendees. The biographies of participants are located in the introduction to Chapter 5, Interview Results and Interpretation.

Participants were selected based upon availability, interest in research, and locale. Due to the nature of the depth psychological content, I conducted all interviews in person in order to capture the subtle responses to the interview questions. Due to the complexity of conveying the depth psychological intent of the questioning with the participants, face-to-face sessions were essential to gathering accurate feedback. Interviews were conducted in San Francisco during the GDC Conference either onsite or at locations within San Francisco area. Age and ethnicity were not a consideration.

Initially there was a possibility to attempt a larger sampling via an online blog questionnaire. However, based on the complexity of the languaging of questions, I made the decision to pursue this endeavor at a future date. In addition, initially the proposal indicated that the interviews would be conducted during actual gameplay. Due to the logistics of the environment, actual gameplay was not conducive in this phase. However, one participant met for a third time in which we viewed YouTube gameplay activity. This format was very helpful as to being able to place the play on hold while we discussed the action in depth. The research of this dissertation unfolded the necessity to first gain a foundation of language to discuss archetypal principles in terms of gameplay and to identify key areas of focus.

Research Procedures

Procedures for gathering data. A hermeneutical approach involves an interpretive listening to the multiple horizons of meaning involved in the interviewees' statements, with an attention to the possibilities of continual reinterpretations within the hermeneutical circle of the interview. I was attentive to the influence of the presuppositions of the subjects' answers as well as the presuppositions of the interviewer's (my own) questions (Kvale, 1996, p. 135).

Procedure for selection of video games as cultural text. The procedure for the selection of virtual games for interpretation as cultural text was determined as an outcome of the collaboration of participants and researcher. Selection of the genre of the games of interactive fiction games, MMOs (Massively Multi-player Online games), and RPG's (Role-Playing Games), were selected by the participant that were familiar either through games on which they have worked during the design process or games they have

played. It was important that the participants have prior relationship with the game content. It should be noted that my priority was to examine games that most deeply engage the participant.

Procedures prior to the interview. Prior to the interview I solicited potential participants through email to determine their availability and interest in participating within the research project. Once I identified a participant, we discussed the logistics of the interview: time, location, Informed Consent Form, any legal requirements such as nondisclosure agreements for the interview, access to the digital games under consideration, and ability to provide potential screen shots or video of any gameplay. All interviews were to be face-to-face. Any follow-up sessions were to take place in person or through email, Skype, or phone, based upon the appropriateness of communication.

Procedure for Informed Consent Forms and insuring confidentiality. Informed Consent Forms and Non-Disclosure Agreements were essential to the nature of my investigation through interviews due to the commercial competitiveness within the video gaming industry. I provided all participants with an Informed Consent Form. In addition, I anticipate being asked to provide an overview of my research project as well as the specific questions I plan to ask to the public relations and legal departments of the companies where my participants work.

Toward this end, I submitted for approval a brief summation of the purpose of the research, the interviewing technique and sample questions, an overview of how the interview will be conducted, and the possible use of the material. I formulated a sample version prior to contacting potential participants. I anticipated that this document would need to be reformatted based upon the unique requirements of the participants' public

relations and legal departments. It was possible that, due to confidentiality, the transcripts of the interview might not be allowed to be included in published work.

I included the "purpose of research" statement that I provide to the companies as Appendix D within my dissertation. Based upon the participants' legal requirements, I offered to submit any required Non-Disclosure Agreements to Pacifica Graduate Institute for review. For the sake of this study I did not anticipate the need to discuss current projects under development, for the plan was to focus on games that already exist in the public marketplace. Appendix D is a sample of the Informed Consent Form for this research.

Procedures for instructing participants. Participants were instructed that the Interview will be semistructured, during which I described the individual sections of Hillman's *Re-Visioning* (1975/1992), explaining in non-depth-psychological terms the concepts of the section. This description included a brief discussion of depth and archetypal psychology, thereby familiarizing the participant with Hillman's definition of soul and the role of image. I gave a short introduction to the concepts that will be inquired about for each of the four archetypal psychology terms, including a short quotation to convey intent.

After the brief introduction of the concepts, I asked participants if they had any questions on the meaning of that particular section. Once we discussed the intent of the inquiry for that section, I asked the interview questions and allowed the participant to respond. In the course of the interview I attempted to verify the respondent's answer for accurate communication (Kvale, 1996, p. 145). I ask for specific examples within games

they have either played or designed, allowing their interpretation of the theory to extend

into their interpretation of the game space.

Upon completion of all four moves of Hillman's theory, I asked questions in

context to the future of game design and ethical responsibilities. At the summation of the

interview I inquired about the structure of the interview and ask for recommendations on

how the questions should be rephrased and if there are questions the participant felt

should be added to expand the relevancy for designers. The participants also were asked

if they had anything they wanted to bring up, or inquire about, before the interview was

completed.

I understand that within an interview there are limitations of time and depth of

entering "into" the video game so as to experience the inherent nature of the image and

its internal and inherent archetypal wisdom as defined by archetypal psychology.

However, the purpose of the interview was to begin a *conversation* about depth

psychological interpretations of the virtual game space. The interview was an initial

discovery phase, a potential beginning point in the following ways: for the validity of

using Hillman's theories outside a therapy room and into a virtual game landscape; in the

consciousness of the designer in this interpretive modality; and in the overall

understanding of meaning-making within virtual games. Thus, the interview did not

strive to be the complete process for soul-making interpretation of video games, but a

beginning point in posing the questions of how, if any way at all, we might explore the

role of psyche in game space. "The inter-view is an inter-subjective enterprise of two

persons talking about common themes of interest" (Kvale, 1996, p. 35). Hence, the

interview was a beginning point to discover mutual languaging between disciplines that can form possible questions to tease out "soul-making" in virtuality of video games.

Pilot study: Games as Theater for Soul. During the GDC Austin conference October 3-6, 2011 I conducted a brief pilot study to validate the research approach. Although we did not access any game sites during the interview, the pilot study was successful in capturing the potential interest of participants and assisted in refining the interview process. The pilot study reflected the Four Hillmanean Turns to refine the interview methodology. The focus of the pilot study, "Games as a Theater for the Soul," was to inquire whether games might be a container for psychic content and, if so, what are the implications.

The intent of the pilot study was to (1) test the wording of questions, (2) determine what additional questions might be necessary, (3) determine the need for additional nondisclosure agreements or other legal requirements, (4) test the basic viability of the study, (5) determine the length, format, and location for the interview process, and (6) determine what introduction is necessary for each section to clarify intent of questioning. Appendix C contains the list of the sample questions posed. Appendix D contains the sample of the Informed Consent Form provided to the pilot study.

The greatest challenge designing the pilot study was to formulate the depth psychological questions based on Hillman's *Re-Visioning Psychology* in lay terms. During the pilot study, I had present with me both the research questions in psychological terms and the comparable questions designed for the interview. Kvale, in his book *Inter Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing,* advises the interviewer to ensure that the questions are "devoid of academic language" and to prepare two guides:

"one with the project's main thematic research questions and the other with the questions to be posed during the interview" (1996, p. 130). However, with both versions present during the pilot study, I discovered there was a need to use both lines of questioning to explain the content in greater depth. This necessity indicated to me the importance of refining the questions for greater correlation of theory with the interview questions. I also noticed how the difference of level of sophistication among participants, in grasping the psychological concepts, altered my use of questioning.

The questions were broken into six parts: (1) Responder's Information, including favorite games, (2) Personifying, (3) Pathologizing, (4) Psychologizing, (5) Soul-Making, (6) Envisioning the future, and (7) Survey Question recommendations.

The proof of concept proved to be successful and holds the potential to gather additional qualitative data to consider psyche within virtual games based upon Hillman's Turns. The responses from the pilot study were rich, spontaneous, and engaging. In addition, the pilot process will allow me to fine-tune the positioning of the questions and prefaces for each section.

Although I had set aside time to interview five technologists, I had not allocated enough time. I had anticipated 30-45 minutes total for the questioning. My first interview lasted 30 minutes. Although we completed all of the questions, the individual was very engaged and would have talked longer, but he had a previous engagement. The second interview went on for 2 1/2 hours, and again, the participant wanted to keep discussing the subject. In this case, I had to terminate the interview due to another commitment. To my delight, the questions stimulated thoughtful and appreciative reflection by the participants. The first participant was randomly selected and a younger male in the

gaming industry. The second participant was from MIT Gambit Game Labs and was a scheduled interview. I had met this participant at a previous GDC in San Francisco March 2011.

Although the Pilot Study was a semistructured interview, the questions opened up large conversations. The second interview allowed me to practice gently guiding the conversation back to the intent of the questions. Although the length of the two interviews varied substantially, the engagement with the content appeared to be sincere and lively. The first participant expressed an appreciation of being asked to reflect on the deeper nature of the games, and he indicated he had never thought of games in this context prior to the interview.

Upon reflecting on the initial pilot study questions, I feel that deeper reflection is required to shape the questions to accurately encompass Hillman's intent with each of these movements. When I introduced my research project as "Games for the Theater of the Soul," the response verified that this was a solid and interesting description for people to grasp its intent. As always, I found that introducing myself as a "depth psychologist" took explanation; however, the phrase "archetypal psychologist" easily provided more recognizable terminology since "archetypes" is a word used with within game design itself. Mentioning Joseph Campbell also provided a bridge, because his work is familiar to most designers, particularly in context to the concept of the Hero's Journey. Overall, the pilot study, in which I framed the research to potential participants, proved to possess significant energy, demonstrating to me the merits of pursuing this methodological approach.

Procedures for documenting interviews. A well-designed interview requires that

the interview data be captured in a way that can be used for later analysis. I taped each

interview for data collection, as the taping allowed me to focus my attention on the

dynamics of the interview and the participant (Kvale, 1996, p. 160). The visual qualities

and the overall senses in the environment are important components of a depth

psychological encounter. As a researcher of depth psychological content it is important to

attend to the nonverbal as well as the verbal content of the interview for rich context of

the subtle conveyances. The interviews, initially designed to take 45 minutes, resulted in

one to three hour-long sessions.

I kept a personal log to document during the interview and for reflections

immediately post interview. A well-documented journal log "is the life-source of the data

collection process for in it goes the hopes, fears, questions, ideas, humor, observations,

and comments of the researcher" (Herda, 1999, p. 98), conveying insights of both the

process and theory. The field notes reflect on what actually happened, including body

language, enthusiasm, emotional responses, or participants shutting down, observations

of both the participant and myself for resonance and dissonance, images that arose during

interview, and a depth psychological read on which *archai*, or archetypes, presented

themselves during the interview process.

For recording the interview sessions and to assure accuracy of and some

detachment from the recorded interview content, I hired professional transcribers for each

of the interviews. I then listened to the interviews while reading the transcriptions,

correcting inaudible or misunderstood (misinterpreted) words that were typed by

transcriber. The transcription was initially reviewed for both accuracy against the audio

recording and for the nonverbal cues present. Then, after that first pass, I re-listened to each of the audiotapes of the interviews three or four times more, reading along with the transcriptions, to ensure the accuracy. At significant moments within the interview transcription I may add the nonverbal content to the transcriptions and cross-reference these moments with my field notes taken during the interview.

Copies of the transcriptions are available upon request. All quotations used in the dissertation and in any future writings were presented to the participant prior to publication for verification of accuracy and to insure no violation of confidentiality.

Procedures for analysis and interpretation of data. The richness and complexity of subject matter was a two-phase process of an analytical matrix to search for themes and a participatory hermeneutic interpretive process in which "analysis [was] a creative and imaginative act . . . . In data analysis the researcher appropriates a proposed world from the text" (Herda, 1999, p. 98). The analysis and interpretation, based upon Herda's methods for participatory hermeneutic inquiry as described in her book (1999, p. 99), first began by establishing a matrix which pulled out significant statements, mapped themes, and placed them into categories based upon the four concepts of Hillman's re-visioning. I substantiated the important themes with quotes from the transcripts and from my researcher's field note log.

Each interview was mapped into four separate matrices, one for each of the four turns: Personifying, Pathologizing (Falling Apart), Psychologizing (Seeing Through), and Soul-Making. Within each matrix presented, for example personifying, one axis consisted of various expressions of personifying and the other axis consisted of the

participants' remarks. Responses were noted within the matrix for purposes of tracking themes.

The goal of the interpretive phase, however, was more than matrix analysis of themes. Whereas the analysis provided a structure, the interpretation, as stated by Ricoeur, did alter the interpreter, for "the text must be unfolded, no longer towards its author but towards its imminent sense and towards the world which it opens up and discloses" (1981, p. 53). The process of hermeneutic interpretation changed the point of view of the interpreter.

> The subjects may themselves have discovered new aspects of the themes they are describing, and suddenly see relations that they had not been conscious of earlier . . . . Research interviews may instigate processes of reflection where the meanings of themes described by the subjects are no longer the same after the interview. (Kvale, 1996, p. 34)

The examination of the themes from the theoretical framework of Hillman set the context of the writings and further discussions with the participants. The interpretation of the interviews intended to "ferret out implications . . . that provide[d] insight and new direction" (Herda, 1999, p. 99) for this study. I endeavored to interpret the data with an "observing gaze" (Gadamer, 1960/2006, p. 32) to seek out the different nuances of what was being revealed, what were the common grounds, and what were the missing components within the process.

For analysis process key insights and phrases were highlight in order to determine them. Because the interview process provided rich and lengthy commentary the analysis was particularly time-consuming. The participants, being game narrative designers, who,

as storytellers, possess an eloquence and love to tell stories. Key phrases, one to three words long, were identified to create an index of topics interview by interview. Each was color coded to facilitate in the interpretation process.

The interview results were then sorted by topics, identifying quotations to be organized into the four concepts of personifying, pathologizing, psychologizing, and soul-making. This aspect of the organization was complex, however, as the interviewee would meander across topics, often referring to other Hillman concepts beyond the specific interview question at hand. For example, the response to the topic of personifying might elicit an example of pathologizing when describing specific game content. The personifying questions also elicited responses that applied to meaning-making (psychologizing) that occurred as a result of the personifying. Upon completion of the interpretation of the interviews, I returned to the participants to ask if they had any further insights they would like to provide about examining games through a Hillmanean lens for the purpose of bringing the conversation of soul into the realm of virtual game design.

As an interviewer I did not anticipate the richness of the descriptions found. However, as I continued to circle around the material I noticed that key insights were cloaked in the stories that were told within the interviews. Hence, I engaged in an interpretive process so that the dynamics of the interview revealed the psychological correlations to Hillman's *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992) as well as to issues of the industry.

The lacuna between depth psychology and gaming was demonstrated through the connections and the misconnections during the course of the interviews. This was most

significant in the interview discussions on soul-making. I examined the interview results to see if it revealed patterns across interview participants and gaps, which by its nature would create a pattern. I noticed a continuous resistance within myself to "interpret" and reduce the interviews into a few phases; hence I kept many quotes within their entirety out of respect for the content to remain whole.

As I analyzed the responses to the four components of *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), I noticed the phenomenon, just as Hillman suggested, of overlap in the process from personifying through soul-making. The participant naturally encompassed the entire process within and throughout the discourse on the psychological relations within gameplay. As a result, you will notice points in the interview re-addressed in the application of the turns. One might assess that the nature of inquiry reflects the nature of the hermeneutic circle in which the dialogue is reflected upon at all levels of the process, but from slightly different lenses from what transpires. This reflection indicated to me, as the researcher, that the process of using Hillman's re-visioning lectures provided not only an adequate but also meaningful lens to examine the psychological processes of archetypal experiences of fantasy content encountered and expressed within video game engagement.

Limits and Delimitations

The proposed research within "Games as Theaters of the Soul" is designed to be a lens to examine the nature of soul's presence within games. The intent is to look through an interpretive lens of archetypal psychology to examine three to five games. Together, with the participant, we discuss the images, actions, and affects of the game of their choosing. The research does not strive to be the complete process for soul-making

interpretation of virtual games, but rather a beginning point in posing the questions of how, if any way at all, we might explore the role of psyche in game space.

Whereas the breadth of possible game genres to research is so broad, for the purposes of this study we will focus on games of mythic nature and narrative. The goal is not to explore all the possible archetypal influences and symbolism within the game but rather on the process of discovery through an archetypal lens. It is the *process* of inquiry that is central to this research, not a complete depth psychological interpretation of the game itself.

This project endeavors to be an introduction to a depth psychological study of the expression of soul through personifying, pathologizing, and seeing through to gain new perspective within the play of the virtual game. For each player there exists many levels of personal and collective meaning. Due to the dynamic nature of game play, each encounter differs, unlike a book or a movie, which the medium remains static but the participants change. Game studies scholar, Ken McAllister, cautions the game researcher:

> As artifacts, computer games are extraordinarily difficult to study because they are so socially complex; recollections of how they were inspired and of a myriad collective and negotiated decisions that gave them their final form . . . are difficult to identify and reconstruct. (2004, p. viii)

The vastness of material presented within the growing field of game studies also precludes a complete and thorough reading of all applicable material. I focus on content that will assist in structuring the game interpretation as well as works of social-cultural importance.

This research is designed as qualitative; therefore my sample participants are few. Whereas a larger sampling of reflections on digital games as theaters for the soul is a project I would like to execute in the future, it is my belief that at this time the necessary common languaging around archetypal concepts and game players is not available. The hope was that through the interviews, common languaging would begin to unfold and provide the basis for further in depth and broader based research.

As a qualitative study with a lens of archetypal psychology, this research may mention, but will not examine in detail, methods of other psychological disciplines such as cognitive, behaviorism, developmental, neuropsychological, or other studies of empirical based data.

Although I will consider the theories of archetypal psychology as my interpretive lens, I am aware that the phenomenon of digital games may reveal limitations to the application of the theories, many written in the previous century. I remained open for possible new interpretations to unfold in a rapidly changing digitized and connected world. My hope is that this research will advance the application and interpretations of archetypal psychology theories, as a result some 20th century interpretations of archetypal psychology are challenged.

For the purposes of this body of research during interview I chose not to focus on the existential argument that Hillman includes about the nature of the archetypes being alive and separate from the individual. That as a philosophical discussion would have been too complicated to embrace within the limits of the interview and distract from the value of the interviews as providing a lens into the role of digital games.

The games and genres discussed in the interviews were based on which digital games the participants chose to discuss. Through their own choice the titles were predominantly mainstream, large studio production AAA (triple A) games within the action genres of shooters, action adventure such as survival horror, and roleplaying sandbox games. Hence the interview research is a limited view into the broad range of game genres available on the market. Therefore, future work merits discussion of a broader scope of game genres.

Many depth psychological concepts are relevant in the study of the virtual gaming experience, including topics as active imagination, projections, archetypes, complexes, pathologies, fantasy, myth, instinctual impulses, symbol, personas, shadow, alchemy, collective consciousness, the unconscious, and cultural symptoms. Although these topics are touched upon within the research, it is my belief that each merits deeper considerations in its application to the 21st century realm of virtuality and virtual gaming. However, those investigations remain beyond the scope of this research project.

To further the investigation of the psychic landscape within virtual games, future research studies projects to conduct include (1) online questionnaires, blogs, to discuss the notion of "virtual games as theater of soul" with players to broaden the base of input, (2) in-depth focus on depth psychological concepts within the game, (3) in-depth study of specific mythic themes, and (4) the alchemical nature of virtual games.

Ethical Concerns and Procedures

The participant based interviews of my study, *Games as Theater for Soul,* adhere to the ethical standards on the use of human subjects based upon the standards established by the American Psychological Association, Pacifica Graduate Institute's Ethics

Committee, and when applicable, the standards and legal procedures of any relevant

institution such as company nondisclosure agreements of software design and creation or

other appropriate restrictions.

As a researcher, it is my responsibility to maintain integrity and respect with my

participants. As outlined below, participants are free to end their participation in the study

at any time, are allowed to determine their anonymity throughout the research, and may

change their status of anonymity at any point. All transcribed and printed material will be

pre-approved by the participant. My primary concern is to protect the welfare and

confidentiality of the participant.

Chapter 5
Games as Theater for Soul:
Interview Results and Interpretations

"When you walk into a game studio you never mistake it for a therapist's office," according to game narrative designer Susan O'Connor (April 2013), and yet the work in game studios possesses an affect resonant with the psychological states expressed within and through the game. At times gameplay has the potential to be cathartic, yet at times it has the potential to constellate negative archetypal impulses, stunting the psyche's progress. This chapter presents the conversations with four prominent game narrative designers while conducting field interviews. Although we are not walking into the game studio, we gain a psychological perspective through the lens of these designers' insights. The interviews were conducted in the format of inquiry based on Hillman's (1975/1992) archetypal psychology components of personifying, pathologizing, seeing through, and soul-making.

The structure of the interviews presented in this chapter reflects the flow of Figure 3 below: Interview Approach of Hillman's Four Archetypal Turns, in which the participants hermeneutically circle through the four cornerstone concepts. Often in the responses to a specific component of the interview cycle, participants' answers blended material applicable from each of the four components. As a result, one notices points within the interviews, when reflecting upon game space, of a dynamic process overlapping and augmenting the various concepts of personifying, pathologizing, seeing through for meaning-making, and soul-making.

Immersion into the Theater of Games

Personifying

Pathologizing

Seeing Through / Psychologizing

Soul Making Perspective

Figure 3. Interview approach based on Hillman's four archetypal turns (1975/1992). Figure created by Susan M. Savett.
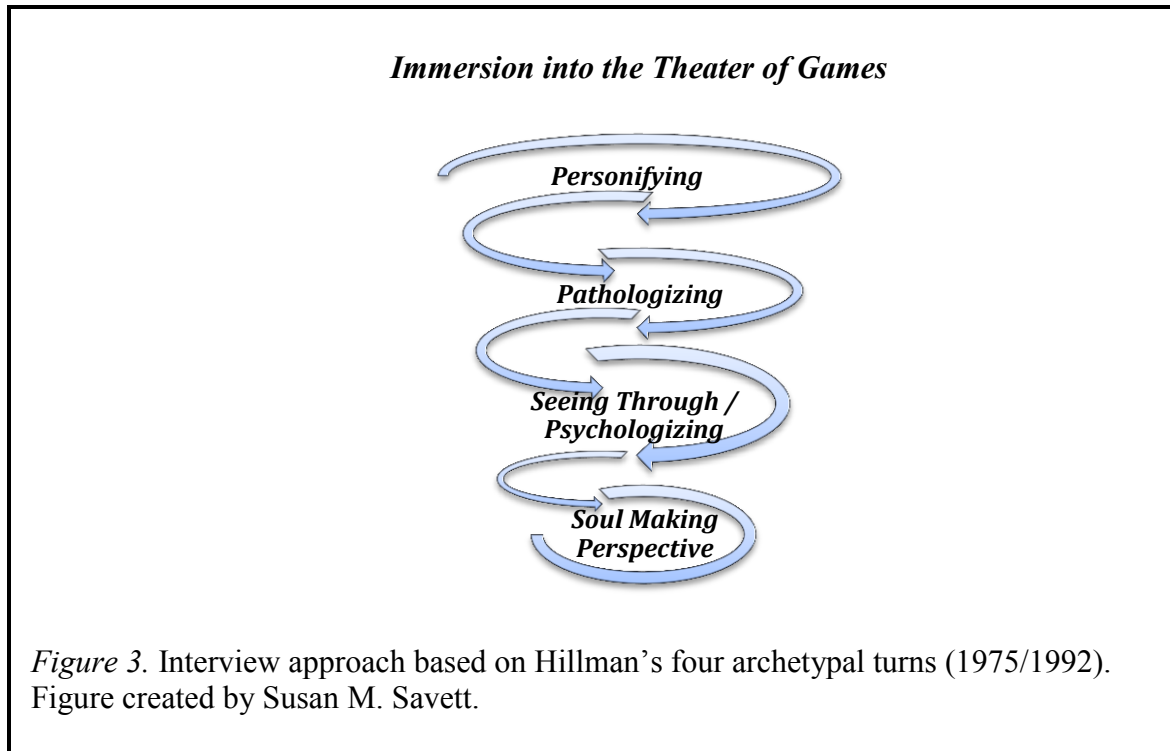
Personifying refers to the player and game elements donning the cloaks of archetypes. *Pathologizing* is the enactment of the archetypal drama. *Psychologizing* is seeing through the drama to the underlying story—the story behind the story—for meaning. *Soul-making* (also referred to as "dehumanizing" by Hillman) is integrating wisdom obtained within the immersion back into daily lives. The term *dehumanizing* is about shifting perspective away from ego goals towards the soul; in essence it is a "re-humanizing" or re-vivification of soul. Through the overarching experience of the four archetypal movements there is a way in which to envision living in an ensouled world.

One might conclude that the nature of inquiry mirrors the nature of the hermeneutic circle in which the dialogue is reflected upon at all levels of the process, but through slightly different lenses. I have attempted to categorize the responses accordingly, but as Hillman indicated, soul is messy (1975/1992). It cannot be reduced to

neat academic formulas. And it cannot be reduced to good or bad, healthy or unhealthy. Hence, the presentation of the results of the interviews attempted to remain true to the intent of the game designer's response while at the same time looking to archetypal psychology for insights.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the interviewing process and the backgrounds of the participants who took part in the interviews. Following that, there is an overview of the concept of personifying from an archetypal psychology perspective. The theories are then applied to the interviews to explore how archetypal psychology from Hillman's perspective (1975/1992) operates within the framework of videogames. The section on personifying is organized around key themes the game designers discussed in correlation to personifying as follows: "The basic hieroglyphs of human behavior"; "In a sea of undifferentiated others"; "Every game communicates who you are"; "Fragmentation: The interior commune of persons," "The Beauty of Zombies," "On the Stage," "Men in Play," and "Fondling the Tool". The chapter examines pathologizing from an archetypal perspective and applies the theories to the interview content. Throughout the chapter there is a weaving back and forth of archetypal psychology theory and the results of the interviews. Although personifying, pathologizing, and seeing through are separated for the structure of discourse, they are inextricably intertwined. The focus of the final concept, soul-making, shifts in its tone as it tackles the most difficult component of the interviewing process, and I would argue, of Hillman's concepts expressed within *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992).

Interviewing Process.

The interview process involved interviewing four leading game narrative designers within the game industry to discuss the following topic: "Games as Theater for Soul." Game narrative designers have a responsibility for the emotional content within the game and the blending of the story to the game mechanics within the design process. Over the course of 4 years, I developed relationships with the participants through attending GDC (Game Development Conference) Game Narrative Summits biannually in Austin, Texas and San Francisco, California. The interviews were conducted in correlation with the March 2013 GDC conference in San Francisco and with two participants providing additional follow-up interview sessions to further expand upon content.

The games mentioned in this chapter are those that the game narrative designers chose to discuss in the interviews. The chosen game titles were predominantly mainstream, large studio production AAA (triple A) games within the action genres of shooters, action adventure such as zombies, and role playing sandbox games. Hence the interview research is a limited view into the broad range of game genres available on the market.

When interview questions addressed pathological content, participants focused on games that were darker in content. It is my belief that the games referenced were selected not only in response to questions about pathologizing within the game space but also based on dominant and successful games within the industry as a whole, particularly for the participants' demographics. Literal components of the gamescape were discussed to discover deeper implications of the personification of the "gods"—or archetypes—within

the storyline, characters, levels, landscapes, and materials of the game, noting the psychological experience.

It should be noted that during the course of interviews, discussion was focused on currently released games that the participants had played. Interviews strictly respected and adhered to nondisclosure agreements of employment. The model of the interview was based on a pilot study conducted at GDC Online in Austin, Texas. The questions modeled for the interview can be found in Appendix C. Detailed information about the interview process is located in Chapter 4, Methodology and Procedures.

Biographies of participants.

Richard Dansky. Richard Dansky is the Central Clancy Writer for Red Storm/Ubisoft. He has been involved in numerous game series, including *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon* (2001)*, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell* (2002)*, Far Cry* (2004)*, and Blazing Angels* (2006). Dansky is a prolific writer and designer of computer games, with over forty-three titles to his name. Earlier in his career at White Wolf, Inc., Dansky was game developer of *Wraith: The Oblivion, Mind's Eye Theatre, Vampire: The Dark Ages,* and *Kindred of the East*. In addition to games, Dansky's creative work includes authoring numerous fiction novels as well as having written and contributed to books on game writing, including *Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Video Games* (Bateman, 2007). When he is not creating new content, Dansky is on the Advisory Board of the GDC Game Narrative Summit, and has also served as an executive member of the IGDA (International Game Developers Association) Game Writers Special Interest Group (Dansky, n.d.).

It was through Dansky's role on the Advisory Board of the GDC Game Narrative Summit at both GDC Online in Austin, Texas and GDC San Francisco that I connected with him. Dansky is known for generously sharing his experiences with newcomers in the industry by annually conducting the Game Writer Round Tables at the GDC to help writers hone their skills. I have also been a recipient of his generosity in his providing me with a rich interview at the GDC San Francisco on March 27, 2013 in addition to many encounters over the years welcoming me into this community.

Susan O'Connor. Susan O'Connor provided a unique voice to the interviewing process as the only female of the interviewees. Ten years ago, in 2004, she founded the Game Writers Conference, which became part of the international GDC as the Game Narrative Summit. She remains on the Advisory Board, providing a guiding voice for game narrative. O'Connor has worked on over 15 game titles, many of which received awards for writing including *BioShock* (2007), *Gears of War* (2006), *Far Cry 2* (2008), *Tomb Raider* (2013), and *Star Wars 1313* (n.d.). Since 1998, O'Connor has worked with game studios Activision, Atari, EA Games, Epic Games, Irrational Games, Lucas Arts, Microsoft Games Studios, Midway, Sony Online Entertainment, THQ, Ubisoft, and Vivendi Universal. O'Connor has contributed to first-person shooters, action-adventure titles, real time strategy games (RTS), role playing games (RPGs), and open-world games in a variety of genres, including sci-fi, fantasy, horror, action, thriller, mystery, and crime.

O'Connor has been acknowledged within the industry as both an award-winning game writer and as one of the most influential women in game design. O'Connor presented the TedTalk, "Video Game Confidential" (2013, January). After 12 years in the

industry, O'Connor offers a voice for creating a higher quality of more meaningful games in interviews with industry trade publications. O'Connor met with me twice to conduct interviews, on March 27, 2013 and April 9, 2013, in order to elaborate upon her reflections on the game industry.

Evan Skolnick. The interview with Evan Skolnick was conducted on March 28, 2013 while he was employed at LucasArts as the lead narrative designer for *Star Wars 1313*. Upon arrival at the LucasArts Studios, a statue of Yoda greets one outside. Inside the lobby, visitors are surrounded by statues of Jedi soldiers, Darth Vader, C-3PO, and R2-D2. The interview with Evan Skolnick was conducted at a table overlooking the San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge during the final weeks of LucasArts Studios, as the employees there had just received news that this epic studio would be closing down.

Skolnick's previous work includes *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2* (2009) as lead writer, *Over the Hedge* (2006) as cowriter and producer, *Guitar Hero III* (2007) as producer; and editorial director and script doctor for *Spider-Man 2* (2004), *Kung Fu Panda* (2008), *James Bond 007: Quantum of Solace* (2008); *Transformers: Autobots* (2007); and *Transformers: Decepticons* (2007). Prior to his work in the game industry, he was a writer and editor for Marvel Comics, where he worked on titles such as *Spider-Man*, *Venom*, *Excalibur*, *New Warriors*, *Doctor Strange*, *Nova*, and *Ghost Rider 2099*. In addition to game design, Skolnick is the author of the book *Video Game Storytelling: What Every Developer Needs to Know About Narrative Techniques* (2014), and contributing author of the "Game Writing and Narrative in the Future" chapter in the book *Professional Techniques for Video Game Writing* (2008).

Steve Williams. Steve Williams, at the time of the initial interview, March 29, 2013, was the senior game designer at Zynga on *Farmville 2* (2012). Williams's work includes *Indiana Jones Adventure World* (2011)*, Vanguard: Saga of Heroes* (2007)*,* the unreleased Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO) game *Stargate Worlds* (n.d.) and the interactive radio drama *Codename Cygnus* (2014)*.* During the second interview, conducted April 8, 2013, we reviewed online the game *State of Decay* (2013) by Undead Labs by watching gameplay videos on YouTube. This method provided freedom to delve deep into the discussion of the gameplay and images while at the same time experiencing a game in play. By the third interview in March 2014, Williams had become a lead designer for Warner Bros. Williams has worked with the following studios: Kiwi Inc., Reactive Studios, Carbine Studios, Cheyenne Mountain Entertainment, Sony Online Entertainment, and Monolith Productions.

Summary of interviewing process. An interesting phenomenon occurred as a result of the selection of participants who were game narrative designers as well as game players. Whereas I had anticipated that they would respond with either a designer or a player perspective, often the response came from a third perspective: that of the character immersed in the imaginal realm. As I listened to or reread the interviews in which they recalled gameplay, I was laughing, even in my seventh and eighth time through the material. I got their joy. It was impossible for me to ignore the effusive psychic energy being emitted from these individuals during the interviews. From the exterior, they were conventional, polite professionals and yet, when providing descriptions while playing the game, their emission of exuberance possessed the charm and excitement of the eternal youths personified. In their exuberance of reliving the moment of the gameplay, I too felt

drawn into another dimension, surrounded by the intensity of the battle, felt a necessity to grab a weapon, feel its weight, and to cover their backside.

Personifying in Games

      Personifying: An archetypal perspective. Archetypal personifying is inherently an extremely potent psychological move in which the player(s) and game elements don the cloaks of conscious and unconscious archetypal influences. It enables putting that which is interior in the soul to be experienced "out there" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 31). The act of personifying devises protections by forming a layer between the exterior and the interior content (p. 31). The soul reveals itself, enabling new eyes to see, opening one's vision and temporal embodiment of alternative experiences. By living in a metaphorical relationship with the world, personifying "revivifies" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 3) the relationship. To personify, one meets the "individual fragmentation, [the] many rooms and many voices" (p. 3) within oneself. Personifying is not only a way of engaging on the imaginary stage of the theater; it is way of soul-making (p. 3). It is a magnifying mirror. Performance of human drama is achieved through personifying and pathologizing. Personifying entails imagining things and employing the imagination to allow the soul to present itself.

      As in the theater, the rituals of theatrical encounters that occur in videogames through the concrete actions of kinetic performances, are personifications.

      The ritual of theater . . . and play require concrete actions which are never only what they literally seem to be. Ritual offers a primary mode of psychologizing, of deliteralizing events and seeing through them as we "perform" them. As we go into a ritual, the soul of our actions "comes out"; or to ritualize a literal action, we

"put soul into it." Here . . . the alchemist point[s] the way; so too can the actor, the

entertainer, and the ball-player. They are able to divest the concrete of its

literalism by the psychological style they bring to an action. Ritual brings together

action and idea into an enactment. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 137)

Performance through the rituals of theater and play is enacted by the game player. The

enactment enlivens portions of the soul through personification. Most importantly

Hillman notes how this process psychologically enables the dissolving of the literal event

and divests it by the enactment of a different psychological style. The character in play,

as well as other elements conveyed within the ritual open space, is available for

deliteralizing psychological events.

Jung wrote in *Symbols of Transformation* about the symbolic imaginal realm, in

which images upon images appear: Dionysian phallagogies, chthonic mysteries, and

theriomorphic monsters, half animal and half human, give face and representation to the

gods within (Jung, 1952/1976, p. 27 [*CW* 5, para. 36]). The images in contemporary

gameplay bear a striking resemblance to Jung's description of the symbolic imaginal

realm. Archaic thinking and feeling states continue to reside side by side with the modern

state of mind. Through fantasy, the archaic mind is mirrored back. Configurations of

images within gameplay are larger than life, amplified in the compelling nature of the

game, reflecting as a large mirror a magnificent display and intensity of life.

Third-century philosopher Plotinus, in *Enneads* (IV, 3, 12), wrote about "the souls

of men, seeing their images in the mirror of Dionysus," referring to the need, throughout

the ages, "of the soul to divide into many parts, and that its portions and phases reflect the

various images of divine persons" (as cited in Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 14). Personifying

the "gods" through image and myth provides voice to the multiple personalities of the psyche within. According to Hillman, myth is "polycentric, with innumerable personifications in imaginal space" (1975/1992, p. 33). Personifying, which is in essence anthropomorphizing, occurs when "psyche presents its own imaginal dimensions, operates freely without words, and is constituted of multiple personalities" (p. 33).

Mythic realms, like the ancient Greek mythic dramas, "become the multiple magnifying mirror in which the psyche can recognize its persons and processes in configurations which are larger than life" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 30). Not only do these mythic representations present the internal persons within the individual but also the processes by which they view, interpret, and act within the given world through the amplifications of the deeds. The following interviews explore whether the personification of interior landscapes "rekindle[s] [the] imagination" (p. 3) such that the virtual game world may be ensouled.

Interviewing Results and Interpretation: Personifying.

The basic hieroglyphs of human behavior. Dansky referred to the archetypal impulses as "the basic hieroglyphs of human behavior," and, according to Hillman, the archetypes are "the persons to whom we ultimately owe our personality" (1975/1992, p. 22). This points to a unique difference of approach: For Dansky, the impulses are aspects of human behavior, whereas for Hillman, the archetypes are envisioned as the multiple persons or gods present within the individual. For the purposes of this research, the archetypes are psychic impulses that determine the course of action.

During interviews, participants were asked if they thought game players took inner psychological material and acted it out in the playing of games. Dansky thought so,

first qualifying that designers have become very good at figuring out what players want to do, providing a way for players to immerse themselves, and then rewarding players in such a way to set them up to do it again. Dansky claimed, "So, obviously we're tapping here some pretty primal stuff and some pretty unconscious urges" with the design of games.

"It is your character, it's your interaction. The dead bodies on the ground are your victims or your opponents, it is your world; it is your game." Note that Dansky shifted from using the phrase "the dead bodies" to "your victims." This move in itself remains in the active state of personifying within the fantasy of the game. Personification as described by Hillman also addresses the power of "me," describing "the movement through the constructed world of concepts and dead things into an animistic, subjective, mythical consciousness, where fantasy is alive in a world alive and means 'me'" (1975/1992, p. 43).

When asked about whether personification was at play in the creation of the avatar and other components of the game, Dansky responded with "absolutely." Whereas I was anticipating a dialogue about specific game mechanics and artistic elements, Dansky spoke about a more basic level of personification. He drew attention to the notion of the players' intimate psychological relationship with the game expressed through and by the use of "me" and "my." Dansky stated:

> The purest evidence for that is talking to the people about what they're playing, and we'll talk about "my game" of something, "my save," things like that. Nobody says, "I am going to go to the Xbox and pick up at level 46." They say "I'm gonna play my game," you know, "move my game onto another hard drive."

They sort of own the world. They own all the experiences that have gone into making the world that way.

The first person is very powerful when people are talking about games. When you play a game, it tells some of your story of what you did, what happened in the game. What's the first word of every story? It's "I."

It is your character; it is your interaction. The dead bodies on the ground are your victims or your opponents or whatever else, it is your world; it is your game. And so, it is defined. It is set up in the assets created by game developers; but it is manifested through *your* playing of *your* specific play. (Dansky, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

The relationship Dansky describes is in alignment with archetypal psychology's idea of the expression of personification as a vehicle of the unconsciousness that "turn[s] events into experiences that mean 'me'" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 45).

Every game communicates who you are. "The way people play a game is a reflection of their personality," according to Evan Skolnick, as we sat at a table in LucasArts Studios. Within a game, he stated,

You are given a certain possibility space in which you choose to play. The more choices, the more variance of behavior you are going to see. . . . There are always different "alignments" that kind of are supposed to dictate what kind of person that character is. It is reflective and interesting to see. It is either a reflection of who they were in their life or some hidden part of them. (March 28, 2013)

The game gives space for part of "who" game players are repressing because of the law, or because of their upbringing, or because of what they think is right in the real world.

According to Skolnick, people feel they can express repressed energy in a fun way and in a pretend environment.

> When I used to play *Dungeons & Dragons* (1990), what I did in that space, it was always a little darker than who I really am. It was always a little nastier, and more rebellious. Maybe the person I would like to be, but then I don't think would be probably a good result in this world. But in the world where there are fewer rules and fewer laws, maybe this is the type of personality I want to be. (March 28, 2013)

Williams, like Skolnick, also used the phrase "every game communicates who you are" during his interview. He explained that how one chooses to play the game could reveal one's inner life.

> I never realized this until I played a game in front of someone I was in love with once. It was the way I played the game that was the demise of our relationship. She said she watched me play and revealed, "you wanted this other thing and it said something about you that I did not like." That was a really *important moment because I began to think more philosophically about what we do in this industry*. To me there were things that I could do in the game that I couldn't do in real life. That is where atavism comes in where we have these things inside of us we fight very hard not to express them, in fact we fight very hard to not say that they exist. All of us are a murderer inside if we go up that river. I didn't realize how nakedly atavistic a game can make you. (March 29, 2013)

The atavistic return to ancestral roots can also be described as the invitation to enact various mythic scenarios, or to see how, as Jung stated, "the unconscious spontaneously

personifies" (1959/1990, p. 285 [*CW* 9i, para. 514]). Unconscious personification

erupting into the imaginal activity of gameplay decisions is similar to dream images that

have the free will to roam in dreams. Hillman wrote about Jung's notion that archetypal

complexes

> were invested with feeling, intention, autonomy, and fragments of consciousness.
>
> They were independent entities because they behaved as such. The same complex
>
> can alter the association of words, show itself as unwanted symptoms, and appear
>
> as a person in a dream. Dream persons are complexes walking around: symptoms
>
> are the irruption of these persons into our normal lives. (1975/1992, p. 20)

The beauty of personification as described in archetypal psychology is its ability to hold

space on a plane of consciousness that mediates the unconscious, not as fragmented,

undefined pieces of the psyche but as whole components, in order to witness the unique

voices clamoring within.

> ***The interior commune.*** The psychic realm of an individual may best be described

in archetypal psychological terms as a landscape of interior relationships of archetypes

rather than individual forces. Within an individual is "an interior commune, a body

politic" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 22). The interplay of members within the commune

enacts mythical scenarios that are manifested in life. The psychic field is a battleground

for the interior commune to engage and battle for submission and dominance. Games

enable enacting these interior dramas. The historian Huizinga elaborates on the

significance of the personification within play as the necessity to become another being.

> The "differentness" and secrecy of play are most vividly expressed in "dressing
>
> up." Here the "extra-ordinary" nature of play reaches perfection. The disguised or

masked individual "plays" another part, another being. He *is* another being. The

terrors, . . . mystic fantasy and sacred awe are all inextricably entangled in this

strange business of masks and disguises. (Huizinga, 1938/1955, p. 13)

Games can be a rich reflecting pool for the fragmented persons within, giving the

individual the ability "to find other persons within oneself, to be divided into several

souls, a field of multiple personalities" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 2). The diversification of

personality is confined and suppressed and yet seeks ways to be vivified.

To successfully enter into a mythic experience, accordingly, "we must personify;

to personify carries us into myth" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 16). Dansky said that during

the game creation,

everything that you put into a game goes through the lens of the avatar. Every

character is created in relation to the avatar, which is the fantasy. Obviously we're

hoping the players are going to project themselves into the avatar in the fantasy.

And so it is all one step removed from the sense of the players' personality.

(March 27, 2013)

The creation of the game, as described by Dansky during the interview, is intended to

resonate with the player, including fragmented aspects of the player's personality that he

or she may not be able to express. Virtual game realms tap into and give access to the

"diversification of personality and its differentiation and vivification [that] have been

suppressed" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 2). For example, throughout the interviews,

participants continually spoke of the need for, and the joy of, experiencing their

warrior/hunter's violence within a safe fantasy of games.

In a sea of undifferentiated others. Fundamental to archetypal psychology is the idea that the return to mythic imagination "offers a way of coping when our centers cannot hold and things fall apart" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 27). This importance of mythic imaginative realms as a means of coping resonates with Dansky's explanation that "in video games you actively take arms against the sea of troubles and more actively take arms against this sea of 9-5 or 8-6 or dead-end doldrums and anonymity" (March 27, 2013). The "sea of troubles" within life becomes personified as the various challenges to overcome within the game, allowing the individual to address conscious and unconscious fears present in daily life. "It is not so much an aspect of player personality I think that we are rising up against; *it is against the player's fear* in many ways," according to Dansky. His observation lends itself to the notion that the personification is not merely a reflection of the personality of the player—as in the desire to directly express one's image in the game content, but rather an engagement in a fantasy in which the "9-5 or 8-6 dead-end doldrums and anonymity" are personified through characters or gameplay mechanics. The daily 9-5 sacrifices required from the average person, bearing the weight of the anonymity in modern society, is given expression archetypally through the avatar personifying the hero. Depth psychologist Glen Slater noted that the archetypal role of the hero is such that "the hero always has the relationship with the dead and the underworld because they are always sacrificing" (2008b).

In the standard gameplay environment of the shooter genre, Dansky described a powerful example of the personification of anonymity and the role of the hero's self-agency:

You have just killed 200 guys where all the faces are identical looking and what that says about you *as a real personality in a sea of undifferentiated others*. The player has forcibly separated himself from that by being the one who acts against them. They keep coming. There are an infinite number of them but you are the one who acts against them, you are unique, you are different. (March 27, 2013)

Dansky described the "sea of undifferentiated others" as external forces of society, as distinguished from the archetypal perspective that the personification elicited through the gameplay that provides the imagination space to open up to the separation of the many different personas within the self. Without the space allotted through imaginal personification, the individual could potentially remain in the state of undifferentiation, both internally within the self and externally in society. However, through personification, the player is able to select and enact the persona with self-agency, overriding the persona of anonymity. The shooter genre particularly provides the player's fantasy a means to "stay close to the raw experience" by personifying the nature of fear and being overwhelmed by the "sea of undifferentiated others." Dansky's insight correlates with the importance of how "personification helps place subjective experiences 'out there'" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 31) as a way to devise a new relation with the feeling of isolation through the act of gameplay.

Interestingly, Dansky's conceptualization of a person "in a sea of undifferentiated others" is also reminiscent of Jung's characterization of a person as "a particle in the mass," which he wrote about in 1912:

Man as an individual is a very suspicious phenomenon whose right to exist could be questioned by the biologist . . . he is significant only as a collective creature or

as a particle in the mass. The cultural point of view gives man a meaning apart

from the mass, and this, in the course of centuries, led to the development of

personality and the cult of the hero. (1952/1976, p. 177 [*CW* 5, para. 259])

Note Dansky's use above of the phrase, "the player has forcibly separated himself." An

important aspect of personifying is how imaginative personalities donned in play provide

a separation and distinction of the many persons present within the individual's psyche.

The player, through the mechanics of the game, is given *space* for the warrior hero to

perform, to arise to address the conflict. The player chooses the warrior hero to take

action against the sense of feeling like an undifferentiated other through the separation

and clarification of the multiplicity of internal personalities.

It is a way of gaining distance. This *separatio* (in the language of alchemy) offers

internal detachment, as if there were now more interior space for movement and

for placing events, where before there was a conglomerate adhesion of parts or a

monolithic identification with each and all, a sense of being stuck in one's

problem. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 31)

In Dansky's example above, personification addresses both external pressures and

internal lack of differentiation. From an archetypal perspective this would suggest that

the game mechanic verb *shoot* within the game fantasy separates one internal aspect of

the player—the warrior—from the many other internal persons. The player's internal

psyche is able to detach from the feeling of disempowerment amongst the sea of

undifferentiated to become something more than that of an Other. The personified image

possesses a willfulness to differentiate (p. 34).

Another excellent example of personified anonymity Dansky described is the slasher figure: "The slasher figure is faceless, he is anonymous, . . . he is the undifferentiated creature who says you are no longer unique and special, and he is coming for you" (March 27, 2013). The slasher figure represents both unknown external forces and unknown internal forces that lie submerged in the unconscious. Fantasy images such as the slasher allow one to encounter and grapple with depersonalization in which "everything and oneself become automatic, unreal, emptied out. The sense of 'me-ness,' of emotional importance, has vanished" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 44). The personal coefficient of the ego has lost its relation with self and the world, and yet the realm of virtual play provides space to encounter this internal absence through its personification. In fact, from an archetypal perspective, the act of dissolving into something collective, such as the Dionysian rituals of a mediated play environment, may help to release the sense of undifferentiation, particularly if there is a return to reimagining the situation within the experience (G. Slater, 2008b).

Splitting individuals' images of themselves through imaginal play, as shown in the many forms of gameplay, results in "multiplying it into more manageable parts" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 31). In other words, this archetypal concept suggests that the various forms of gameplay provide a vehicle for encountering the many fragments within the individual on a one-by-one basis. The gameplay is able to amplify a particular element of the individual in order for it to play out within the free space of imaginal play.

As an example of the game elements providing aspects of internal fragments of the individual, Williams described a relationship with a character he became particularly attached to in the zombie survival horror game *State of Decay* (2013) created by Undead

Labs. *State of Decay* focuses on survival tactics of a survivor community within a small town against the infected population.

> Every time you think the zombie is dead or gone, it comes back; there is another one. But the characters within the game die permanent deaths. You can actually mourn the loss of a character because the game gave you enough information that you feel like you actually know them and mourn them when they are gone. I was particularly attached to this one character. Once the zombies mutilated that character, I was gone. They [Undead Labs] nailed the concept of loss. I had lost other characters but this was a special one. I had to stop playing the game. I haven't gone back to it. Maybe someday I will, but not now. (Williams, March 29, 2013)

The depth of his emotional response to the annihilation of this feminine character by the relentless attacks of the zombies could be due to accessing the unconscious relationship to the death—or threat of death—of one of the feminine internal fragments within his interior world. The sense of loss and grief was of such intensity that he could not return to the game. He needed time to process the grief, to mourn the loss of her. On some level, albeit as the result of a fantasy game, it was real psychically.

> This vision cannot be enacted unless archetypal persons strike us as utterly real. To experience imaginal reality, a psychic function—the specific function of the imaginative soul—must be active. This soul person is . . . the spinner of fantasy who is the personification of all unknown psychic capacities that lie waiting, drawing us seductively, uncannily inward to the dark of the uncut forest and the deeps below the waves. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 42)

The archetypal lens of personification suggests that for Williams, this particular character

in *State of Decay* carried the psychic weight of a fragment to the point in which the

digital image became the psychic container, alive with psychic energy, creating a

meaningful relationship between player and character.

However, in addition to psychically alive characters, Williams also spoke to the

necessity for "cardboard characters" in gameplay; those NPC, non-player characters,

within the game that do not elicit an emotional response. For some operations of fantasy

play—particularly violent conflict—the NPC character needs to remain as "other."

> You never want to create cardboard characters in storytelling. You want to give
>
> them soul, but in games that is not necessarily the case. There is a technical
>
> limitation in design but really I don't want the Nazis that I am going to gunning
>
> down endlessly to feel like people. They need to be cardboard, they need to be . . .
>
> well, if they did feel like people then . . . [long pause] . . . . I would have to pause
>
> with them. I don't have time to engage with Private Helmut who is guarding the
>
> door. I need to kill him. (Williams, March 29, 2013)

Apparently, if Private Helmut felt like a real person, Williams would be compelled to

respond not from the warrior perspective but to revert out of the fantasy in order to

momentarily return into a polite, ethical person. It interrupts his immersion in the fantasy,

which requires the quick, unreflective responses of mashing the kill button.

Anonymity itself is an overwhelming archetypal state of being within society such

that there is a need to amplify and to personify anonymity. The challenge arises not in

whether there are cardboard characters within gameplay but rather the use and application

of the NPC characters. O'Connor argued,

> We do such a poor job of seeing other people as people in games. It's the notion
> "You only see through your own eyes" is amplified a zillion times in games and
> it's crazy. Instead of them [non-player characters] just standing there saying, "I
> am in your way, I am in your way, I am in your way" until you kill them and
> move on, it wouldn't take that much to put the energy in working to make the
> other character as act as real and vibrant and unpredictable; especially because the
> writers control the characters. (O'Connor, March 27, 2013)

To vivify other characters beyond the cardboard character is an important shift from lower-case "other" to upper-case "Other." The request of O'Connor is to see through the eyes of the other characters present as well as one's own. This move is a broadening of consciousness and a goal of meaning-making. However, it is possible, as Dansky highlighted, that the "other" at times needs to remain a part of the sea of undifferentiated others to personify internal and external struggles. Yet O'Connor's point, in which she advised not to reduce representations of people in both external and internal landscapes, is also valid. Both views point to the powerful nature of symbolic representation for the purposes of personification. At best, games allow players to enter into and live from "Other" through fantasy play; at worst, games reduce "Other" to either stereotypes or entities to eliminate in order to achieve a fantasy goal. In fantasy, the symbol is often grounded in the unconscious archetype but manifested outwardly. Jung explained, "Symbols act as transformers, their function being to convert libido from a 'lower' into a 'higher' form" (1952/1976, p. 232 [*CW* 5, para. 344]). The importance is to understand and tend to the appropriate level of personification available during game design so as to enhance the movement of energy within the experience.

The beauty of zombies. The proclivity of games to personify "other" within

games is particularly witnessed within the culture's appetite for zombie games. What is

implicit within the fantasy world of zombie games is how it allows one to come into

relationship with the daily world, according to Dansky.

> The zombie apocalypse is the great leveler because it removes complexity from
>
> society. It just removes every little complexity in the society. All of the things that
>
> drive you nuts in your day to day: paperwork, taxes, zoning regulations, having to
>
> be nice to the neighbors, going to the supermarket. What happens in the zombie
>
> apocalypse? The whole deck gets cleared. You don't have to be nice to anybody;
>
> you don't have to be polite with anybody. You've got more important things to
>
> do, so all the stuff that is actually necessary to keeping your day and life going is
>
> off the table. It's just kill or be killed. And so you can surely look at that as both a
>
> worst-case scenario and a best-case scenario.

> You're dealing with a fantasy because you are suggesting that the player is one
>
> of the people who's cool and smart enough to survive. And so you're feeling like
>
> none of this annoying crap is there for you to have to deal with. You just do what
>
> you've got to do with the implicit and "you're awesome enough to do it." (March
>
> 27, 2013)

The zombie genre also wipes out the feeling of a sense of responsibility to "other."

Williams pointed out that one of the reasons he loves the zombie genre so much is that its

personification of the other as a zombie eliminates moral angst. There is no guilt for

shooting another human. "You don't have to feel bad about shooting a zombie. You don't

have to dwell on 'Thou shall not kill' type of questions" (Williams, March 29, 2013).

There is no "Other," but rather as Dansky noted, zombies personify those things that annoy, those things that are relentless, and those things which threaten to drain the life out of oneself.

On the stage. Games such as the *Grand Theft Auto* series (1997-2014) are systemic, open world, less of an authored story and more of a sandbox-type space where players create their own stories. Such games provide many ways in which players can express themselves. Skolnick described the beauty of the incredible living, breathing cities of the *Grand Theft Auto* series, with its countless choices to explore on a minute-to-minute basis and with its continual rewards.

> There are a lot of things you can do and the world is designed to react in ways that anticipate almost anything you can do. The game is very good at reacting to what you do in a way that feels right and that is stimulating. . . . It all happened because you pushed this thumbstick to the left for a second and you hit someone you shouldn't have hit. That's the system and, and that could become a story where I accidentally hit this guy and the cops came and I realized I had to run for it. You are creating the story then. It's your story. That's what makes it interesting is that you're not just going up on stage and reading someone else's script. You got someone else's premise but you're on stage making it up as you go. And the other people on stage are reacting to what you did. . . . The story's what happened to you, how you dealt with it. (March 28, 2013)

Grand Theft Auto's success, explained Skolnick, taps into the desire for freedom to move within the game space to create one's own mythic, dark world of repressed desires in an imaginary world that responds to the player. The level of agency within the space

enhances the ability of the player, in an imaginal world, to step onto the stage. The

driving forces within play involve reacting "in a way that feels right and that is

stimulating" (Skolnick, March 28, 2013) and demonstrate the designer's intent to enable

archetypal dramas. There is a coherency of gameplay that has resonance with the player

on multiple levels of the landscape, enactment, and response.

The player takes over the dramatic text and creates a unique performance.

Repeatedly in the interviews and in private conversations with many people, the *Grand*

Theft Auto series (1997-2014) was mentioned as one of the personal favorites. Whereas

an outside observer of the game may focus on the apparent violence possible, the players

within *Grand Theft Auto* focus on the agency they control; and it all happens when they

move the thumbstick—it becomes their story. Skolnick compared gameplay to an improv

theater experience where the player is creating the storyline development during the

player's engagement.

> What games provide that is so incredibly stimulating is that it's your story . . .
>
> because you were there, it is suddenly a million times more compelling to you and
>
> that is what games offer: the ability to have that [particular] experience. The story
>
> that you are in is much more interesting to you than anybody else. . . . What is
>
> unique about games, especially in terms of a story, is that you are involved. . . .
>
> The story in the game is what happened to *you* and how *you* dealt with it.
>
> (March 28, 2013)

The notion of "you" within the gameplay blurs the lines of the player sitting in a room

and the character within the game. Who is "you"? The game structure provides virtual

realms into which one both splits off from reality into fantasy and simultaneously merges

fantasy with reality. All the while, this state of being remains part of "your" story. The individual is both the player on the improv stage and the person in the room watching the story unfold for the character. Hence, as Skolnick noted, the experience is "suddenly a million times more compelling."

Fondling the tool. Personifying, I discovered during the course of the interviews, not only takes place within the game realm of the fantasy but also extends to the mechanisms of tools employed in the interface between the player and the fantasy world. The tools become in essence a personified extension of the imaginal and the player, bonding the virtual with the physical.

> Everything we do [as designers] in a game has to feed the fantasy and there has to be a reason you have to have this element. There's a *reason* that that particular element is in the game. Game controllers, although they are physical tools, they are personification in the hands of the gamers. It is a symbolic language. You translate this waggling of thumbs into "I just shot someone" or "I just jumped." It's very much a symbolic language and the actions—things you say through the controller—have to be meaningful. (Dansky, March 27, 2013)

Here Dansky referred to the game controller as the physical tool that translates the symbolic language. Jung noted in *Symbols of Transformation*, that the thumbs and fingers "are personifications of creative forces, of which the phallus, too, is a symbol" (1952/1976, p. 124 [*CW* 5, para. 180]). Skolnick gave the example of gameplay agency through the controller, where "it all happened because you pushed this thumbstick to the left for a second and you hit someone you shouldn't have hit. That's the system." The

personification is the translation of the controller into the bridge between the external player and the internal character within the game. It is the conveyance of agency.

It was pointed out during the discussions that men in particular have been fond of their tools since the beginning of time when they went out to hunt. Men have a unique relationship with tools of all types: for hunting, for building, for working, and for any other tasks in which the tool is used for problem solving and mastery. "Man and his tool bench" (Skolnick, March 28, 2013) was given as an example of this particular fondness of men for tools. O'Connor gave the example of how archetypal an impulse it is, stating, "A 3-year-boy will take a Barbie doll and weaponize it," turning the doll into a tool for fighting (April 8, 2013).

O'Connor discussed personification with the use of game controllers to convey the action of a gun within the game. "When they use a gun, they touch the world with their 'end.' It's not literal for them, it is metaphor. It is like it is their penis where they want to touch everything" (April 8, 2013). With the game controller in their hands, they play with the tool until they achieve mastery. This mastery provides an ecstasy, a release of pent-up energy, a coming to the "moment," a sense of momentary power while enduring failures until solving the puzzle of the game. The hands, according to Hillman (2005, p. 219), function both as creative and authoritative: "the wand and the mace." With the controller in hand, young puer archetypal players have "the little gnomaci phallic *daktyls* who fashion new shapes in their spontaneous play" (p. 219).

Personifying summary. Game worlds are worlds of personification. The player actually enters into another psychological dimension as she personifies fragments of interior personalities, donning masks in play. The "many rooms and many voices"

(Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 3) of the individual's psyche are inhabited and meet in imaginal worlds of play. The interviews provided examples of how the game, the avatars, the gameplay, even the tools such as controllers, vivify the internal psychological world of the player. Through the interviews and research, it became clear that both the images within the game and the gameplay elements are personified. As Hillman stated, "Where imagination reigns, personifying happens" (p. 17).

The invisibles of the psyche are given form. Like anthropomorphism and animism, personification "takes an inside event and puts it outside" (p. 12). Through the act of personifying we are "experiencing the world as a psychological field . . . so that events are experiences that touch us, move us, appeal to us" (p. 13). First we don the masks of personification in the games space and then allow the drama to unfold in the play.

Pathologizing in Games

Pathologizing: An archetypal perspective. Archetypal psychology claims that pathologizing is intrinsic to soul. The dark impulses, according to Hillman, should "no longer be wrong or right, but merely necessary, involving purpose which we have misperceived and values which must present themselves necessarily in a distorted form" (1975/1992, p. 57). Archetypal psychology asks to turn a new lens toward darker content to ask the question, "Why is this pathological symptom necessary?" (p. 56) rather than to either immediately condemn the pathology or, at the other end, to blindly enact it without measure.

Examining the content of digital games from an archetypal viewpoint provides an alternative perspective on the pathos present within the imaginal realm. Whereas video

games are repeatedly described by critics of video games as soulless and responsible for intensifying violent urges within individuals, pathologizing looks to the reflections of the inner world of the individual and society. The following description of the woodcuts and drawings of alchemists matches the content of various genres of gaming, particularly shooters, zombie, adventurer, horror.

> Processes of dismemberment, torture, cannibalism, decapitation, flaying, poisoning, images of monsters, dragons, unipeds, skeletons, hermaphrodites; operations called putrefaction, mortification, pulverizing, dissolution. The woodcuts and drawings of the alchemists display the processes with every sort of bizarre and obscene configuration. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 90)

Hillman words could be describing the pathological images found within some games, with game designers as modern day alchemists, through which the soul's language speaks of its suffering. Archetypal psychology emphasizes the necessity for the soul's growth to speak of repressed content, allowing expression of bizarre and heretical fantasies (p. 40) for the alchemical process to have full freedom. Each person experiences moments in life of "depressions, overvalued ideas, manic flights and rages, anxieties, compulsions, and perversions" (p. 55). Pathologizing gives raw and spontaneous expression of emotions: sorrow and happiness, dejection and passion, fear and excitement, surprise and monotony.

Temporal worlds of such cathartic encounters are similar to the therapist's office that "offered the vessel into which our unconscious pathologizing could be poured and then cooked long enough for its significance to emerge" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 71). The term *psychopathology* comes from the root *psyche-pathos-logos*: the soul's suffering of

meaning (p. 71). Although games provide an alchemical vessel for the cooking of pathological content, whether the significance of the meaning is achieved remains to be seen. Nonetheless, to acknowledge the power of pathological content, not as evil to eradicate from play, but rather as a necessity for which "we owe our symptoms an immense debt" (p. 71), games pave the way to locating meaningful relations to the world around and within.

Pathologizing language is the psyche's way of "telling us about its lacunae, its gaps and wasteland" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 89) rather than of the ego's human perfection. Hillman noted, "The psyche uses complaints to speak in a magnified and misshapen language about its depths" (p. 82). Pathologizing is "the psyche's autonomous ability to create illness, morbidity, disorder, abnormality, and suffering in any aspect of its behavior and to experience and imagine life through this deformed and afflicted perspective" (p. 57). The images within the games provide a window into cultural symptoms just like those that Hillman specifically, pointed to: symptoms such as illusions and depressions, overvalued ideas, manic flights and rages, anxieties, compulsion, and perversions. Through the images within the entertainment-mediated realms, one sees into the cultural soul. Jung indicated, "The constellated archetype is always the primordial image of the need of the moment" (1952/1976, pp. 293-294 [*CW* 5, para. 450]). Interpreting culturally mediated realms such as digital games within this frame of reference provides insight as to how unconscious content presents itself and guidance for reflecting upon primordial images within pathological content of digital games so as to consider what is the need of this moment in time.

By following the path of the symptoms, one is led down into the depths of the soul (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 74). Through extreme derangement of fantasy within the games, the frightening, bizarre, decayed, and fantastic images are displayed so that the soul is revealed and experienced (p 74). By allowing the cultural images depicted in the game to go beyond the rational and into the madness of the imagination, one is able to follow the rhythms of the soul. The "deformations of human images" (p. 89) and the "subculture deviation" (p. 77) of the game give witness to the "falling apart" of reality. It is through the act of falling apart, or witnessing pathologies, that the soul is able to revivify itself towards wholeness.

The notion of falling apart (Hillman, 1975/1992) is often the ground of preparation for the psyche. Teenagers, in particular, need the dark psychological journey. Adolescence is a period of confrontations with the younger innocent self that requires dying for movement into adulthood. Rebellion is the hallmark archetypal force of this transitional stage. Teenagers, however, due to the powerful draw to pathological, can overidentify with dark content; getting constellated in it is a danger (Slater, 2008a). The art of game design walks a fine line between allowing one to become less caught in the identification or becoming lost in overidentification.

Fantasy enactment within virtual games enables coming into relationship with either that which lies quietly in the shadows or that which erupts violently, demanding to be heard. "Essential to changing the soul's viewpoint are the experiences of pathologizing, for they express the decomposition of the natural; they present images that do not and cannot take place in the natural world" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 91). Discovering the psychological necessity of pathologizing shifts the angle and gives value

to the expression of the pathos as a means to understand what the soul is saying. In other words, we open the space for creative digestion of the dysfunction (Slater, 2008a). Games open up the opportunity for emotional relationship with images and different ways of seeing things. Critics of pathological fantasy, such as that which is present in certain gameplay genres, miss the validity and necessity of regression (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 27) and its call to develop skills for resolution of conflict.

The power of symbolic imagery and fantasy, according to Jung, balances psychic reality "by shifting the whole question on to another and less dangerous plane" (1952/1976, p. 156 [*CW* 5, para. 220]). At its best, pathological content in games allows one to reimage a difficult situation and discover multiple ways of dealing with the pathos and "unearth that place where one has been stuck" (Slater, 2008a). At their worst, games can fixate the psyche to remain stuck in an obsessive pathological disorder, furthering the suffering. Jung warned of such potential perils of the soul, of

> a splitting of the personality ("loss of a soul") and reduction of consciousness, both of which automatically increase the power of the unconscious. The consequences of this are a serious danger . . . they may give rise to psychic disturbances, states of possession, and psychic epidemics. (1952/1976, p. 169 [*CW* 5, para. 248])

Becoming consumed in pathological hyperactivity without reflecting inward creates a one-sidedness of an archetypal impulse. Balancing the necessary pathologizing with psychologizing, the seeing through to the underlying meaning, is addressed later in the chapter.

Interview results and interpretation: Pathologizing. The archetypal principle of pathologizing views the dark content and suffering as a necessity. "Each soul at some time or another demonstrates illusions and depression, overvalued ideas, manic flight and rages, anxieties, compulsions, and perversions" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 55). Through experiencing the pathos of the soul, "we owe our symptoms a great debt" (p. 71), for by encounter with the darkness, we are able to "comprehend it from another angle" (p. 55).

During the course of the interviews, most of the games the designers spoke about contained quite substantial amounts of violence and pathological content. Jung addressed the notion of how primordial content is drawn out of an individual through images. "These images, ideas, beliefs, or ideals operate through the specific energy of the individual, which he cannot always utilize at will . . . but which seems rather to be drawn out of him by the images" (1952/1976, p. 157 [*CW* 5, para. 223]). The examples of moments within games that possessed a potent energy validate the importance of coming into relation with primordial urges. What appears to be overcompensation provides psychological value through the hyperdrama of the pathos within the images and action.

Pathos takes one into relationship with loss: the loss of childhood, dreams, ambition, calling, virility, and ultimately the loss of control. Games, such as those described previously in the interviews, give personified shape to encountering a loss and, sometimes, mastery. Game worlds are worlds full of problems; that is inherently what makes them games (Schell, 2010; Salen & Zimmerman, 2004).

There is a compelling call to journey into the pathological; "Everyone wants to leave the pastoral environment; they don't want to look back. Most people walk away from the beautiful world, maybe they will come back," stated Williams (March 29,

2013). They instead enter into a landscape of the scorched earth, spires of rock, dark caves, and unknown terrain. Dark impulses, according to Hillman, should "no longer be wrong or right, but merely necessary, involving purpose which we have misperceived and values which must present themselves necessarily in a distorted form" (1975/1992, p. 57). Williams's opinion of video games is that

> there is no virtual violence that is bad because all humans need to wrestle with what is within them but would make them not a part of civilization. It serves society as a safety valve for our animal nature. With these impulses it is absolutely essential to have those outlets. (April 8, 2013)

Similarly, Dansky spoke about the need for personifying and providing space for a perspective apart from regular life in addition to giving expression to both heroic and destructive behavior that seep out autonomously.

> It can be cathartic; it can be experimental. Most of us don't have the chance to saddle up and be on the mighty horse and go smite the Dark Lord and you know, save the princess or whichever gender we choose. There is the chance to be heroic in a way that you can't in your life. It's a chance to be violent in a way you can't be in real life. It's a chance to be skilled in a way you can't be in real life. It's a chance to explore behaviors that you can't explore in your real life. If you do 90% of the things you do in a game in real life, you're getting locked up. Even the harmless roles, they will lock you up. It's a chance to operate in space without real consequence, particularly if you've got save points. (March 27, 2013)

As in theater, there are no real life consequences for the actions within the game space. The game provides amplification of the pathological behavior of the deeply flawed

characters or the other deviant persons of the internal commune, each of which give expression to that which is falling apart in the world of the individual, the culture, and the natural world.

Pathologizing can produce peak experiences, a form of transcendence, which generates ecstatic joys (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 66). Moments within games can also relegate the fantasy of the pathology to visceral experiences. Dansky spoke of playing *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Desert Siege* (2002), a game about U.S. troops in East Africa. Even though Dansky had worked on the design of this game, he was totally overcome by an unexpected moment.

> All of a sudden—I have never done this before—I heard [growling] and there's these two trucks with guys on the back. It's on me and I don't duck, I don't duck. I just stand there; I got gobsmacked! I was completely unprepared. I got completely destroyed by it. It was something that I was unprepared for, you know, *even though I had designed it!* Right down to the exact routes that they were going to follow. And I knew how many bullets it would take. I knew everything about it. Just the moment when they appeared in that world, I was powerless. I was absolutely powerless. They were bigger than I was. They were moving faster than I could move and I stood there and got turned into a bad marionette by a machine gun fire and I *loved* it. Because it was a, a sheer moment of—it's a pure moment of—of, of the fantasy expressed. (March 27, 2013)

The intensity of this moment in which he is powerless, ironically within a realm he created, gave him completion, or, as Dansky put it, "the fantasy expressed." Even in the

retelling of the game experience years later Dansky conveys the ecstatic nature of in the pathos of the moment, providing an example of pathologizing experience of a game.

  Ritualizing loss. Ritualizing a loss forms another type of relationship with what is lost. Ritualization, like play, is "an imaginal psychological moment" (Slater, 2008a). It sees with "another eye"—the metaphorical eye—more than what meets the eye of literal representation. Hillman explained, "Psyche tries to solve the matter at hand not by resolving it but by dissolving the problem into the fantasy" (1975/1992, p. 135), into another terminology, and thereby it loosens it up. Fantasy creates space for movement.

  Escapism allows the struggling psyche to relocate from the oppression of daily life; games are an invitation for the amplification of the distress. Hillman reflected, "The psyche reverts not only to escape reality but to find another reality in which the pathologizing makes new sense" (1975/1992, p. 100).

> When we make a game we don't talk about escapism impulse, we talk about gameplay, but we all know that the person that is speaking to a certain type of person that needs X in their life. Where we often stumble when we discuss games is we often put the various shaped pegs of escapism in the same hole. There are many different forms of escapism. (Williams, April 8, 2013)

For some players tortured images, magnified in and through the ritual of game play, speak to distress: "we see our distortion in the mirror of these distortions" (Hillman, 1975/1992, pp. 94-95). Williams gave an example of this in the following description:

> *BioShock* and *The Walking Dead* both dealt with a dysfunctional world, horrific crucible. Let's take *BioShock. BioShock Infinite* started from a moment of grace. There is a real shock at the hyperviolence of some of the things your character

does without a thought—I know I did. You can choose to shoot a man, you can

choose to set them on fire, you can choose to ratchet it up to strangle a man by

breaking his neck; it is more difficult and takes time—and blood is shooting out;

which you end up choosing to do so over and over again. I believe we are

genetically programmed to not only kill but also destroy. It is a legacy of our

animal ancestry. We are born with this in us. Breaking someone's neck has a

strong impact. (March 2013)

Pathologizing within the fantasy realm of games, or according to Hillman, within the

therapy room, is about coming into a relationship to that which destroys. In the above

quotation, Williams makes a powerful statement about being programmed to destroy.

Personifying the power of destroying within a game is complex. On the one hand it

allows for the pathological behavior to be played out in the game, but it may also serve as

a means through which a deeper touch point may occur. The care of soul necessitates

tending to what destroys and is destroyed within psychopathology when one falls apart

(Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 56). The issue may be whether the space of the game is capable

of "tending" the destroying impulse and enabling any care for the soul. Asking what is

within the pathologizing and what is behind this distortion makes the important

psychological move: "the distortion is at the same time an enhancement and a new

clarification, reminding the soul of its mythical existence" (p. 99). The following scenario

may have allowed one player to achieve that reminder of his mythical existence:

The hyperviolence served the story in *BioShock*. It is a little bit of a meditation to

be the guy who kills a hundred men. A good friend who is 22 years old said when

he finished the game he sat and stared at the wall for a while and started crying a

little bit and then stared at the wall for an hour more. You are serving an atavistic

impulse such as power. (Williams, March 2013)

The critical component that may be missing in gameplay as opposed to a therapy room is

the opportunity for guided reflection of the trauma. Well-designed games, however, may

also provide a new clarification of the soul's mythical existence. "The soul is moved

most profoundly" Hillman proclaimed, "by images that are disfigured, unnatural, and in

pain" (1975/1992, p. 95).

The powerful success in the game industry of such games as *BioShock Infinite*

(2013) and *Gears of War* (2006) taps into accessing the pathos of the human soul as well

as the complexity of one's relationship with the external fantasy of the goal of perfection

within society. The allotment of pathologizing in games is intensely impactful,

> so that the deformation of human images with maimings, breaks, and
>
> suppurations decomposes our humanistic icon and our spiritual vision of the
>
> perfectibility of man, cracks all normative images, presenting instead a
>
> psychological fantasy of man. . . . Both spiritual man and natural man are
>
> transformed by being deformed into psychological man. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p.
>
> 89)

Williams previously addressed one notion of this very point with an example of

gameplay within *BioShock Infinite* (2013):

> You can choose to shoot a man, you can choose to set them on fire, you can
>
> choose to ratchet it up to strangle a man by breaking his neck; it is more difficult
>
> and it takes time—and blood is shooting out; which you end up choosing to do so
>
> over and over again. (Williams, March 2013)

Whereas Hillman proclaimed, "The soul is moved most profoundly by images that are disfigured, unnatural, and in pain" (1975/1992, p. 95), the worlds within games give the player visceral, yet virtual, experiences of inflicting the pain on others. *BioShock* is appropriately named for it shocks the player with the dissonance of both societal and personal actions, exposing the "cracks of normative images" (p. 89) and challenging players with confrontations of the psyche. The gameplay allows the space and time for the player to slowly break a man's neck over and over. The dark forces of pathological fantasies appear as latent psychosis. Hillman posits that such disturbing images are essential. They afflict us and touch our sense of life: "It both vitiates and vitalizes, a quickening through distortion" (p. 83). Humans have a "predilection for pathologizing" (p. 81) which "given the circumstances [one] would crack, and out of the crack would crawl [one's] pathological demons" (p. 81). *BioShock's* gameplay facilitates the gruesome fantasy and psychologically challenges the player's choices.

   Guilt: "Why did I kill that person?" Gameplay is uniquely positioned to provide expression of pathologizing in that it is a medium that is able to provoke the feeling of guilt. During the course of or after completion of gameplay, a player might inquire, "Why did I kill that person? Well, what does it tell me about myself?" Guilt, according to Hillman, "belongs to the experiences of deviation, to the sense of being off, failing, 'missing the mark'" (1975/1992, p. 83). Guilt is where "the failings become faults to be set right" (p. 83). The pathologized images and acts have moved the soul, calling for rectification, correction, and prevention. Skolnick referenced this very same quality of the role of guilt with pathological gameplay.

I don't think games very often get to that level of introspection. But sometimes you see something like *The Walking Dead* by Telltale where you're actually being encouraged to look at yourself and look at the choices you made and think about them. And it's been said that of all the emotions that any entertainment experience can evoke in the audience, that games offer very few. Yet there is still no other medium up to now that really had up their sleeve *guilt*. A game can make you feel guilty about something you did whereas no other medium can really do that. You go to a movie, you can empathize with it, with a character who feels guilty, but you don't feel guilty for watching it. But when the game puts you in a situation where you do or don't do something and you see a negative result, you can be made to feel guilty for what you did or didn't do. And that's *incredibly* powerful and it's something that no other medium really has in their arsenal. (Skolnick, March 28, 2013)

The soul, by witnessing its injustice to others, can feel fearful to the point of recognizing its own vulnerability. "Affliction reaches us partly through the guilt it brings," simultaneously "increasing the ego's sense of importance" (p. 83). The archetypal viewpoint asks, "to which person of the psyche and within which myth does my affliction belong, and does it bespeak an obligation?" (p. 83). Through a pathological experience of gameplay, the affliction of the psyche is being expressed. From an archetypal viewpoint for the sake of the psyche's survival, it expresses itself through afflictions that "cannot be expressed in the same subtle and vital impact in any other way" (p. 84).

Zombie, dystopian, and post apocalyptic genres in particular represent a fundamental change in the American and global experience and collective psyche.

"Essential to changing the soul's viewpoint are the experiences of pathologizing, for they express the decomposition of the natural; they present images that do not and cannot take place in the natural world" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 91). Amplification of decomposition of the natural is grappled with in many fantasy worlds that directly personify the experience of death and decomposition.

The game *State of Decay* (2013) does a powerful job personifying the decline with each small detail, as Williams pointed out as we watched the gameplay. "That's why there is a decay of familiar spaces, urban ruins and such. There is a fascination within the culture to come to terms with the decay" (April 8, 2013). Within the game the player moves through what was once a charming small town in the Pacific Northwest, but everything is now in decay: rusted cars, abandoned homes, broken toys lying on the ground, even trees are in a state of decay with the season of fall. Life has declined towards death. Williams pointed out that this was once a world—a small town—that one would have wanted to live in. Now, the infestation of zombies relentlessly attacks, and nothing lasts; morbidity surrounds the player.

> The zombie comes all the way up to her. She allows it to come, when it gets right up to her she has a hatchet and hacks up the zombie's body. She runs over him with her car. Blood drips over the mirror. There is a messiness. (March 29, 2013)

The character depicted by Williams, a character named Maya, is a psychotic, bloodthirsty female, and she is having the time of her life killing zombies. Some players love to be that character, exploring and mastering her archetypal power. "Pathologizing forces the soul to a consciousness of itself as different from the ego and its life—a consciousness that obeys its own laws of metaphorical enactment in intimate relation with death"

(Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 89). In this particular game the designers are pushing emotional

buttons pretty hard, Williams reflected, "for which there are huge consequences at all

times, both mundane and fantastical" (March 29, 2013). The images in this genre

resemble those of the alchemist: skeletons, the undead, weapons of melee. Dansky

observed that the power of the zombie genre with its pulverization and mortification,

provides "death to the world as we know it, obliterates all the daily stuff. The ultimate

simplification is death" (March 27, 2013).

  Donning the body. Whereas the actor dons the mask and costume in theatrical

performances, the player within the game dons a physical body with the ability to

transform gender, shape, ethnicity, and an endless myriad of physical forms. Fantasy

worlds are able to provide extraordinary embodiment of pathological content. Hillman

cited the importance of personifying the horrifyingly pathological: "Visages, postures,

and dress of figures to be remembered were twisted into odd, unnatural shapes, becoming

'strikingly hideous and horrible.' . . . especially those corporal likenesses which are

comic, monstrous, bloodied, and diseased" (1975/1992, p. 92). One can imagine

Hillman's words as an excellent description of the images virtual games avail themselves

of. Emotional use of artistic creations within the game artistry of the physical bodies

reflects the game's darker "obsession with primal power and violence" and "outsized

sensuality," as seen in "masses of twisted, boiling curves . . . to underline their emotional

tensions" (Theodore, 2011, pp. 44-46). Visages—the faces of the psyche—are given

form. Human representation brings to consciousness the darker, subterranean aspects of

existence. The uncomfortable image of the deformed human presents a challenge not

only to the player as the character, but also to the player as an individual. The

confrontation between the perfect human and the complex reality of imperfection and subversion are center in the theatrical stage through donning digital bodies richly invested in psychological form.

Often the body reflects the process of the progress within gameplay. Williams gave the example of an MMO role-playing game in which one begins the game in rustic brown clothing while residing in the pastoral environment.

> You start out as a newbie. As you graduate from chasing chickens and go to a slightly darker world such as *Guild Wars 2*, you ratchet up the value of threat to both yourself and the world you are defending. As you progress through levels you get better gear, and you get badder and badder. (April 9, 2014)

Williams and O'Connor each noted that there is something in particular about the shoulders of the player and characters within many games such as *World of Warcraft*. As one progresses, the shoulders become larger and larger until the neck no longer exists (Williams, March 29, 2013). Williams reflected that this is similar to Atlas supporting the world upon his powerful shoulders. Shoulders increase in size according to the level of power a character is gaining. The physical representation is tied directly to a game mechanic for conveyance of progress.

Jung conveyed the importance and weight of the symbolic body within the psyche. "The finest of all symbols of the libido is the human figure, conceived as a demon or hero" (1952/1976, p. 171 [*CW* 5, para. 251]). The libido energy conveyed within the body image, the "finest of all symbols," indicates a direct correlation of the powerful connection to the imaginal perfection of the source of power. The psychological

significance of donning a virtual body cannot be overemphasized as a form of holding the psychological power of the gaming experience.

Where Jung referred to the religious figure in the following quotation, he was indicating the perceived ideal human, which is consciously or unconsciously strived for through the achievements of each particular era. In the era of virtual worlds, the symbolic image representation is amplified.

> The religious figure cannot be a mere man, for it has to represent what it actually is, namely the totality of all those *primordial images which express the "extraordinarily potent,"* [emphasis added] always and everywhere. What we seek in visible human form is not man, but the superman, the hero or god, that quasi-human who symbolizes the ideas, forms, and forces that grip and mould the soul. These . . . are the archetypal contents of the (collective) unconscious, the archaic heritage of humanity, the legacy left behind by all differentiation and development and bestowed upon all men like sunlight and air. (1952/1976, pp. 177-178 [*CW* 5, para. 259])

The notion that a "mere man" is not the goal of the symbolic body representation, but rather that it conveys the archetypal image of the "extraordinarily potent" is a universal theme that runs throughout the ages within mythological content. This creates what Jung referred to as the "quasi-human" to represent idealized forms of the superpowers longed for and alive in the theater of virtual games. Within virtual space, the notion of the "quasi-human" takes on new meaning and is vivified as the imaginal is given digital form to be seen and witnessed beyond solely the internal imagination of the player.

Returning back to the images of the shoulders, as an example of the body image symbolically conveying potency and thus transcending the reality of a "mere man," Williams gave the following example:

My shoulders go from small to *really* BIG! I don't know what it is about shoulders. A guy flipping burgers isn't getting stronger every day but when playing *World of Warcraft*, he gets to think "Man, I go from a level 25 ranger with little shoulder pads to level 60 with gigantic shoulder pads and a bow that's sparkles in every color of the rainbow. I have progressed. I have grown. I am strengthened." (March 29, 2013)

The visual body representation grips the imagination of the player's psyche, allowing temporal experience of power and perceived physical perfection.

O'Connor addressed the irony of the juxtaposition of the body representation in digital games and the reality of many players' bodies.

What an awesome fantasy it is to have a body like the one in the game. It speaks to them [players]. There is joy of playing active, buff bodies. But, ironically, doing it virtually they are getting farther and farther away from their fantasy of having powerful bodies. (April 8, 2013)

The donning of the virtual bodies to personify personal power and masculinity, according to O'Connor, places the physical body at risk of becoming weaker, as represented in the classic stance of hunched over game players.

Men in play. Skolnick and Williams both noted how gameplay today gives men an activity in which they can share and communicate with each other. The experience of gameplay speaks to the archetypal drama of deer and buffalo hunting of the past, which

gave men an activity in which they could share and communicate. Every Friday night, Skolnick puts on his Skype headset and gets online with his old high school buddies.

> We are doing the virtual digital version of hunting buffalo every week. Only, we're hunting other players or we're hunting each other. No one's getting hurt and no one's dying, and yet there's something about this that we find incredibly entertaining and compelling. And the more gory and over-the-top violent it is, the funnier we find it. (March 28, 2013)

Skolnick, Williams, and Dansky each addressed how games duplicate this archetypal impulse: "They can satisfy the deep kind of hunting, aggressive, testosterone-driven history of the human male" (Skolnick, March 28, 2013). Their recognitions correlate with Jung's observations about how instincts are traced "back to fear of the very real dangers of existence in this world" (1952/1976, p. 156 [*CW* 5, para. 221]). Fight-or-flight is at the core of most modern game experiences such as console games. "You are either running away or towards something or you are trying to kill something or defend yourself against something" (Skolnick, March 28, 2013).

Games both honor the impulse and in some ways dissolve it through its amplification. What is terrifying and horrific becomes funny and fun. The extremely bloody and violent *Gears of War* (2006) is "over the top silly," explained Skolnick. As he described how people "just explode," the laughter and humor of particular game moments reenter into his voice and the tempo of speech: "It's just beyond what anything we have ever had really happen, but you know, we just, people start laughing. It is fun to men and we are laughing our asses off because it is funny to us" (Skolnick, March 28, 2013). When men socialize with each other, pointed out Skolnick, they need an activity

and often with a competitive component, be it "guys on a baseball team or . . . guys playing *Call of Duty* [2003] online. It goes all the way back to when men were out hunting deer and that was their time together" (March 28, 2013).

The following description by Skolnick of the "escalating mayhem" within *Grand Theft Auto* is an excellent example of the visceral enjoyment that can occur during the enactment of gameplay.

There are more and more cops and they're always coming in and the helicopter's coming in and I'm, I'm grabbing bazookas and I'm shooting helicopters down and things I would never ever consider doing in real life, of course. But there's something that's really primal and, and fulfilling about that. I think it goes beyond even archetypes. *So, that's what I think a lot of games do for us.* (March 28, 2013)

Skolnick, upon his emphatic statement of "so, that's what I think a lot of games do for us," went on to say games stir up some great course down a deep river within that has been present for thousands of years. It stirs up those primal forces, and allows one to be enlivened by those internal and eternal life forces. Not only does this genre of games satisfy, but it also celebrates the male testosterone drive.

During the interview with Williams, the importance of gameplay was also highlighted as a particularly essential means of connection for men.

Guys talk about gameplay; gameplay provides a vehicle for common conversation. Men are interested in outcomes; women are interested in community. Games are all outcome, we can talk all day long. I am always up for a conversation about a game to play. I had an outcome; let me see if my outcome

has any weight with others. Within gameplay we now have a common ground.

Video games facilitate conversations between men. I have a college friend that

our conversations are so full bursting with game outcomes. (Williams, March 29,

2013)

As Williams spoke during the interview, I noticed the way in which he held his hand

palm facing up whenever he said the word "outcomes." When I commented on my

observation, Williams explained, "It has value. It has weight. We talked about archetypal

values. An outcome [of gameplay] has value, that is why I hold it" (March 29, 2013).

Williams spoke of another example during a particular session playing post-apocalyptic

Fallout 3 (2008), which takes place in the year 2277 after nuclear fallout; human

survivors live in vaults within the wasteland and martial law is enforced.

In *Fallout 3* I took out Hoover Dam for the new society. I had a female friend

who desperately loved that game. She had a relationship with all of the characters

in the game. But for me, *I took out Hoover Dam*! I fought alongside a ridiculous

sized squad and that was a personification of liberty. (March 29, 2013)

The outcome of the game correlates to mastery.

Mastery is addressed by storytelling. If I continue with this game I am becoming a

master of this world, of this space. Mastery can be, I have cleansed it, I have

improved it, and in some way there is ownership of the outcome, of what

happened there. (March 29, 2013)

Sensing the feeling of mastery within imaginal realms is vital to a player's motivation for

furthering gameplay experience and allows the player to express an alternative reality.

Williams went on to share that when he was a schoolteacher, many days he came home

unsatisfied; he said that being a teacher is an extremely difficult job. At home he began playing the massive multiplayer online roleplaying game (MMORPG), *Star Wars Galaxies* (2003). "I created a city. I had 100 people living in the city. I was able to build a world in the game where I couldn't build in my personal life" (March 29, 2013). Both internal worlds and the archetypal gods within "are dead or alive according to the condition of our souls" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 16); for Williams, he found a world in which he could personify the creative god within to manifest a world that other players inhabited.

When Dansky recalled a particularly memorable moment in gameplay, he also spoke about experiencing mastery. Moments such as these embrace archetypal force with awareness and vivification.

I have sat there and looked at the last enemy on the map through the sight of my sniper rifle and did not pull the trigger because that was the moment, the moment when I understood I owned that battlefield, when I had the power. And as soon as I pull the trigger he's dead, it's over. But in that moment I have mastery. And that . . . that was a powerful moment. That was an enjoyable moment. And I also have moments of complete loss of mastery. *They are all so enjoyable that I would run back and tell stories on myself* [emphasis added]. (March 27, 2013)

Dansky's response is also quite interesting due to the notion that he "would run back" to tell stories worthy to share, indicating his complete immersion within the fantasy such that the return was expressed as a physical state of running back into the day world outside of the fantasy. Each world carries its own particular reality. Dansky traverses the worlds by personifying the transition with the act of running back, with a story to share.

In discussion of the pathological qualities within many games, all of the interview participants shared the attitude that those qualities were both fun and cathartic, particularly for males.

> I think that these are primal urges that go very deep. These games are a great vehicle to get this energy out of your system in a way that's not really harmful to people. I think it's much better than to use a real gun to shoot animals. I just think it's better in every way. (Skolnick, March 28, 2013)

Skolnick simply summed up what archetypal psychologists would call pathological gameplay with, "Well, I think it's a healthy release of that energy that guys need" (March, 28, 2013). The appeals of violence, as addressed during the interviews, are viewed by those interviewed as primal forces dating back to the hunter and the need to kill for survival. The very *archai* that civilization has cast out and deemed unacceptable seep into and through virtual landscapes to find home and space for pathological fantasies to once again live. Jung wrote that individuals and society

> go through a phase when archaic thinking and feeling once more rise up in us, and that all through our lives we possess, side by side with . . . directed and adapted thinking, a fantasy-thinking which corresponds to the antique state of mind. Just as our bodies still retain vestiges of obsolete functions and conditions in many of their organs, so our minds, which have apparently outgrown those archaic impulses, still bear the marks of the evolutionary stages we have traversed, and re-echo the dim bygone in dreams and fantasies. (1952/1976, pp. 27-28 [*CW* 5, para. 38])

These obsolete fantasies are refreshed and revivified from dark corners into the drama of games. Pouring out, letting go, and releasing the emotional content in the safe place of fantasy may be an intrinsic need for the masculine gender in particular. The interviewees repeatedly stated that men are drawn to the more pathological, fantastic realm of games. It is their hunting ground, their wilderness and their wildness, their release, and their theatrical stage where rage and horrific deeds are honored. Body counts have meaning and there are no jails or consequences for dark fantasy behavior.

Pathologizing summary. Pathologizing is a natural component of gameplay. Games have an intimate relationship with death: there are winners and losers in most gameplay. In even the mildest of game genres, the act of destroying is permissible and often integral to successful play. Recall *Pac-Man* (1980), where ghosts are eaten by a little benign-looking yellow character. The popular game entailed the challenge of survival, as the imaginal world of the labyrinth became increasingly more inhabited with ghosts who destroyed the player's little yellow character: ghosts are killing the apparently innocent character, and yet it is this benign yellow one who cannibalistically eats ghosts named Blinky, Pinky, Inky, and Clyde. Pathological content does not require the graphic action of shooters and horror genre to be present within games. Even games such as chess, checkers, and tick-tack-toe are played to eliminate the opponent. "The push of progress leaves corpses in its wake" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 10), and game progress is often no exception. Death is inherent within play as it is also in intimate relationship with soul's movement. In fact, one of soul's key defining attributes is "its special *relation with death*" (p. xvi).

Games bear witness to emotional quicksilver—nakedly volatile and unpredictable. Games bear witness to pathology. Games transmute suffering into fun. With the provision for little restraint of full expression within the fantasy of the game world, one is able to discover the range and intensity of the dark river where deep drives and forces flow. The tears and rage of unfulfilled expectations are countered with battle and mastery of the personified enemies who repeatedly attack: the undead and alive, machines and monsters, sinister melee weapons, and magic spells.

Meaning-making in Games: Seeing Through and Soul-Making

The final two archetypal psychology concepts of psychologizing and dehumanizing, also referred to by Hillman (1975/1992) as seeing through and soul-making respectively, within the structure of interview questions, were the most complex ground to walk through. For the purpose of the interviews the term "meaning-making" was often used to facilitate the discussions. Hillman used the term "psychologizing" for his initial application of archetypal psychology as a means for psychologists to revision the process conducted within the therapy room and within psychology itself. However, for the interviews with game narrative designers this term was vague and could lead to misinterpretations; therefore for the purpose of this research project the terms pyschologizing and dehumanizing were never employed during the interviews, nor will it be emphasized in this text. The alternative terms meaning-making, seeing through, and soul-making are preferred as they more clearly demonstrate the psychological meaning and potential within games.

Meaning-making and meaningful gameplay within games emerged as a theme within the 2013 and 2014 GDC Narrative Summit during the course of the research. At

the onset of the research several years ago (2010) "gamification," how to induce the player to establish as many "hits" as possible, was a predominant theme and driving push. The goal was to increase player retention and amount of time within the game. The core gamification strategy of reward is similar to Pavlov's dog of providing reward treats upon hitting the button. While a powerful motivator for players to see the progress made in gameplay, there is a shift with an increasing number of individuals in the industry to also create meaningful content that has a reflective quality and emotional impact.

Psychologizing or Seeing Through in Games

Psychologizing or seeing through: An archetypal perspective. Psychologizing is the act of seeing through the divine dramas of life. Where games to date are rich in the imaginative personification and pathologizing, there is a question as to the current level of seeing through the metaphorical into the meaning-making for soul's continued expansion and evolution to the "imaginative possibilities within our nature" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xvi). Both Jung and Hillman emphasized that fantasy images are not just the "raw material" (p. xvii) of the psyche but also the "finished product" (p. xvii) of the psyche. The fantasy image of the finished product results with the new imagined forms of archetypal presences and new relationships with them that inform the individual and the collective. The fantasy relationships within games have an ability to generate an alternative psychological perspective for the player achieved through the ability of seeing through the metaphorical to the underlying psychic energies and possibly controlling behavioral patterns present.

Seeing through sees the story behind the story. Where personification of the archetype gives form and shape to the particular archetypal attitudes, and pathologizing

exposes the darker drama and wounds, it is psychologizing that sees through the dramas for making meaning, for understanding, and for envisioning the full story. The entire cycle brings the quests, the driving impulses, and dramatic subtext of life from the recesses of the psyche into the light of consciousness.

Alchemists would place the contents of their investigation within glass vessels for the purpose of permitting the alchemist to see through the solid transparency of the glass to the alchemical process. Hillman compares the alchemist's process to the process of psychologizing. "The contents of the psyche, by being placed within or behind glass, have been moved from palpable reality to metaphorical reality, out of life and into image" (1975/1992, p. 142). And yet, this statement rings particularly true to virtual games being placed behind the screen, "moved from reality to metaphorical reality, out of life and into image" (p. 142) for both the conjuring and witnessing of alternative realities.

It is critical for psychological development to emphasize the need for meaning-making within gameplay. One walks a fine line with personification and pathologizing in game play and becoming stuck in constellated archetypes, unable to see through to some form of meaning-making. The movement of "seeing through" is a re-turn of the elements witnessed in the previous turns of personification and pathologizing, so that they now will be explored for mythical patterns by re-examining the "parts" of the "falling apart" to see how they might be re-imagined or how the virtual game may "move from the apparent to the unapparent" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 140). Hillman would call this process "finding the hidden god" and unveiling further ideas for consideration. Seeing through provides an important step in which new questions and doubts emerge. It is a step towards the discovery.

An image or idea can change the psychic landscape. However, to simply participate in events, literally or virtually, does not deepen one's capacity for understanding the archetypal drama (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 122). Reflection takes place whenever one attempts to understand and deepen the psychological landscape. Reflection inspects the interior intention. It sees with "another eye" the drama at play, seeing through to deeper meaning. By dissolving a problem, or a dominant archetype, into a fantasy, its content is loosened up (p. 135). Where the movement of pathologizing sets the stage of falling apart, it creates the necessary space to see through that which is falling apart. The pause, the *reflexio,* of the dominant fantasy turns ideas and ways of being back upon themselves, in order to see through to the importance for the soul (p. 127). The reflective moment keeps actions and ideas connected with soul (p. 118).

Definition of terms is important for understanding the focus of archetypal psychology, particularly in sections of this chapter which explain the process of seeing through and soul-making. Soul is not used as a religious term in archetypal psychology but rather as the psyche. The soul is not so much an object but rather a way of being. When the psyche reflects upon itself it is an act of soul-making (p. 117). Some other terms used by archetypal psychology to describe the process of seeing through are psychological ideas and ideation, or as Hillman means, "those [ideas and ideation] that engender the soul's reflection upon its nature, structure, and purpose" (1975/1992, p. 117). This definition is a particularly important move that Hillman makes in context to action within activities such as games.

Psychological ideas enhance behavior by witnessing action as an embodiment of soul; seeing through is "*to bring soul into action and action to soul*" [original text

italicized] (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 117). This is a critical notion for the premise of games as a theater for soul. The action of imaginal play within games has the potential through the process of seeing through (psychologized) to translate the action into meaningful content for the soul, and for the soul to be expressed through the action. Having a vessel for meaning-making is a necessity of the soul.

> Major psychological ideas echo the deepest questions of the soul, bringing it to reflect profoundly about its nature and destiny. These ideas can more readily be called archetypal . . . where we meet them as crucial insoluble problems. Some of these archetypal ideas arise from the soul's relation with death, the world, and other souls; with its body, its gender and generation; with virtue and with sin, with love, beauty and knowledge; with Gods, with sickness, with creation and destruction, with power, time, history, and future; with family, ancestors, and the dead. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 118)

Fantasying activity is a means by which archetypal ideas are able to encourage speculation. Images grappling with core archetypal content are present not only within religions and in the arts, but also within "scientific theories; in delusional systems of the insane and in personal organization of our lives" (p. 118). Seeing into what dominates the culture and the personal turns events into soul's experiences.

Seeing through to the underlying content is what feeds the soul of its hunger for understanding and reflection. "Seeing through, insighting, is an activity that opens; anything becomes an opportunity for soul-making" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 163). Revealing one's archetypal structure through investigation of seeing through is inherent within archetypal psychology as a means for examining any influence that "frames our

consciousness, the cages in which we sit and the iron bars that form the grids and defenses of our perception" (p. 127). The archetypal fantasy may be extracted through reflective consideration.

The metaphor of vision is appropriate for examining underlying contents of actions: Perspectives, seeing, viewing, reflecting are all ways of knowing, ways that move one towards envisioning, imagining, and imaging. "By seeing through the illusion of problems into the reality of fantasies, we shift from the heroic ego to the ego of the imaginal" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 135). The nature of therapy teases out the internal fantasies that one may possess based on influencing mythic archetypes. The elusive and complex qualities of human experience are seen through a lens. Meaning-making occurs when the lens that is being used for the viewing, and hence creating a reality, is able to give the appropriate identification of the "fantasy." In essence this lens provides a seeing through of the seeing through process itself. In essence, to begin to understand that which grips one's reality requires a stepping back to see through, to bring to light the archetypal lens through which reality is interpreted.

Interview results and interpretation: Psychologizing or seeing through.
The contents of the interviews took an interesting turn when the conversations shifted from the more obvious roles of personification and pathologizing in game design to psychologizing of seeing through and soul-making. It should be noted however that those interviewed in the preceding discussions on personification and pathologizing often pointed out, using their own languaging, when the game narrative designers are seeing through in various moments in gameplay. Hence, they were demonstrating, through their own previous experiences, seeing through the gameplay to gain greater context of the

events and drama of the fantasy. Therefore this particular section will not revisit in detail examples previously discussed in the chapter.

It is important to note that seeing through occurs at multiple levels: the level of the player seeing through to the metaphors within the game to gain greater perspective, the level of the design teams creating game moments to allow players space and depth of storytelling to discover which archetypal elements are playing on their psyches, and the level of individual designer's personal discovery of archetypal elements playing on the psyche. For the level of the design team discovering and creating a quality of a well-designed game occurs when the particularities of the game are speaking on a metaphorical level. At a game design's best, everything within a game is a personifying of a soul movement.

> The archetypes express "each in a specific mode of being, each with symbolic attributes, landscapes, animals and plants, activities and moralities and psychopathologies, then part of the specific mode of being of each God is a style of reflection. . . ." (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 130)

Dansky referenced the importance of tending to all the details for coherency within the gameplay: "Everything we do [as designers] in a game has to feed the fantasy and there has to be a reason you have to get this element. There's a *reason* that that particular element is in the game" (Dansky, March 27, 2013). From an archetypal perspective, this feeding of the fantasy occurs because the complexity of archetypal dynamics is enlivened rather than as a result merely of dead stereotypes being plugged into game design. The "specific mode of being" enacted through careful creation has allowed reflection.

In the level of the players' interaction with rich evocative game play experience,

The inherent rhythm of the narrative movement transposes and transforms events, even invents them. We are different at the end of the story because the soul has gone through a process during the telling, independent of its syntax and full understanding of its words. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 143)

Recalling Williams, citing a moment at the end of *BioShock Infinite* in which a player sat staring at the wall for an hour, the game content powerfully resonated with the player, moving him to tears. Whereas one cannot know for certain the specific psychological impact, it is possible to consider the correlation of the narrative rhythm of gameplay creating an environment where the soul of the player has seen through the action and game mechanics to move him to tears. The events of game mechanics transform story into an experience in which the soul too participates within the storytelling.

One motivating archetype to even begin to play a game is the willingness to encounter challenges with the potential for failure, and thus, the heroic ego cannot go unmentioned when discussing gameplay. The inherent action of gameplay is to overcome the problem or problems at hand. By picking up a game, there is the possibility that the player will become a hero through encountering the tension of the game space. "Problems challenge the heroic ego, presenting it with projects and projections. By means of problem solving, the ego defines itself. Heroic ego and hard problems require each other; they toughen each other in the coping game called 'reality'" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 135).

During the interviews Skolnick expressed the value of experiencing the role of the hero within a vessel of the game space rather than in reality.

No one wants a hero's journey in their life. No one likes to go through these trials in their life. We want things to come easily. We want things to be fair. We don't want to suffer sacrifice. We don't want to potentially die ourselves. So the reality is, we don't want that. We enjoy seeing it in a safe place and we are aware that ultimately, we don't have control over whether our hero's journey is easy or hard. It provides perspective maybe and encouragement, but I don't think it prepares you. (Skolnick, March 28, 2013)

Having the opportunity to safely experience the fantasy of the hero's journey without true consequences of suffering and death speaks to the need for role-playing within the theatrical realm of the game for momentary psychological tension. Where many games are obviously patterned after the hero's journey, all games by nature carry tension (Huizinga, 1938/1955; De Koven, 2013; Schell, 2010). A game allows one to play, in a version of fantasy, the illusion of suffering and death—a theatrical enactment of which wants to be avoided in life and yet which constantly remains as a threat to the ease of one's life.

Unreflective action. Entering mythic enactments offers a multiplicity of meanings inherent in our lives (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 158), but with unreflective participation the opportunity for meaningful insight is lost. Without seeing through archetypal dramas, unreflective action results in an anemic psyche. "It has meager means for orientating itself as a soul in a psychological field. It also loses the ability of seeing through ideas that are imposed upon it. It asks the wrong questions and forgets itself as soul" (p. 118).

O'Connor also discussed how many games fail to provide the reflective moments to resolve the activated dramas within gameplay.

We don't get that catharsis. We don't get that completion. We don't get that

feedback loop, you know, and I think a lot of times you don't get that reflection

moment. Games don't listen and don't respond meaningfully and I think we're

getting this—we're getting these emotional states that flare, and that wind up but

don't ever resolve. (O'Connor, April 9, 2013)

The psyche without reflective moments can easily becomes a victim to dominant

archetypal ideas imposed from external cultural forces or from a one-sided internal view

of the world. "The weaker and dimmer our notions of the archetypal premises of our

ideas, the more likely our actions are to become stuck fast in roles. We become caught in

typical problems, missing the archetypal fantasy we are enacting" (Hillman, 1975/1992,

p. 128). Personification and pathologizing begin the process of the psyche in entering into

imaginal space, but action without reflection results in a potential alienation of the soul.

Alienation comes about: First we refuse the importance and values of ideas. . . .

This leads to unreflecting actions . . . fostering an overactive soul without an idea

of itself. Then we borrow alien perspectives, regarding ourselves as consumers,

computers, or apes. The borrowing of alien perspectives starts a process of

alienation in which the soul, having no adequate idea of itself, loses touch with

itself. *We have not only lost soul; we have lost even the idea of soul.* (Hillman,

1975/1992, pp. 118-119)

There is a potential loss of valid and rich psychological perspectives for the soul of the

individual, of the culture, and of a community. The possession of particular ideas is

difficult to be witnessed by the self. The grips of an ideation or archetypal drama blind

the psyche's vision. One loses valid, balanced perspective when overcome by an

archetype (p. 119). When in the grips of a constellated archetype, unconscious projections, acting out, blindness, and libidinally charged activity occur. The archetypal energy possesses a one-sided aspect of the archetype until it is resolved through a more holistic experience of the archetype or through inviting in additional archetypes within the pantheon. O'Connor, during our conversations, recognized this difficulty in gameplay.

> We are creating monsters, but we're not giving the player the chance to transform these monsters into their mentors. You know, I mean it's like when they talk about their dreams and just turn around and face the monster that's chasing you. It's trying to teach you something…or they talk to you.

> We never do that part, you know, or I shouldn't say never. People obviously are doing these smart things, but not enough in my opinion. (O'Connor, April 9, 2013).

Jung warned how the misuse of symbolic fantasy could leave one in a split-off fantasy. He indicated "The constellated archetype is always the primordial image of the need of the moment" (Jung, 1952/1976, pp. 293-294 [*CW* 5, para. 450]). The basic problem is not to be possessed by an archetype, but to be in relationship to it. Sometimes a player's psyche just wants to be witnessed. "It is not about keeping people stuck where they are but to allow the imagination to open up, to open a little gap to allow something else to come in" (Slater, 2008a). This is a goal of therapy:

> "Constellated" (i.e., activated) unconscious contents are, so far as we know, always projected; that is, they are either discovered in external objects, or are said

to exist outside one's own psyche. A repressed conflict and its affective tone must

reappear *somewhere.*" (Jung, 1952/1976, p. 59 [*CW* 5, para. 92])

Play within video games could also provide such space. As O'Connor speculated,

unresolved conflict and despair within some gameplay can result, due to the stories and

game mechanics which do not resolve the game story tension: "So, the best we can do is

get them angry and blow it out. We need to somehow return them to a neutral state"

(April 9, 2013). Hillman stated, "When we lose sight of these archetypal figures we

become, in a sense, psychologically insane" (p. 128). Hillman's observation that the

weaker and dimmer [the] grasp of archetypal fantasy premises, "the more likely our

actions are to become stuck fast in roles" (p. 128) serves as insight to the predicament of

some games which keep players within the psychological limitations of their avatar.

Where many designers seek to achieve addictiveness in their games (Rouse, 2005, p. 27),

well-designed games provide an interesting stream of decision points that move play

through and beyond a limited perspective.

  Quest of the what and who. Psychologizing asks "What?" What happened, what

pattern is going on in the constellation of events? Who is here? Who and what from the

unconscious is demonstrated "among the many traits and moods" (Hillman, 1975/1992,

p. 139) within this moment? "By dissolving *what* into *who*, we follow one of the main

styles of questioning used with the oracles at Delphi and Dodona: 'To what god or hero

must I pray or sacrifice to achieve such and such a purpose?'" (p. 139). At whose altar

does the moment belong to? The quest of games is best performed through understanding

whose archetypal rules and perspective propel the movement. Successful artists, poets,

designers see through the events "even with the participants seeing only the surface" (p.

140). The question for meaningful play is whether the player is able to reflect. Also this raises the question of what—or who—in the player's—or the game designer's—psyche so desperately wants to engage in the play.

Video game players may not see through to make meaning unless the game designers see through their creative work, which may also entail whether they see through to understand how their own archetypal lenses dominate, how they interpret the world and determine their choices. Creative developers either are capable of reflecting the impulses, which lay grips on them, or possibly they could view the larger frame of reference to specifically target a given audience, feeding their psyches what they are longing for. It is a complex process because one of the most difficult of tasks for all individuals is to be able to see which impulses are driving the "who" that possesses them. Being in the grips of an archetype is often so blinding that one is unaware of the possession which reflects back only through that lens.

Soul-Making or Dehumanizing in Games

Soul-making or dehumanizing: An archetypal perspective. To understand soul-making within archetypal psychology it is beneficial to return to Hillman's notion of soul as a perspective and a viewpoint. Soul, according to archetypal psychology, "mediates events and makes differences between ourselves and everything that happens. Between the doer and the deed, there is a reflective moment" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xvi). It is a culmination of both seeing through the archetypal dramas, where the root metaphors and operations myths are discovered (p. 169) through reflection, and, as a result, altering the way in which one relates to the world. The psychological spectrum is then broadened and actively shifts the psychological perspective and relationship to the

world. The telos of soul-making occurs when the archetypal "influences are channeling the spirit of the times beyond personal influence in service of something greater. You are being carried by the transpersonal daimon" (G. Slater, personal communications, September 4, 2014). Hillman went so far as to state, "it is not my individuation but my daimons" (p. 175). Within the nature of imaginal fantasy, the hero has to recover something deeper as a result of the experience so that "the imaginative possibilities in [one's] nature" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xvi) are activated.

Dehumanizing, the term used for soul-making by Hillman's *Re-visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), is a both a confusing term and a difficult concept to grapple. Hillman, with his Hermes-like nature, applies this term with a twist. Dehumanizing is not as one might initially interpret—as a soulless transformation of humanity, but rather the term possesses the opposite quality.

Dehumanizing, for Hillman, is to take the human off the center part of the stage so as to acknowledge the ensouled world around the narrow-vision ego of humans. The world does not consist of humans alone and humans are not uniquely given soul, but rather the world is ensouled. Humans are but one participating species. The call with the term "dehumanize" is to invite in other players in life to have equal presence and voice in the world at play. This movement is necessary to become fully in relation to the life-death cycle. The purpose of soul-making is "an attempt to *re*-humanize" (1975/1992, p. 193) to that which is deeply human (G. Slater, personal communications, September 4, 2014). Re-humanizing, soul-making, is to touch and activate the imaginative possibilities to create. The soul opens up to different ways of seeing things.

The Renaissance period is a prime example of a period of profound cultural soul-making in its achievement of new perspectives. The psychology of the era altered the way in which people *experienced* the world. It produced a great cultural development due to the burst of imaginal psyche. Hillman notes: The "*care for the contents of the intellectual imagination*" (1975/1992, p. 194) during that time created a world rich in new perspectives in the fields of science, literature, art, poetry, history, travel to distant lands and to the antiquity texts. The "renaissance touches the soul in its rebirth fantasy" (p. 194), and this resulted in the development of the imaginative mind. Mythical figures and the revival of Neo-Platonism provided "modes of reflection" (p. 198). The Renaissance "recognized that the imagination must have a place, a realm for envisioning" (p. 199). The Renaissance was a "magnificent theater for the imaginal soul" (p. 199). In the 1970s Hillman was hoping for such a container to re-emerge: "If we today would restore imagination to its full significance, we too need some sort of enormous room that can act as its 'realistic' vessel" (p. 119) and be a living metaphor.

In soul-making, or ensouling, a dynamic relationship occurs. To ensoul is to come into relationship, with emotional connection. The code of the game, a building, a painting, and a piece of music are ensouled when one comes into relationship with the entity. There is a reciprocity in which both participate and inform the other, hence creating an energetic bond. There is a reciprocity that occurs creating a resonance. When soul-making occurs, the space, such as a game, is infused with psychic energy. The players' psyches enter into a conversation, where both the person and the game listen and speak to one another. There is an alchemical moment with ensouling in which an

exchange transpires and has the ability to deeply move the soul, creating a moment of pause, of reflection, and of transcendence to another state of being.

The question to ask is whether current technology provides mechanisms to create anew worlds for the soul to imagine, like the period of the Renaissance in which the imagination ignited possibilities. Envisioning soul-making within the cultural container of digitally mediated realms could be a way for new perspectives to be enlivened and a means "to recover the essential humanness" (G. Slater, personal communication, September 4, 2104).

Interview results: Soul-making or dehumanizing. The section of soul-making and dehumanizing was challenging to present during the interviews. First, the religious overtone of the subject of soul is difficult to address within the limited time period of the interview. Secondly, much of the current game design does not yet address this psychological movement. Here lies the lacuna in the interviews and the goals of this research. Although the interviewing content on soul-making was limited, I did witness body language and reflections during conversations that were consistently present throughout all game developer conferences attended.

Within the interviews, the responses addressed creating gameplay that provided meaning for the player, namely the fact that the nature of seeing through to what is shaping one's view of the world is a complex and elusive task. Having stated this, the dilemma is how game designers see through to what will create meaningful game tasks. This is where the game narrative designers hold a particular power within a development team as a storyteller. Design teams have multiple masters: the economic marketability

from business executives, the technical new wonders and technical limitations, and then there is the emotional content for which the game narrative designers are responsible.

Amongst the participants there was a broad spectrum of response to the ability for meaning-making, as in soul-making, within gameplay. A response that was unexpected when asked the question about the ability of gameplay to provide meaning-making for the player took a personal turn. Participants, without prompting, discussed whether creating gameplay provides meaningful work for them. Several designers expressed a shift in their interpretation of the value of creating meaningful designs as they have aged. Several indicated noticing an increased importance for themselves now that they or colleagues have children.

> I don't know if games do a good job when speaking through adult psychological struggles. I think developers are certainly struggling with like questions and leaving the industry too for this very reason. They can't really create experiences that mirror what's going on in their own lives and so they feel disconnect with the work and are leaving. You know, you start in your mid-20s. You leave in your mid-30s. You just age out of it. (O'Connor, March 27, 2013)

O'Connor indicated that games in general are not meeting the psychological potential. "Every age brings with it new terrors," discussing apocalyptic and pathological game content. Through her role as a member of the Advisory Board of GDC Game Narrative Summit she is a powerful advocate to create more meaningful gameplay.

> We put all pieces on the board but we don't tie it together for people, which is a shame because I think in our culture, we don't have a good language, a good process for sorting and working through this pain of being human. (April 9, 2013)

O'Connor expressed a desire for games to occur where deeper issues have a place. When asked if games could provide the place to see through the pathos and provide a sense of soul-making she indicated that she believes there is potential for games to be a theater for soul-making. "They could, absolutely, because it captivates—it hypnotizes the whole mind. People go into a dream state when they play games. I think it's got the potential to do that and someone will harness that eventually." The Indie game movement, in her opinion, is really going to make it happen, since soulful and meaningful games do not have to be "market-tested or focus grouped out of existence." O'Connor feels that currently there is "a lot of squandered talents and opportunity. It's a shame. This is what my presentation this year at the GDC is about: 'We all want to do this. Why aren't we? Let's get practical about that.'" Her frustration, with longing to create more meaningful and soulful games, reflects back to Hillman's comment, "Life is used for the care of the soul" (1975/1992, p. 175).

Williams responded differently to whether games provide meaning-making. He passionately stated, "I know that in every fiber of my being that we are teaching things" April 8, 2013). Earlier Williams referenced the point of view of a *World of Warcraft* player whose has progressed from level 25 to level 60.

> I have progressed. I have grown. I am strengthened. I may not have grown as a
>
> person in the year that I have played this and yet it is interesting to me … I gave
>
> up 3 years of my life for *nothing."* But when people ask, "What did you do in
>
> Warcraft?" they will tell you a hundred amazing stories, these things they have
>
> internalized, these ways they have grown and prospered from. Games can be
>
> sneaky in that way…many games have taught me many things. At the time I

certainly was in the moment. It was upon reflection. I am in a similar situation in

life and I know what to do. "Gosh, this reminds me of the time when…"

(Williams, April 8, 2013)

The particular notion of how "games can be sneaky in that way," suggests that the value

of the game moves the soul in subversive ways. The dramas told in the game's screenplay

inform and resonate with a portion of an individual in such a way that many activities can

have impact. Whether the mountain is climbed physically or through an intense

engagement with game problems, according to Williams, the meaning of the event can

still be profound and possess impact: The collective sum of game experiences can be

more than the individual events; they can become experiences that shape behavior in life,

according to Williams.

An alternative perspective was presented by Skolnick on the ability of games to

generate meaning-making and to teach people. He sees games as an escape, fun,

entertaining, challenging, and providing a sense of accomplishment. Although he does

not see games often getting to a profound level of introspection, his prior comments on

games being the only medium that can provoke guilt and therefore seeing them as a

"powerful arsenal" say much. Skolnick, however, does not feel that games prepare an

individual for real-life situations. He views the game space as "a place to safely play . . .

but I don't think it prepares you for the reality of war, apocalyptic events, and other

death-related dramas" (March 28, 2013). He is very clear that they are different realities:

one is reality and one is fantasy pretending to be reality. "When you play video games

there is zero fear. And because there is zero fear, you are not really learning anything.

You are certainly not really being prepared for the reality of that situation." He points out

that there is "an author behind [the game] that is controlling the destiny of the characters. In my life I know there's no author doing that" (Skolnick, March 28, 2013).

O'Connor provided another interesting perspective on the limitations of meaning-making and soul-making. She explained that since many people who get into the games industry do so because "they are captivated by machines . . . computers and technology," and the resulting creations are emotionally anemic. "What they're capable of and with real affinity for and real talent for [is] speaking to machines and understanding them, often more so than people. There's a documented representation of this spectrum in our industry." As a result, O'Connor believes that this is where and why emotionally transformative content falls down.

When asked about whether the conversation of soul has any value within games, Dansky first responded, "I am not much one for metaphysics. I don't think there's anything waiting for me after my metabolic functions cease." I present this as an example of the initial tension in using certain languaging from archetypal psychology bearing religious overtone. However, when the terminology was described with the metaphor of walking into a place and feeling the place has *soul*, as in a *resonance*, Dansky engaged the conversation from another perspective: that of the act of play.

> Play is basic to humans and by playing we learn, we grow, we develop. There is good play and there is bad play. There is rewarding play and unrewarding play. There is emotionally fulfilling play and there is emotionally unfulfilling play. And we have some unique opportunities and we have ways to create emotionally fulfilling play that some of our predecessors did not. (Dansky, March 27, 2013).

When asked for particular examples of games that succeeded profoundly, Dansky cited

Planetfall (1983)*, Ico* (2001)*, Grim Fandango* (1998)*, BioShock* (2007)*, Journey* (2012)*,

Passage (2007)*,* and *Dear Esther* (2012). Although not wanting to be perceived as

metaphysical, his dialogue of the act of play as a potential vehicle of meaning-making

and resonating content could be seen as suggestive of how archetypal psychologists see

the ritual act of play as sacred (Huizinga, 1938/1955; Hillman, 1975/1992; De Koven,

2013). Through play one gives the opportunity to explore multiple ways, multiple

dispositions to be in relationship with juxtapositions that life presents.

Summary

This chapter, through interview results, demonstrated alignments of the

psychological content in games to the theoretical discourse of archetypal psychology as

presented in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (Hillman, 1975/1992). One probably would not

mistake a game studio for a therapist's office (O'Connor), and yet the work within game

studios possesses an affect through the psychological states expressed within and through

the gameplay.

> Analysis offered the vessel into which our unconscious pathologizing could be
>
> poured and then cooked long enough for its significance to emerge, for it to make
>
> soul. Out of *psyche-pathos-logos* came the meaning of suffering of the soul, or the
>
> soul's suffering of meaning. (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 71)

At times gameplay has the potential to be cathartic and at times it has the potential to

constellate archetypal impulses, stunting the psyche's progress; or it has the potential of

seeing through to the underlying metaphors and tending to the possibilities presented

from the many voices personified in the gameplay.

The discourse of the interviews demonstrates that games as a theater for personifying different personalities and "pathologizing as a mode of speech for psyche" and "a way in which the psyche talks" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 82) provide space for engagement with internal psychological forces. When acknowledging that "the psyche uses complaints to speak in a magnified and misshapen language about its depths" (p. 82), one can envision a different relationship with pathological content such that it is possible to see the work of game designers as providing not only fun but also cathartic psychic release and potentially even therapeutic engagement. Play, as mentioned in previous chapters, is an important vehicle for grappling with societal challenges (Huizinga, 1938/1955) and for engaging internal archetypal forces (Jung, 1961/1989). The first step is to step into the imaginary realm through personification and then to encounter pathos through mashing buttons. Play can present moments to see through to the underlying patterns and metaphors for meaning-making. What looks like play can be learning. What looks like gameplay can be soul's performance.

Chapter 6
Reflections and Conclusions

"Those who work professionally with imagination recognize the value of fantasies."
(Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 135)

Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the interview content using *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992) as a model for both structure and interpretation. This chapter, through my participation within the GDC game design community and research within game studies, incorporates my reflections on the game industry through an archetypal psychological lens. Based on the results of the interviews, attending several hundred lectures, speaking with key game designers—particularly narrative game designers—the following is a culmination of my reflections and interpretations of my observations throughout the research process.

In the final pages of *Re-Visioning Psychology*, Hillman suggests that we need to "build new imaginal arenas . . . theaters for the images . . . new imaginal processions for the driving mythical fantasies that now over-run us" (1975/1992, p. 225). When Hillman envisioned theaters for the images in 1975, pervasive virtual game worlds were not a form of cultural medium. The 21st century is a ludic century in which the current age of games and play within the mass culture are a "part of the fabric of our time" (Zimmerman, in De Koven, 2013, p. x).

From an archetypal perspective, the following questions arose during the course of research: Are archetypes robbed of their influence within the game space? Do they become barren images, no longer able to possess affect or inform? Does the machine consume the imagination with no return? Do the three billion plus hours (McGonigal,

2011) spent per week playing games suck out the life force, reducing our humanness to bits and bytes of binary dribble? Viewing these questions through an archetypal lens, I propose that the value of gameplay comes down to the essential nature of meaning-making. The value cannot reside solely within the game experience without some form of psychic release. The integrated skills and touchstone moments move beyond the virtual magic circles, resembling a Venn diagram that extends beyond the boundary of gameplay. There is strategy, there is collaboration, there is pathological content, there is failure and there is victory, there is laughter and there is guilt. These are valid encounters through which soul moves. The issue is not whether soul is present but, rather, whether we listen into the voices expressed on the virtual stage and whether we witness the rifting of dramas. Every time a game console is picked up to enter into a game world there is a readiness and willingness to encounter potential failure and defeats as well as a commitment to develop mastery (Juul, 2013). This in itself is archetypal movement.

To willingly play with mercurial Hermes, trickster at heart, is a clear face-to-face confrontation with the gods: a battle of wits and mastery. To don the mask, the body, and the tool of this primary archetypal drama again and again, is the drama of soul being performed. Call it personified, pathologized, psychologized, or just call it fun; it is a game of soul.

There are inadequacies in AI, game mechanics, the language of games, the language of archetypal psychology, and theories of psychology. However, most of all, there are inadequacies in understanding the power and psychic nature of virtual realms. And yet, it is my observation that by the very nature of the love of gameplay, game designers and game players, as De Koven points out, empower creation of new

conventions within the play community (2013, p. 11). There is an archetypal calling within the game community to move soul to play.

Game Industry: An Archetypal Perspective

The dominant archetype: Puer in play. Discovering which archetypal idea of the soul the individual or, in this case, an industry is enacting is to witness what fantasy of soul they are making (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 120). Seeing through (psychologizing) is uncovering dominant archetypes that are influencing not only individual choices but are compelling a societal development. So in order to see through game design—the creation of industry, the creative product, and the underlying dominant relationship with players— one needs to consider which archetypal god calls our bidding. Depth psychologist and philosopher Edward Casey stated, "It is not what one sees but the *way* in which one sees" (as cited in Hillman, 1983/2004, p. 19).

I suggest that the Olympic god Hermes, the eternal youth archetype, is a key archetype informing the game industry's "attitude toward existence . . . opening the soul's eye so that it regards the world in a particularly formed way" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 130). Hermes is many things: the messenger of the gods, intermediary between mortals and the divine, the traveler, the thief, the conductor of souls (Kerenyi, 1944/1976). He is known as the Roman god Mercury. Hermes, the puer, is the inventor, the communicator, the public speaker, the trickster, and the guide laying the pathways toward the outer boundaries of exploration. Commerce and mercurial nature are also attributed to Apollo's younger brother, Hermes.

Whereas the obvious quality of the puer—the boy who does not grow up—is seen as an archetypal energy of the video game enthusiast, let us not forget critical archetypal

qualities of the puer, who explores and discovers new frontiers, pushing boundaries

beyond what was previously known. The exploration of the virtual landscape, as

Castronova discusses (2007), touches on the archetype of the puer, the eternal youth in

constant motion towards discovery. The eternal youth of the puer archetype possesses

instinctual drives for survival, has a distinct relationship with death and as well as the

puer joy of playing with and creating tools. The building blocks of games themselves

reflect the Hermes' love for tools and invention. First this is demonstrated with the love

of the tools, then we witness how the language and movement within many games,

particularly the initial genres, display the natural archetypal language and movement of

the puer god, Hermes.

Transcending the limitations of daily life by shifting into a liminal space of

fantasy and play, Hermes the puer seeks not only to extend the boundaries but also to

cross boundaries into other realms. The puer designer proceeds to the edges, where

morality is challenged and new worlds are created. Creation of space is a fundamental

gift that Hermes, the puer archetype, seeks according to Jungian psychologist, Murray

Stein (1999). Hermes resides on the edge between realms of the known and the unknown.

By creating new space, the old space is redefined or even destroyed, altering perceptual

horizons. The innately bold and courageous explorer follows Hermes into the other

world—the underworld—into the virtual world.

> Within the area of the known, containers take shape which are reserved for
>
> specific types of human activity, while beyond them lies the "other," the foreign
>
> (even if only temporarily), the taboo, the forbidden, the unclean. Hermes standing

at the boundary marks a psychological and sometimes a moral limit and calls

special attention to the space being entered or left. (Stein, 1999)

Most recently, Jungian and depth psychologists have correlated the archetypal god

Hermes as the god of the Internet (Stein, 1999; Neville, 1992; Brien, 1997). In *Senex and*

Puer, Hillman wrote that "the puer spirit is the voice of the moment and the puer spirit

seizes the situation in an instant" (2005, p. 106).

   Necessity of puer as the game designer archetype. Digital gaming designed

initially by and for the puer archetype answers a call for exploring unknown territories,

breaking boundaries, travelling to new worlds, creating tools and machines, problem

solving, feeling fearless of failure, having an intimate relationship with death, and

thriving on survival and hunting. This archetypal energy was and is vitally necessary to

create vibrant realms of technology to evolve and revolutionize what it means to be

human. And it is the same archetypal energy that dominates much of the gaming contents

available.

   The creation arch of the digital game industry has required the unique archetypal

energy of the puer/eternal youth/young warrior. Hence the game play mechanics have

been envisioned and crafted through the impulses of the puer: survival, problem solving,

death and eternal resurrection of the warrior, disassociation with "the other," and sexual

desire. The initial language of the verbs has come from the eternal youth/young man

archetype: run, jump, shoot, explore, kill, survive.

   The research interviews repeatedly demonstrated the Hermes god in action. For

example, Skolnick spoke of the primal dynamic within games: "The core of most modern

game experiences . . . . [is that] you're either running away or towards something, or you

are trying to kill something or defend yourself against something." Further, with games, particularly console games, there is "a primal itch that these games scratch. That's why they're mostly attractive to males, to men. These games can satisfy the deep kind of hunting, aggressive, testosterone-driven history of the human male" pointed out by Skolnick during his interview on March 28, 2013).

The puer consciousness repeatedly asserts its role in the evolution and the re-visioning of psyche's boundaries, shifting the very boundaries of understanding the puer as not merely a boy-child in play but as a necessary revolutionary boundary breaker for psyche. Psyche's experiences inhabited new frontiers that Hermes crafted in the tools that shattered old fenced boundaries of play. The puer asserted his vital role in moving the guidepost of play. Paradoxically, the boy-child explorer and imaginal dragon slayer claim a far greater role in imagining new possibilities for problem solving. "For the puer consciousness no situation ever becomes 'wrong' or 'impossible.' There is always a way, or way out" (Hillman, 2005, p.106).

An interesting example of the puer consciousness breaking boundaries within games—and science—is the problem-solving game *Foldit* (2008), created by David Salesin and Zoran Popovic at the University of Washington. The challenge was placed by the Department of Biochemistry to solve a protein structure model of the enzyme that scientists had unsuccessfully struggled with for 15 years. Once *Foldit* was placed online, the game was played for three weeks and game players solved it in just ten days (Popovic & Cooper, 2011). Shifting the lens out of the authority and discipline of science and into the play of the game broke through boundaries, moved science into a new frontier in

which players, not biochemists, were able to find a way through perplexing challenges! Exploration is indeed inherent within gameplay.

The puer archetypal energy is opportunistic in nature. "Opportunities excite puer consciousness because they evoke these archetypal spirits of resourcefulness" (Hillman, 2005, p. 106). This perspective is indicative within the outcome of *Foldit* (2008), where the game designers adapted the situation of the problem. By releasing it into the space of online play, the game designers created an opening and freedom for new lenses and perspectives. This act evoked the archetypal spirit of Hermes.

The necessity of the Hermes archetype as a dominant influence within game industry, as in all possessions of archetypes, carries its gifts and its challenges. Hermes as the "way-finder" (Hillman, 2005, p. 106) has facilitated the movement of psyche into virtual spaces. As mentioned previously by Huizinga (1938/1955), play is the means by which civilization informs itself on how to be in the world. By creating a virtual space to play in, game designers have informed and taught others about unlimited potential scenarios within virtual game space. After several decades, the current designers have learned to navigate and to imagine through the puer consciousness of gameplay. As a result, new applications, new ways of being virtual are pushing beyond the space of video games and into practical applications of the digital existence of a technological textured lifeworld (Hansen, 2006). The puer's "perception critical for adaptation to situations" (Hillman, 2005, p. 106) facilitates psyche's adaptation and movement into new virtual worlds. As "time and attention are migrating from the real world into the virtual world" (Castronova, 2007, p. 7), game designers are initiating the path.

Puer to senex: The shifting conversations. During the course of research involvement over six years, I witnessed a growing shift in the discourse within the gaming community, reflecting an archetypal shift from the predominant puer archetype to the senex. As the game medium matures, the conversation on how games inform the player is arising more and more within the game industry. There is a movement towards creating meaningful gameplay that raises the debate of games as pure fun versus games as meaningful.

One witnesses game narrative designers and theorist such as Richard Rousse III and Tom Abernathy at GDC 2013 after the shooting of school children in Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, revisiting the topic of what type of games we are creating and how they affect the player. Rousse, senior game designer at Microsoft Studios, in his 2013 GDC talk "Seven (or so) Techniques for Writing a Moral Game," emphasized the necessity for the repercussions of choices within games. Similarly, "Evolving Emotional Content in Games" by Susan O'Connor and Chuck Beaver (2013) pushed the audience of game narrative designers to evolve. The call was "wanting to make games that nourish the soul" and "speak to more than just the brainstem" as is the case in violent games. They stressed that what is missing is the emotional core and the need to "set the North Star" for the players' emotional journeys (O'Connor, 2013). Designer Walt Williams of K2 Games in "We Are Not Heroes: Contextualizing Violence Through Narrative," addressed how "your character will never be more righteous than the core mechanics allow. The character's growth must always be evolving." In his presentation Williams emphasized, "It is time to put down the gun. Know that blanket use of violence is wrong. It is easy to create. We are better than that. Is there something else we can do?" In

accordance, Schell, in "Future of Storytelling" (2013), spoke of the desire within games to "create deep meaningful storytelling to make people cry." The problem is that designers are "missing above-the-neck verbs"; hence, Schell lamented, "We create ridiculous stories". The need is to change mechanics to ultimately achieve great epic storytelling, to have a great "Shakespeare" of a game.

The movement is indicative of the underlying perspective of the archetype puer that invented imaginal realms shifting now towards accepting responsibility and moving beyond remaining in the one-sided grips of an archetype. "The roots of soul governing the perspectives we have of ourselves and the world" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. xix) is the underlying principle of exploration of how games participate in understanding internal and external psychological dynamics.

> Ideas are both the shape of events, their constellation in this or that archetypal pattern, and the modes that make possible our ability to see through events into their patterns . . . the more ideas we have the more we see, and the deeper the ideas we have, the deeper we see. It also suggests that ideas engender other ideas, breeding new perspectives for viewing ourselves and world."
>
> (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 121)

Ultimately the puer is about the survival of the clan. Ultimately the puer is about moving forward into the future. Ultimately the puer attracts other archetypes such as the feminine. Ultimately the puer recreates life, procreates. Ultimately, the puer confronts the Senex. And ultimately the puer becomes the Senex: fixed, building an empire, inflexible, rigid until the next generation of puers breaks down the rigid walls to build a new world.

Indie game developers may be those important new puers who can shift the games without the restrictions of the senex complex: expanding the gaming language, flexible in creating new verbs and new tools. In archetypal psychological terms those "new verbs" are the impulses and language of other archetypal entities. The Indie game *Journey* (2012) is an example of successful transformation into a new model of gameplay without the encumbrance of the senex structures of business profitability limiting creative possibilities. In *Journey* we see the entrance of the archetype of Aphrodite in her beauty, grace, flow of cooperation, and love in the game quest. *Journey's* success is an example of the unique perspective is a blending archetypal perspective of the young puer's quest with the feminine Aphrodite. The resulting expansion of archetypal perspectives relieves the one-sidedness of remaining stuck in one archetype.

Puer creative and innovative energy was the necessary archetype for creating a new terrain for psyche to inhabit. No other archetypal energy within the pantheon would or could have generated such a place as digital games. From an archetypal perspective it is logical that the initial language and dynamics of the predominant game spaces spoke the language and used the verbs of the Hermes puer archetype. It is also logical that the format of the puer manifested itself as games, developing the mercurial nature of play as a primary source of engagement and a transitional learning space for psyche on how to inhabit virtual landscapes beyond the borders of physical terrain. Games provide the collective and individual psyches various ways to explore how to participate in the virtual state of being.

However, remaining only with the archetypal lens of the puer that allowed digital games to be created also is a risk of being stuck in a one-sided archetypal complex: "the

relation with any archetype involves the danger of possession" (Hillman, 2005, p. 57). There are many more dimensions of fantasy than the fun of the gun. As the eternal youth is essential, so too are all the archetypal impulses within. Inviting other archetypal perspectives into the creative nature of play shifts one's perspective to understand that to allow for many possibilities is the foundation of wisdom. For transformative entertainment, a host of psychological perspectives is required in order to expand the verbs within interactive storytelling to the entire pantheon of archetypal gods.

Game Mechanics, Verbs, and Archetypes. The role of verbs in game mechanics is intricately woven into the psychological experience of the player. The game mechanics create the structure for personification—the taking on the role of an archetype: for pathologizing—encountering and behaving with the darker content of psyche in play; for meaning-making (psychologizing)—reflecting and enacting with other archetypal verbs; and ultimately for soul-making—by giving a language to revision possibilities. A dynamic layer of technology resides within the interface. There is a complexity in the phenomenon of game mechanics and its relationship with psychic content.

Game mechanics are the interactions and relationships of the game. Where the game mechanics may appear on the surface as objective rules within the code, game theorist and designer Schell, in *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* (2010), indicates that on another level, it "involves something more mysterious" (p. 130). As a result, some elements within game mechanics are not easy to define, but, according to Schell, are part of what makes for great games: "As a designer, if you can understand and control how that illusion is formed in your player's mind, you will create experiences that feel as real, or more real, than reality itself" (p. 118). In order to create great games,

designers must understand the mental models, often the gray areas that "exist largely in the darkness of the subconscious mind" (p. 130).

Game mechanics, explains Schell (2010), consist of six main catagories: (1) space; (2) objects; attributes and states; (3) action (the verbs); (4) rules; (5) skill of player; and (6) chance (pp. 130-153). Verbs are the game mechanic that facilitate the actions available to the player "which define both how the player performs in the simulation and define(s) the player character" (Fernandez-Vara, 2009, p. 10). As a result the verbs most closely align with the archetypal dynamics present within the stage of the game.

Ultimately it is game mechanics that define the emotional experience and potential meaning-making, delivering psyche *through* the mechanics. Soul-making within the game experience is a result of the weaving of the game mechanics in a digital web of rules, movement, and space. In gaming terms, archetypes are the rules and other game mechanics that determine options available for action (agency) and what imaginal landscape surrounds the psychological process within the game space. The metaphorical viewpoint is determined though and by the game mechanics, determining the patterns available to the player to resolve the problems and quests placed before them. It specifies the lens, the archetypal lens, the metaphorical lens through which the player will enact. O'Connor during her interview April 9, 2013 defined the "story" of a game that provides the emotional connection as being "what the player *does*. That activity of gameplay is triggering an emotional connection to the player". The operative work she used is "connection to" and not "reaction from," indicating a relationship that embodies a psychological relationship between player and digital code.

Just as actors point the way in deliteralizing events through performance, so too do game designers with creation of ritualized spaces; they too perform alchemical transformations of psyche. Hence, it is the game mechanic verbs—the kinetic drama—within the game that generates the psychological experience, tell the story, and construct a vehicle of personification of the archetypal drama. Thus, theatrical encounters enacted in digital games through the concrete actions of kinetic performance are personifications. The "ritual of theater . . . and play require concrete actions which are never only what they literally seem to be. Ritual offers a primary mode of psychologizing, of deliteralizing events and seeing through them as we 'perform' them" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 137).

Within the game design community, game mechanic verbs were often discussed within conversations and lectures at the GDC as previously mentioned. Frequently there was lament expressed as to the limitations of the verbs currently available. I would suggest that the limitations of verbs available are a result of the underlying archetypes dominating the industry. The supporting tools and technology are designed in response to the archetypal drive, hence limiting the ability to envision game mechanic tools and verbs that reside outside of the spectrum of the compelling archetype of the moment.

Skolnick during the course of his interview explained that in some game mechanic verbs in games, where players "run around shooting other people" such as in the Grand Theft Auto series, the game mechanics possess "something compelling with that at a very core level," on a puer archetypal level, but also he noted that current "control schemes are geared very well towards" those actions. In addition simple tasks as "run, jump, shoot" are easy for the development team to implement.

Shooting is a verb that matches well with our physical game systems, with our pointing devices that we used on computers every day. It's well suited to that. And on top of that, it is—you know, it is highly entertaining. And it's going to continue to be entertaining for as long as we have these deep dark urges, especially on the male side, to have that feeling of being out hunting with your buddies and shooting. An entire sequence of largely unpredictable events can happen simply because you pushed this thumbstick to the left for a second and you hit someone you shouldn't have hit. That's the system. (March 28, 2013)

The limitations of the verbs are both a result of the tools currently available and the underlying unconscious relations to archetypes that voice their longing to the creators of the medium.

Game narrative designer O'Connor asks "Can't we do better?" (April 9, 2013). Tremendous momentum towards the expansion of compelling play dynamics with reflective moments is occurring as the industry continues to mature. Voices on this subject I heard during the research included professionals within the industry such as Richard Rousse III, Miquel Sicart, Tom Abernathy, Richard Bartle and many more.

The debate is interesting, for, on one hand, there is a necessity to allow the pathological impulses to rise up the safe realms of play, and yet there is the question of the ethical responsibility of the game designers to provide reflective moments for resolving the one-sidedness of the impulse of the archetypal gods in play. Archetypal psychology asks: Who else of the gods is longing to be present? It is my opinion that by inviting in the pantheon of archetypal gods as participants in the design process, a greater variety of game mechanic verbs will emerge within game play. The verbs are alternative

archetypal energies manifested in the play. When game designers attempt to broaden the scope of "archetypes" by introducing "diversity" of characters (Lazarro, 2014) into the game narrative, I would argue that, while it is an important step, the body of work tends to become stereotypical unless the game mechanics are allowed to be infused with the archetype in motion. The act of shifting the lens of the archetypes in design process alters the outcome: "By seeing differently, we do differently" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 122). Hence, I suggest that by seeing through the lens of different archetypes, possibilities of action alter the landscape of the design process, the design tools, the interaction with the design tools, as well as the game experience. By seeing the design process differently, the designers create differently, and psyche's encounter in play is done differently.

Meaning-making through Game Mechanics. It is critical for psychological development to emphasize the need for meaning-making within gameplay. One walks a fine line with personification and pathologizing in gameplay and becoming stuck in constellated archetypes, unable to see through to some form of meaning-making. Game mechanics currently have evolved to successfully address the first two components of personifying and pathologizing within the theatrical dynamics of gameplay.

What falls down, according to conversations in the field, are the technological advancements within game mechanics to facilitate deeper reflective moments in gameplay. With the development of capabilities such as 3-D Oculus Rift, virtual reality headsets, AI (artificial intelligence), voice interpretation, facial expressions, and other advances of game mechanic interaction, the possibilities for meaning-making will expand. When asked about the ability of games to generate meaning-making within gameplay Skolnick commented while being interviewed:

I don't think games very often get to that level of introspection. I think generally they're an escape and generally they are fun and they're entertaining and they're challenging and there's a certain sense of accomplishment when you've gotten past the puzzles someone else has created for you. But sometimes, once you see something like *The Walking Dead* [2012] from Telltale, where you're actually being encouraged to look at yourself and look at the choices you made and think about them. (March 28, 2013)

When asked what would provide for more powerful content within games, Skolnick replied:

It all comes down to AI. The AI in the games is extremely crude. They can barely recognize what you're doing. Basically, games are not going to move forward in this area until AI gets much, much better. And when it does, it's going to transform gaming.

So in other words, I'm playing a game and I say something that I thought of to the character in the gang. And that character understands what I said and responds appropriately with dialogue that was not pre-*written* or pre-recorded, but which is just being generated on the fly and which makes sense. If I attack that character, they react the way that make sense as well. The moment at which you can have a conversation with a digital person and have them carry their side of conversation then your verbs become infinite.

Until that point, the world reacts in a simplistic way because the verbs are determined by what the world can react to; what we can have you as the player

actually do or say. In other words it's the verbal AI component of games that is

so far behind everything else. (March 28, 2013)

These tools will facilitate the reflective moment within game play, opening the mirror to

a two-way reflection for a "seeing through" the mirror to what lies below in the deeper

chambers of psyche.

However, there are designers who challenge the argument for more technology as

a rationalization for limitations within much of the current gameplay. Game design

director Matthew Weise from the Singapore-MIT Gambit Game Lab argued in his GDC

Austin 2011 talk "The Future is Now: Emergent Narrative Without Ridiculous Tech" that

developers blame lack of forthcoming technology for their inability to achieve deeper

content. Weise suggests that the issue is design problem due to lack of creativity not a

technology problem. The current technology of "a console that can deliver a high-

polygon, high-frame shooting experience can certainly deliver a more reflective

experience" (J. Howard, personal communication, October 15, 2014). The issue is with

game verbs, mechanics, and design.

Until now, game mechanics have limited not only the deeper work of

psychological resolutions but also the underlying language of game design industry. Not

only have the verbs within the games been limited, but also have the verbs of the

languaging amongst game designers been limited. As game mechanics continue to

expand, the "other" within gameplay has an opportunity to become a known being,

allowing archetypes such as the feminine to also appear and have a voice within imaginal

play. The importance is not to replace or deny the thrust of the puer archetype but to

rather expand the verbs allotted for imaginal states of being. As the pantheon of the

archetypal "verbs" come forward through enhanced game mechanics, richer and deeply woven texture within the gameplay occurs. The expanded vocabulary expands the dramatic text of the theater. Additional compelling and authentic characters come into play, enhancing the psychological dynamics of the performance and ultimately shifting the event of gameplay into an aesthetic experience of soul.

The core mechanics of problem solving and mastery is in essence the same as a psychological moment where one gains better understanding of that which has gripped us in the past. There is inherently a re-visioning within gameplay that occurs when the perspective shifts. Whether it is solving a maze within a game or resolving a maze within one's interior psychic space, the underlying process of discovery is similar. "Aha!" moments occur with the opening of new layers and levels within gameplay. In essence this is an unveiling of a limited archetypal perspective to see something new, something fresh, or something present but previously unrecognizable from the old lens.

Examples of games embracing meaning-making. Over the course of the research I noticed a shift in conversations and themes presented within GDC with a transition toward more meaningful games. Within GDC 2014 Game Narrative Summit there were talks presented such as "Stories, Meaning and Emergent Narrative: A Therapy Session," "Breaking the Mold: Experiments in Evolving Game Narrative," "Video Game Rx: Narratives a Therapy," "Indigenous Storytelling as Game Design and Narrative," "Beyond Fun: Difficult Topics Inspire Story and Design," and "Empathic Games Are Here to Stay!"

"Beyond Fun: Difficult Topics Inspire Story and Design" (2014) by Jill Murray and Hugo Graud of Ubisoft discussed the design of *Freedom Cry: Assassins Creed IV*

(2013)*,* which is an historical action-adventure open world game. The premise of
Freedom Cry is about slavery and is an example of a transition within the industry
towards more meaningful gameplay. The goal of the Ubisoft design team, according to
Murray, was to create a game about an important topic that created strong emotions
beyond fun. Ubisoft contextually reframed the game mechanics to motivate the players
through emotion. Even though the *Assassin Creed* series is based on the "run, jump,
shoot" verbs, the game mechanics deliver a twist to achieve more meaning gameplay.
The slaves are being punished for the players' avatars' mis-action, creating a highly
emotive game in that someone other than the player's avatar gets punished for the action.
A review of the game by Patrick Klepek (2014) explains the effect of the change in
context of your actions.

> *Freedom Cry* is about hope. It's about hope for a people, even if it feels futile and
> fleeting. You don't solve the problem of slavery in *Freedom Cry*. The way slaves
> and plantation owners constantly cycle back into the world, no matter how many
> you liberate, also works as genuine commentary on the state of slavery at the
> time. It might just be a way the game keeps the world from becoming empty . . .
> but it works. The add-ons also give hope for what's possible when blockbuster-
> driven creators take risks with material. There are missteps in *Freedom Cry*, more
> ethical than mechanical, but it hits as often as it misses. That's undeniably an
> important step forward.

Ubisoft's game lab success in evocative play was established in realigning the given
verbs in such a way as to deeply connect emotional content through personifying and
pathos: the verbs of the archetype are given an additional lens of the slaves. The avatar's

use of the machete has consequences. The game mechanics employed seeing through the underlying drama beyond the action of the verbs in order to generate a meaningful resolution. Klepek comments, "When the mission was over, I had to set the controller down. I was drained, and Adwale's pain was my own."

"The Stanley Parable: A Negotiation: Expressive Choice: Reality: Time: The Stanley Parable," presented at the GDC 2014 by William Pugh and Davy Wreded, demonstrates that the moment of having to make the choice within the mechanics of gameplay is meaningful. Choice allows one to see something new about oneself by the choice one made and how it was made. Choices are meaningful because they are contextualized. They presented the concept that when negotiating a choice, choices are inherently expressive. Creating a stage with some props and placing multiple people on the stage generates a variety of player expression. Players choose something that is an expression of themselves, for how an individual responds under pressure in the game is revealing—"it is their personal narrative." I would suggest that the choice is based on the archetype that has cloaked the player.

Highly memorable moments in a game create the connective tissue; these are the moments for slowing down so the players notice the narrative and bringing their interpretation to those moments. This notion of choice, as described by Pugh and Wreded, emphasizes that even within imaginal games the choice still remains with the "archetype [who] dominates our individual choices, our messes, and our ideas" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 131). Similarly speaking at GDC, Jeremy Bernstein (2014) indicated that his new hope for games is that the character's experience and the player's experience would align to the character's motivation with the player's motivations. In other words

that games will align the archetypal actions of the characters through game mechanics with the players' archetypal desires.

A fascinating demonstration of psyche evolving in and through games by Elizabeth La Pensée (2014) was presented at the GDC with the application of gameplay of traditional Native American teaching. In discussions, La Pensée approached the elders of a tribe about adapting storytelling traditions to the virtual game space to create *Survivance* (2013). Within the Native American tradition, the act of storytelling is a sacred ceremony in which the traditions are passed on from Elders to the young. The elders carefully engaged within the design so that the spirits are shared in the virtual game spaces in order to pass teaching on. The belief was to pass on the original storytelling in order to evolve. The goal of storytelling for Native Americans is to "listen to stories with new understanding as one matures. With ears open, with eyes closed." According to the speaker, the elders were moved to a new understanding of how stories could be told through video games as a way of continuing their traditions so that the ears of the young remain open. This, in my opinion, is an act of soul-making through games.

"Game writing attempts to create experiences to provoke, entertain, surprise, and suspend judgment, for fantasy sees past our disbelief" (Vanaman, 2014). Game writing—the blending of game mechanics—is a complex blend of system design with tool development and creative directing. Game mechanics cannot do it alone. However, according to Jeremy Bernstein in a GDC presentation (2014), the experience is fundamentally about interaction with player and system. This is where the true magic resides in which the unexpected interactions and results occur. Often, players come up with resolve that the development team didn't envision. The participant of the player

creates an emergent environment. The formulation of the interpretation of the dramatic

play informs the choices. The game then reflects back at the player! The non-narrative

mechanics of the game become more than a mirror of the player. They can foster the

individual to grow. The designer/author of the game does not own the narrative any more

than does the player, according to Tracy Fullerton of the USC Game Innovation Lab

(2014). The author allows the audience to inhabit, and "the players apply their adjectives

to the verbs." This indicates to me the personifying and pathologizing of the player's

avatar moving into a state of seeing through, and even potential soul-making.

Another example presented at the GDC 2014 that demonstrated the significance

of the players' involvement within the game story as an active participant in the emerging

narrative is demonstrated in the game *Papo & Yo* (2011). In a GDC presentation, its

creator, Vander Caballero (2014), explained that he designed *Papo & Yo* as a vehicle for

helping players make meaning out of their lives after traumatic events, such as

overcoming shame. The game mechanics metaphorically indicate that the choices you

make matter. He proposes in his talk "Empathic Games are Here to Stay! What's Next?"

the necessity of metaphors to address the pathos in life and to create empathy. Within the

imaginal realm created in game mechanics and story, Caballero created gameplay for

letting go of hurt (letting go of your crows). The game bridges innocence, pride, anger,

sorrow, forgiveness, and hope. In the mechanics he incorporates a journey of

transformation even within the locomotion of the avatar.

The above-mentioned games demonstrate a broadening scope of possibilities

generated in the game design for meaning-making by seeing through the metaphors to the

underlying pathos towards a movement of soul. The games ask the player to go into the

horrible drama and discomfort to get to the resolve. These games are just a few examples of the ability of games to provide an emotional journey, in addition to and beyond the fun.

Schell, game designer and author, states in his introduction to *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* (2010) that game designers "are in a position something like the ancient alchemists" (p. xxv) with a patchwork quilt of rules of thumb on how to combine chemicals. Although they are "incomplete, sometimes incorrect, and often semi-mystical . . . by using these rules, the alchemists were able to accomplish surprising things, and their pursuit of the truth eventually led to modern chemistry" (p. xxv). Schell indicated that good game is the result of viewing from many perspectives (xxvi), which sets up questions about the game design. What if Schell in *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* (2010) added the lens of personifying, the lens of pathologizing, the lens of seeing through, and the lens of soul-making to his list of game design lenses? How might that impact future game designers and the worlds they create? Schell reminds designers "to create something great and innovative, you have to do something different" (p. xxvii).

Transformational Games: Providing Language

A new genre of game design. With Hermes as a guide between worlds, and the guidepost herms of archetypal psychology marking the path towards, new arenas, new places of seeing, new theaters might alter the lens within the game design studio. Possibly certain genres of game design will elicit active imagination, the archetypal gods, and the gods of design in which the elders are designers working with imaginative vision for another form of coherency in play. This requires new verbs, additional maps, and

alternative archetypal influences to transform and to transcend beyond the ego and into the soul through gameplay.

"Deities create virtual worlds; designers are those deities" (Bartle, 2004, p. 247), suggesting that designers act in accordance to religious deities who designed the world with the intention of humans living within the environment. Hence, Bartle explains, designers need to create environments that fit humans and ensure that the players' needs are met.

> To design a virtual world is perhaps the greatest act of creative imagination there can be. The possibilities are absolutely limitless—you can make and do anything in them. *Anything!* Today's virtual worlds are mere children's scribbles compared to the masterpieces to come. (p. xviii)

While traditionally virtual worlds and game design are determined by three factors of business model, technology, and gameplay (p. 248), developing a means of designing for new genres of transformative entertainment supplements, not replaces, these factors.

Games consist of foundational components for psychological growth through the personification and pathologizing that occur in the fantasy of play. However, in order for them to generate deeper levels of awareness and consciousness of psychic dynamics, several steps are necessary. Game narrative designer O'Connor, in the course of the interview, responded to the question as to whether games are a place where deeper issues are met.

> Life is really short. People are doing incredible work elsewhere. What we are doing right now and what you are talking about: speaking of the psyche; speaking of the soul; and describing the pain of being human in a way that you could only

dream of in this industry. It is going to happen eventually and it's going to be

transcendent, but like I said . . . our industry doesn't speak like this. (O'Connor,

April 9, 2013).

I argue, along with O'Connor, that there is a need for language to further clarify and

distinguish the dynamics of psychological processes within games and even within

archetypal psychology. Applying archetypal psychological concepts as outlined by

Hillman in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), presented languaging limitations to

clarifying, developing, and applying his concepts in practical applications. From the

results of the interviews and reflections on the difficulty of transitioning his theories

across disciplines, it became apparent that several levels of language require further

clarification.

While analyzing the interview results and reflecting on game design with the

application of the four archetypal concepts, it became apparent that there are distinct

movements within the meaning-making and transformative soul-making process that

differ from the psychological processes of game play and fantasy. I propose that fantasy

is the initial step in which personifying and archetypal drama occur, and that the more

transformative influence is a result of the imagination being ignited to envision another

psychological reality.

Fantasy versus imagination. The distinction between fantasy and imagination is

key to the examination in this research, "Games as Theater for Soul: An Archetypal

Psychological Perspective of Virtual Games," as are the implications on the interpretation

and the creation of video games through an archetypal psychological lens. Whereas it is

easy to see how games are realms of fantasy, the notion of possibility for transformative

entertainment within digital games requires an understanding and incorporation of the notion of imaginative process. In conjunction with Hillman's four guideposts of *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), archetypal psychology supplements current game theory with a process of creating theaters for the soul through games with broader psychological growth: from the understanding of the differences between fantasy and imagination, towards developing transformative entertainment and providing a map—an "imaginative vision" by which to be explored. Exploration of the qualities of fantasy and imagination is essential to grasping the overall affects and potential of video games and the development of the psychological process.

For the purposes of clarification of the terms *fantasy* and *imagination,* I refer to Jeffery Raff's *Jung and the Alchemical Imagination* (2000). Raff's definitions of fantasy and imagination are based on the interpretations of Jung's work about the Ego, Self, individuation, and the alchemical process of transformation. The important distinctions to be noted are that fantasy is defined as ego-based, entertainment, and illusion, whereas imagination is defined as expanding consciousness and accessing latent potential—which provides a means by which game design language can shift the constructs of the design process.

Within fantasy the ego is the star of the stage in which the fantasy facilitates the ego's need to inflate (Raff, 2000, p. 42) by means of playing various archetypal patterns. "Fantasy is about the ego's needs, desires, and quest for aggrandizement" (p. 45). Within the virtual game fantasy, the gamer becomes the super-hero, overcoming obstacles. Fantasy resides in the illusion and folly of play: enjoyable, satisfying, and fun. However, the realm of fantasy also serves the purpose to provide understanding of what the

individual ego longs for and " [to reveal] the places in which developmental work needs to occur" (p. 48). It points the way towards further psychological growth. Fantasy tends to be played over and over in one's head, within a dream, within a game, or even within daily behaviors.

Herein lies one of the dangers of the fantasy. The repetitive encounter with inflated archetypal impulses may lead to one-sidedness behavior and becoming lost in the wilderness of the unconscious. If the ego is not strong enough with internal balances, the ego risks being swept into the destructive delusion of the fantasy and acting out inappropriately. Immersive realms of fantasy risk unleashing a deluge of unconscious material, which may lead some individuals to experience psychotic episodes (Raff, 2000, p. 21). Psychotic individuals "are unable to protect themselves from the cacophony of their inner spirit" (p. 21), as archetypal influences overpower and activate the ego to become "possessed." Unfortunately, we have seen in our culture the manifestation of individuals, many of whom are young or without a strong sense of self, coming under the influence of the killing instinct within a game and enacting it in real world, even killing family members, friends, teachers, or unknown individuals.

Fantasy is also the precursor state to the imaginal, the imagination, which is beyond the ego, beyond fun, and unlocks transformation. The imagination is the pathfinder toward transformation and transcendence (Raff, 2000, p. 45).

The roles of fantasy and imagination are inexplicably intertwined with psychological growth. Fantasy feeds the conscious ego, holding both potential danger and potential shift into greater expanded consciousness. Imagination promotes profound transformational experiences. Imagination integrates the inner psyche and the conscious

self to unlock latent possibilities. Imagination, through play, is "imaging" a new way, a new pattern of being for the Self. "Imaging" is the vision according to which one lives reality. Imaging is the view of world coherency and one's capacity to create the image into reality. Imagination accesses the inner knowing of the archetypes (Raff, 2000, p. 44).

In context to Hillman (1975/1992), fantasy most closely correlates to the process of personification and pathologizing in which the individual encounters the archetypal dramas, allowing the psyche to relate to the archetypal impulses at play. Imagination correlates to Hillman's process of Psychologizing (seeing through) and (soul-making). To move towards a deepening of the play experience for transformative growth, one's imagination sees through to the underlying metaphorical meaning: through the imagination, soul-making occurs. The transformation and transcendence of old patterns occur as a result of recognizing patterns of archetypal lenses, seeing through the underlying structures and unlocking mysteries, liberating the Self from limited perspectives towards growth.

Hillman's use of the term *dehumanizing* for soul-making may initially appear to be confounding, since the word *dehumanize* implies that one deprives humans of their spirit or that humans are seen to be mechanical beings, void of life. Hillman's notion asks to "de-egotize," to expand one's perspective away from solely an ego-based consciousness. Hillman argued that for a truly ensouled state, one must first take the individual ego's needs, desires, and demands out from the center. In order for soul-making to occur, the individual's ego perspective is not at the center of existence. Rather, Hillman calls for coming into relationship and into integration with all of life for the purpose of soul-making: ego with the inner self, consciousness with unconsciousness,

individual with collective. In fact, Hillman extends this notion beyond the human species to an ensouled world in order to broaden the scope of reality beyond the ego's limited view. In other words, soul-making is to transcend the ego's smallness and limits by imagining.

The ability to distinguish between fantasy and imagination assists in clarifying the process within a game design where the player moves from the ego-based goals into deeper levels of play. This can occur as a cyclical process: Once the player moves into deeper psychological engagement of seeing through and deeper meaning-making, the functions of personifying and pathologizing may continue to be re-experienced but from a broader spectrum and, hence, create transformative experiences.

Without this languaging distinction and clarification, the application of Hillman's theories to the 21st century's mediated arena of images would be difficult. The arena of virtual imaginal worlds is great in its extension beyond the individual to a collaborative community. The language used in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (Hillman 1975/1992) falls short of the task for practical application. Designers are creating substantial realms— places of distinction—for psyche to reside. The clarification of language is essential to distinguishing the unique properties of fantasy and imagination in order for archetypal psychology to provide substance for game designers, particularly those that seek to create transformative entertainment.

It might be argued that the goals of imagination are not the same as the goals of playing games: That the goals of greater wisdom, liberation, potential are too forced—or too politically correct—for pure gameplay, or that one is enforcing an agenda onto fun. I argue that there is merit in this position, that the mere bliss of the moment within a game

is exciting enough. And I would also argue that the play of a game in itself possesses latent forces—and taps into these latent forces on a regular basis—shaping the underlying creative capacity of the player: consciously or unconsciously. However, this attribute of game play does not preclude the exploration of considering the soul-making, the deeply moving and transformative experiences, is possible within the medium.

Re-visioning an archetypal performance model for video games. Previously in Chapter 3, the parallels of the components within traditional theater, digital media, and games were succinctly demonstrated by Fernandez-Vara and presented in Figure 1: *The Performance Framework for Videogames* (2009, p. 74). When examining the diagram from an archetypal psychological view, additional layers can be considered. Figure 4 below, Extended Archetypal Version of Performance Framework for Videogames, is based on Fernandez-Vara's diagram (p. 74) but with added row levels to further demonstrate virtual games play as archetypal vessels for the "Theater of the Soul."

To achieve the correlation between "games as theater" and "games as theater for soul" from an archetypal perspective the diagram adds a layer of the participants within each stage of the game's process. The designers create the dramatic text, the avatars perform, and the players experience a psychological catharsis. By distinguishing the three primary participants of designer, avatar, and player the four components of archetypal psychology can therefore be applied to each. The alchemical vessel is built by the designer(s), psyche performs through the imaginal enactment of the avatar, and the psychological experience is felt by the player.

	Structure	Action	Catharsis
THEATER	**Dramatic Text**	**Performance**	**Mise-en-Scène**
DIGITAL MEDIA	**Rules**	**Runtime**	**Interaction**
GAMES	**Mechanics**	**Dynamics**	**Aesthetics**
PARTICPANTS	**Designers**	**Avatars**	**Players**
ARCHETYPAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE	**Archetypes' Perspectives** **Alchemical Vessel**	**Imaginal Enactment** **Psyche's Performance**	**Experience Meaning-making** **Seeing Through**
STAGES OF RE-VISIONING PSYCHOLOGY	*Personifying Pathologizing*	*Personifying Pathologizing*	*Psychologizing Soul-Making*

Figure 4. Parallels of theatrical performance, digital media, and games presented in first three lines are adapted from "Performance Framework for Videogames" in *The Tribulations of Adventure Games: Integrating Story Into Simulation Through Performance* by C. Fernandez-Vara, 2009, p. 74. Reprinted with permission.
The last three rows, created by Susan M. Savett, demonstrate the archetypal performance within games. It parallels participants, archetypal psychology, and stages of re-visioning psychology in games to that of the theatrical performance, digital media, and games.

This figure correlates archetypal psychological perspective with the phases of the theater, digital media, and game mechanics.

The revisioned "Structure" includes the dramatic text of theater, the rules of digital media, the mechanics of games, and the alchemical vessel of archetypal perspectives. The "Action" comprises the performance of theater, runtime of computer

code, dynamics of play, and psyche's performance in imaginal enactment. The "Catharsis" result whens departing the realm of the theater, one might incorporate the catharsis experienced into meaningful reflection on daily life: the interaction computer code of digital media results in a desired output, the game aesthetics results in new skills and knowledge, and the realm of alchemical vessel may result in a psychological process of soul-making.

The mechanics of the game design, reflecting the dramatic text of the theater, not only embodies the magic circle of play, the rules, and the verbs available within the game, it creates the alchemical vessel for archetypal performance. Mechanics set up the space, objects, attributes, rules, verbs of the alchemical vessel from the archetypal perspective engaged from the designers and the techical tools they elect to incorporate into the gameplay. Mechanics also set up the structure of the personifications within the game elements as well as the pathologies of the dramas. Designers in their own psychological processes access the archetypal influences to mold the structure of the game through the mechanics. Like alchemists who mix tinctures within a vessel in order to transform the material into the non-material, game designers mix the elements of code —all the while under the influence of their own unique archetypal lenses—to generate a magic circle for the performance of archetypal gods. Each element of the game, every line of code bears meaning: "Every space, character, object, and action stands for another idea in a complex array of interrelationships" (Howard, 2008, p. xiii). In creating the environment, each element is infused with archetypal significance: The staircase leading up, the whip in hand, the moment of touch on the game controller, all create a cacophony of the gods' dramas enacted in the imaginal, virtual state of being. A well designed game

is a complex blend of personified forces to allow a drama of challenges—pathologies—to unfold. The archetypal drama reflects what the god is wanting to perform and to be witnessed, for the archetype's essence defines and determines the nature of the rules. It influences the drama to be played out, the dramatic text to be played.

Although the game designers only directly influence the mechanics (LeBlanc, et. al., 2004), the dynamics are the enactment of the codified simulation created by the design team with the personified projections of players donning the masks of their avatars. The avatars—the characters—are the enactment of personification and pathologizing. Dynamics of the game as the theatrical performance deliver the moment of the imaginal enactment during which psyche performs. Dynamics within the game produce personified behavior of the archetypes. The masks of the various gods perform according to the verbs of the archetype. Avatars are influenced from conscious and unconscious intent within a personified experience, and performance within the imaginal realm consists of a blending of both the content of the designers and the players. Avatars and the virtual world of code enact the performance of the archetypes. During his March 28, 2013 interview, Skolnick spoke to the engagement of the designers script within Grand Theft Auto.

> What makes it interesting is that you're not just going up on stage and reading someone else's script. You got someone else's premise but you're on stage making it up as you go. And the other people on stage are reacting to what you did. . . . The story is what happened to you, how you dealt with it.

The player's avatar is not the only one on the stage. There are the NPC (non-player characters) created through the scripted mechanics, and in some games such as MMOs

(massive multiplayer online) other players' avatars present their unique personifying and pathologizing content in the imaginal enactment.

Psychologizing occurs in the players, not the avatars, who are the audience to the game when they see through the performance. Such seeing through produces the moments of meaning-making, the mise-en-scène of theater, in which not only is the audience entranced but also reflective in the greater drama of the play—the players' reflection on the avatars' encounter of the dramatic text of the game's runtime. Like an audience's experience of a theatrical performance, the impact may be personal or collective to the participants who witness the enactment of imaginal drama. Based on the skill and craft of the playwright or designer to powerfully engage archetypal dramas, the quality of the play determines the potential meaning-making and soul-making for the performance.

The extension to Fernandez-Vara's model *The Performance Framework for Videogames* (2009, p. 74) provides a succinct correlation of digital games to the model of theater and to the model of archetypal psychology as presented in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (Hillman, 1975/1992). It can be argued that seeing through and the reflection of meaning-making for designers could be placed within the first column of the creation of game mechanics. However, I would suggest that the full experience of meaning-making and revelation for the designer does not occur until after the performance when the players enact within the imaginal space, the alchemical vessel. Upon witnessing the results of the alchemical tincture the alchemist becomes informed.

Contributions of Work

The research project and methodology used provided a "special twist of vision" about the soul of games and the game industry (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 30). Hillman's "ideas necessary for the soul-making process" (p. xv) structured the journey of this research quest as a way to enter into both the games and the exploratory conversations with game designers as an access path for deeper, contextual meaning-making. This foray into integrating two scholarly fields of depth psychology and games studies has been intended to open an opportunity for dialogue about images, games, soul, and how transformation occurs.

The quest of this dissertation has been to help situate archetypal psychology within game studies as a legitimate approach to understanding the underlying psychological dynamics present within digital games. Establishing digital games as a form of theater within the field of game studies, and demonstrating *Re-Visioning Psychology* by archetypal psychologist James Hillman as a model based on theater, facilitated the correlation of archetypal psychology as a viable partner to game studies. The application of Hillman's framework to consideration of game dynamics as explored through the interviews validated the process of using archetypal psychological concepts to reflect upon games. This validation suggests the viability of creating a structured model to help facilitate game designers with a language for understanding the psychological processes evoked within the game mechanics beyond merely "procedural systems of rules that create actions and behaviors for players to engage with" (Sicart, 2013, p. 59).

Hillman, like Jung, acknowledges that psyche moves and encourages psychology to evolve along with it. This dissertation applies Hillman's theoretical approach as outlined in *Re-Visioning Psychology* to the interpretation of virtual games to attempt to yet again advance ideas that current psychology "has not even begun to consider" (1975/1992, p. xv). Even though Hillman in 1999 was somewhat dismissive of the Internet as depriving the gods of their depth in the "plastic alter" of the computer screen (1999, p. 14), technology has evolved, and this research demonstrates through the application of archetypal psychology toward the realm of games, revisions and evolves archetypal psychology.

The interview process and results discussed in Chapter 4 have suggested that the framework of James Hillman's archetypal psychology, as outlined in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), provides an appropriate and adequate means to investigate this phenomenon. In particular, the lack of examples for soul-making indicated that the process of psyche present within games is evolving as the medium matures. The process of the interview technique suggests potential application of using *Re-Visioning Psychology* as a structure to investigate other areas of study for archetypal psychology.

The interpretive lens of archetypal psychology lends itself well to applying it as means to view digital games as a potential theater for soul. The process of personification, pathologizing, and seeing through directly correlate to the nature of the performance within theater and the performance within games as described in Chapter 3, Video Games as Theater. As demonstrated in the interviews, soul is present whether we consciously or unconsciously engage with the concept of soul, as virtual games provide a realm for soul to perform in dramas of the soul.

A contribution of this dissertation has been in the initial grappling with ways to provide language for transformative gameplay in the context of archetypal psychology. Questions of archetypal psychology towards gameplay may provide means by which game designers can come into new relationship with the games they create and play. During the interview process on soul-making game narrative designer O'Connor validated the need for language and approach to discuss soul-making and transformative game spaces, "You bring to it [the game design industry] a different perspective, which is so overdue, you know. It brings, like, a new appreciation for it and new eyes, and it's great" (April 9, 2014).

This initial investigation has provided the groundwork for further exploration as to how the model of *Re-Visioning Psychology* can establish a necessary structure and psychological language for game studies to incorporate into the discourse. Making the distinction between fantasy and the imaginal provides both game designers and depth psychologists clarification to understanding that the direction of soul-making is moving beyond ego-based game design and towards imagining—as in imaging—other possibilities. Finally, the body of work demonstrates the role that archetypal psychology can play in the 21st century—as a lens to gain perspective within the mercurial realm of virtual games.

Using *Re-Visioning Psychology* (Hillman, 1975/1992) as a framework during the research process provided necessary language on ensouling, enlivening, vivifying, and elicited conversations which touch into the soul of the work the designers could create and play within. As mentioned previously in a citation of game narrative designer, Susan O'Connor, "this type of language is never heard at the design table. Nobody speaks like

this. Nobody is having these type of conversations" (April 8, 2013). This recognition, I believe, is the essential gift that depth psychology brings to the work of game design: a sense of ensoulment within and beyond the pleasure of fun. Jung indicated that whoever speaks in the voice of an activated archetype "stirs us because it summons up a voice stronger than our own. Whoever speaks in a primordial image speaks for a thousand voices" (Jung, 1923/1978 p. 82 [*CW* 15, para. 129]). The enhancement of the archetypal psychological lens to the understanding of games as psychological containers, lends itself to bringing fragmented parts of the psyche together within the creation process— vivifying the mechanics of inventions into creations that move life forward.

Challenges within the research. While Hillman has many valid depth psychological insights applicable to games as theater for soul within *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992), his last section on dehumanizing was overly religious in tone. Although the gist of the desire for soul-making has significance, Hillman relies too heavily on religious discourse for it to resonate with what has been transpiring within this century and within the advancement of both virtual spaces and discoveries of neuroscience. His emphasis on the gods as "presences" and the need for religious—and Western Judeo-Christian lenses—is limited in capturing the full dimensions of influences within the 21st century.

Ironically, the greatest insight about this difficulty came during the research interviews, where the approach seemed to fail as an interviewing method. This occurred when shifting from personification and pathologizing into questions regarding the meaning-making process in the seeing through of psychologizing and soul-making. This could be due to timing these subjects at the end of the interviews. However, from other

conversations within the field it is also apparent that the industry at this point in time does not address these issues well. Hence, it is not surprising to witness the conversations falling apart at this point.

From this particular lacunae within the interviews, what was revealed became the most intriguing components for the research: the role of the game mechanics but the limitations of technology currently available; the pervasive role of the puer archetype within the industry and its impact on both the incredible development of the medium of virtual games as well as its limited perspective; the lack of language within the industry, possibly due to the limited language of the main influencing archetype, to address deeper meaning and soul-making within games; the relationship of the archetype to the language in industry, the language within game mechanics, and the expansion of the possibilities for psychic movement and development.

In addition, those moments within the interviewing process that felt the weakest, most challenging, most awkward, within the context of archetypal psychology were conveyances of the depths of soul. Archetypal psychology is, of course, a perspective; it is a philosophical approach for seeking the meaning-making of one's existence, which crosses into metaphysical constructs. The languaging to bridge this crevasse needs to be further developed within both industries. Using the simple question of "Are games theaters for the soul?" elicits a strong visceral reaction from many whom I met over the course of five years. Possibly just posing the question is enough for psyche's movement within individuals in the industry. Possibly this is one small beginning phrase to elicit larger and longer conversations within industry. I am just one of the growing collective that is imagining and listening into what is longing to come forward, that is asking what

new archetypes will infuse the game mechanics; what archetypal voices will provide new verbs that have not yet been heard in the dramatic text; and what new play will emerge in the theatrical world of video games.

Seeing through Hillman's *Re-Visioning Psychology*. Hillman repeatedly emphasized the need to unveil the underlying driving metaphor in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992). As I proceeded through the research I saw through to the underlying metaphor of this seminal book: that of the theater. This correlation of theater to the psychological development process described by Hillman has validated the use and modeling of *Re-Visioning Psychology* as the foundation for this research process.

I stumbled upon this important detail while reading the book *Hermes, Guide of Souls: The Mythologems of the Masculine Source of Life* (1944/1976) by Kerenyi, a classical philologist, an associate of Jung, and Hillman's mentor. It became evident that not only does the concept of seeing through tie back to the origins of the Greek theater, but this act of seeing through also unveils the structure of personification and pathology—pathos—to dramatic text. Kerenyi explained that "seeing through" within the Greek theater "offers its spectators a divine standpoint in that it allows them to participate in such a penetrating vision. The spectator sees in the king the guilty fugitive while he is still ruling and governing" (p. 46). Kerenyi defined the function of theater as "seeing through," in which the theater exposes the ironies of the divinities of gods and their mercilessness.

 In *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992) Hillman does not cite "seeing through" to his teacher Kerenyi but rather builds on the concept of theater. To the best of my knowledge, prior to this research I had not heard of *Re-Visioning Psychology* being based

on the metaphor of theater as a way to guide soul-making. There is, in addition, an irony that this discovery occurred for me within Kerenyi's book about Hermes, for Hermes is the trickster, the thief, and the communicator between the worlds, particularly because both Hillman and Kerenyi have been compared to Hermes in attitude and temperment (Slater, 2008b). Hermes is a guide for souls, as is Hillman's writing.

Future Work

Addressing the desires of a growing segment within the gaming industry to create more meaningful game content, core concepts based on archetypal psychology as described within *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992) merit further exploration to create an alternative model to re-visioning game play: to look at the story behind a story, the drama behind the drama. The particularities of the game, or game genre, are speaking to us on a metaphorical level.

Continuing the conversation to understand the phenomena of digital games as a potential theater for soul requires additional investigation. Future would include (1) detailed analysis of games within a variety of genres to explore the application of the framework of personifying, pathologizing, and seeing through from the perspective of the game itself, particularly the detailed game mechanics; (2) the development of an archetypal design model which integrates archetypal psychology principles with game design processes; and (3) to incorporate other archetypal and depth psychologists' into the dialogue of possibilities to envision the merging of digital and imaginal worlds for deeper ensoulment of virtual landscapes. From these future research projects new language will emerge, both for archetypal psychology to reflect our evolving psyche and language and for game designers to incorporate the movements of soul-making processes.

Re-visioning: A new archetypal model for game design. To bring archetypal psychology to the game design process in my future work I propose providing the lenses of archetypal psychology with the initial languaging based on the framework presented in this dissertation, first with utilizing the framework guidepost of personifying, pathologizing, and seeing through as outlined by Hillman (1975/1992), and then extending archetypal psychology theories to flex into languages—and technologies—of the collaborative dynamics within the current era. In particular, I believe that much greater work is to be done in the notion of "game mechanics as archetypes" to broaden the language of the verbs employed within game space for a greater polytheistic spectrum. Another important idea to pursue is based on the term *virtual.* In context to games the term virtual is imperative in that not only would this future research examine the virtual media of digital games, but also inquire into the virtual state of being within the imaginal realm of psyche.

Future work for archetypal psychologists. Everything within a game is a personifying of a soul's movement. "All fantasy is carried by a deeper archetypal order" (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 40). Examining detailed aspects of specific games through the lenses of archetypal psychology would greatly enhance understanding between the fields of archetypal psychology and game studies. Initially this dissertation's research intended to incorporate deep, detailed engagement with the digital text of a selected set of games through the lens of Hillman's framework. Due to environmental limitations of the interview locations, however, I was only able to view one game, *State of Decay* (2013), with a game narrative designer. This vast task remains and potentially has great merit. The hope is that researchers within the fields of depth psychology and in game studies

will collaborate within this endeavor to gain greater understanding of archetypal psychological influences and dynamics in virtual states of play.

Creating appropriate verbiage for the game design community to touch upon archetypal psychological concepts includes the following: meeting the player's individual fragmentation, the many interior rooms and many voices within; listening into the desires and the pathological as a means to allow unconscious and instinctual fantasies not to be suppressed but to live out in virtual realms of digital games; allowance for the reflective moment, which integrates parts of the many fragments into whole consciousness; experiencing both sides of the archetypal forces—the polarities of the archetypal consciousness.

Future work would also benefit by investigating the application of archetypal psychology beyond Hillman's framework as presented in *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975/1992) to other archetypal psychologists' work such as Avens, Von Franz, Hollis, and Raff, to name a few, through games across genres to determine the applicability of the core concepts of archetypal psychology.

Using archetypal psychology as the research approach for investigation of game design influences, as I previously stated in Chapter 4, has established an "archetypal stance, with its radical attempt at allowing soul to hold the 'imaginative possibilities in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation.'" Such a stance has been an essential, vibrant research approach, or as Hillman might refer to it as a "research perspective," into deepening the understanding of the challenging aspects within our culture.

There remains vast work to explore into depth the use of archetypal psychology within the actual design process. Games that have been designed to date have done an excellent job of personification and pathologizing, and yet as a relatively young industry, game design will continue to transform itself. Newer voices of archetypal psychologists are needed within this dialogue for imagining new possibilities within the disciplines of archetypal psychology and game studies.

Summary

The opening quotation by Jung at the beginning of this dissertation both moves and haunts me: "Just as the body has its evolutionary history . . . so too does the psyche" (1947/1968, p. 291 [*CW* 8, para. 38,). The evolution of psyche in 21st century with the augmentation of our body, mind, and I suggest soul, requires a deep and new consideration from all depth psychologists as to the meaning of psyche and soul. This is the most fascinating question to address through observation and imaginal vision. This dissertation attempts to provide one rudimentary stepping stone in a far greater path towards our understanding of the changing landscape of psyche. Where is psyche's home? Who are the guardians tending to this evolving landscape? I would argue that the designers of play have a unique role. Therefore I contend it is important to maintain the dialogue between the disciplines of archetypal psychology and game design.

Critics of pathological fantasy, such as in certain gameplay genres, miss the validity and necessity of regression (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 27) and its call to develop skills for resolution of conflict. During the course of my research, when asked on a regular basis what my research topic was, I received many strong responses regarding my topic, primarily from nongamers (who were somewhat more mature in age) about games

being a demise of society, an evil addiction, and asked if my research was addressing and validating this particular viewpoint. Critics of video games miss the power of the need for regression in order to encounter and develop problem-solving skills that evolve the psyche. The issue of gameplay holds far greater consideration than to merely label it as culturally stultifying.

Throughout the research I questioned whether game play bears the weight of being considered an addiction within society or a necessary adaptation for society, and a way in which psyche evolves. I pondered the notion of whether the algorithmic code and the structure of game mechanics can generate for the player a vessel, as a theatrical stage, for soul-making to occur. Just like a painter's brush, the programming functions are the tools of creation. At the very core of the programmer's language, like the painter's brush, holds the potential of creation. From an archetypal perspective this is the moment where the gods enter into play. The question remains how well both the craftsman working the tools and the receiver of the creation listen into the language of soul being expressed and participate in the conversation.

From the research of this dissertation I believe that virtual games provide us with the tools necessary for adapting and evolving for the sake of the world's soul. As the gaming community invites into play new language, new models, new perspectives, and new archetypal energies to solving complex problems through the imagination, these virtual imaginal spaces of play may re-enchant humanity on a massive scale. It is a community with global arms, reaching out to the call to duty against the relentless consumption and resulting decay. First we need to imagine, witness our pathologies, see

through to understanding the grips that have held us as captive, and find new fantasies to create new worlds to inhabit.

We begin with play: imagining, becoming, and seeing with new eyes. A "Theater of Soul" is a place in which the psyche performs, and is witnessed by the individual and the collective. At the end, there could be tepid applause or the rush of resonance that elicits the standing ovation.

References

Aion [Computer software]. (2009). Seoul, South Korea: NCsoft.

Ashen Empires [Computer software]. (2007). Iron Will Games. Retrieved from
www.ashenempires.com

Avens, R. (2003). *Imagination is reality: Western nirvana in Jung, Barfield and
Cassirer.* Putman, CT: Spring. (Original work published 1980)

Bartle, R. A. (2004). *Designing virtual worlds*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

Bateman, C. (Ed.). (2007). *Game writing: Narrative skills for video game.* Boston, MA:
Charles River Media, Thomson Learning.

Blackmore, S. (1999). *The meme machine.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Blazing Angels [Computer software]. (2006). Montreuil, France: Ubisoft.

Becker, H. (2007). *Telling about society.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bernstein, J. (2014, March). *Stories, meaning and emergent narrative: A therapy session.*
Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

BioShock [Computer software]. (2007). Novato, CA: 2K Games.

BioShock Infinite [Computer software]. (2013). Novato, CA: 2K Games.

Bissell, T. (2010/2011). *Extra lives: Why video games matter.* New York, NY: Vintage
Books.

Brien, D. E. (1997) *Archetypes of the internet.* Retrieved from
http://www.cgjungpage.org/psychtech/techdeb.html

Caballero, V. (2014, March). *Empathetic games are here to stay! What's next?* Paper
presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Caillois, R. (1961). *Man, play and games* (M. Barash, Trans.). New York, NY: Free

    Press of Glencoe. (Original work published 1958)

Call of Duty [Computer software]. (2003). Santa Monica, CA: Activision.

Campbell, J. (1959). *The masks of God.* New York, NY: Viking.

Campbell, J. (1991). *The power of myth*. New York, NY: Anchor Books. (Original work

    published 1988)

Castronova, E. (2007). *Exodus to the virtual world: How online fun is changing*

    reality. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Codename Cygnus (2014). [Computer software]. Boston, MA: Reactive Studios.

Cooper, S., & Papovic, Z. (2011, March). *Deeper problems, deeper gamification: Solving*

    hard real-world problems with games. Paper presented at Game Developers

    Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Coppin, J., & Nelson, E. (2005). *The art of inquiry: A depth psychological perspective.*

    Putman, CT: Spring.

Corbin, H. (1989). *Alone with the alone: Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi.*

    Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1969)

Dark Age of Camelot [Computer software]. (2001). Redwood, CA: Electronic Arts.

Darkfall [Computer software]. (2009). Athens, Greece: Aventurine SA.

Dear Esther [Computer software]. (2012). Kirkland, WA: Steam.

Demon's Souls [Computer software]. (2009). Tokyo, Japan: Sony Computer

    Entertainment.

Deus Ex: Human Revolution [Computer software]. (2011). Montreal, Canada: Eidos

    Montreal.

De Koven, B. (2013). *The well-played game: A player's philosophy.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Dixon, D. (2009). Nietzsche contra Caillois: Beyond play and games. In *Philosophy of Computer Games Conference 2009,* Oslo. Retrieved from http://www.hf.uio.no/ifikk/english/research/projects/thirdplace/conferences/proceedings

Dungeons & Dragons. (1990). Redmond, Washington: Wizards of the Coast.

Egenfeldt-Nielsen, S., Smith, J. H., & Tosca, S. P. (2008). *Understanding video games: The essential introduction.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Everett, R. (Ed.). (1983, October). *Special Issue: SAGE (Semi-Automatic Ground Environment)*, *Annals of the History of Computing* (Vol. 5). Retrieved from http://ftp.math.utah.edu/pub/tex/bib/toc/annhistcomput.html

Eve Online [Computer software]. (2003). Reykjavik, Iceland: CCP Games.

Fallout 3 [Computer software]. (2008). Bethesda, MD: Bethesda Softworks.

Far Cry [Computer software]. (2004). Montreuil, France: Ubisoft.

Far Cry 2 [Computer software]. (2008). Montreuil, France: Ubisoft.

Farmville 2 [Computer software]. (2012) San Francisco, CA: Zynga.

Feenberg, A. (2002). *Transforming technology: A critical theory revisited.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Fernandez-Vara, C. (2009). *The tribulations of adventure games: Integrating story into simulation through performance* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (304888282)

Final Fantasy Mystic Quest [Computer software]. (2010). Tokyo, Japan: Square.

Foldit [Computer software]. (2008). Seattle, WA: University of Washington. Retrieved from http://fold.it/

Freedom Cry: Assassins Creed IV Black Flag [Computer software]. (2013). Montreuil, France: Ubisoft.

Freeman, R. (2009). *The internet: A web of disconnection* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (3395656)

Fullerton, T. (2014, March). *Breaking the mold: Experiments in evolving game narrative*. Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Gadamer, H. G. (1998). The art of play (N. Walker, Trans.). In R. Bernasconi (Ed.), *The relevance of the beautiful and other essays* (pp. 123-130). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1986)

Gadamer, H. G. (2006). *Truth and method* (W. Glen-Doepel, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum International. (Original work published 1960)

GDC. (2011, October). About GDC. Retrieved from http://www.gdconf.com/aboutgdc/

Gears of War [Computer software]. (2006). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Studios.

Gee, J. P. (2005). *Why video games are good for your soul: Pleasure and learning*. Melbourne, Australia: Common Ground.

Giegerich, W. (2007). *Technology and the soul*. New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal Books.

Giorgi, A., Smith, D. L., & Knowles, R. (Eds.). (1979). *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology*. (Vol. 3). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Grand Theft Auto [Computer software]. (1997-2014). New York, NY: Rockstar Games.

Grim Fandango [Computer software]. (1998). San Francisco, CA: LucasArts.

Guild Wars 2 [Computer software]. (2008). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Studios.

Guitar Hero III [Computer software]. (2007). Santa Monica, CA: Activision.

Halo [Computer software]. (2001). Bellevue, WA: Bungie Software, Microsoft Studios.

Hansen, M. (2006). *Bodies in code: Interfaces with digital media.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Hathaway, E. H. (2000). *Psyche's virtual reality: A psychological exploration of self-doubt in the experience and structure of the post-modern self* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (304676524)

Hauke, C., & Hockley, L. (Eds.). (2011). *Jung & film II: The return, further post-Jungians takes on the moving image.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Herda, E. (1999). *Research conversations and narrative: A critical hermeneutic orientation in participatory inquiry.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Hillman, J. (1979). *The dreams and the underworld.* New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Hillman, J. (1992). *Re-visioning psychology.* New York, NY: Harper Perennial. (Original work published 1975)

Hillman, J. (2004). *Archetypal psychology, volume 1.* Putnam, CT: Spring. (Original work published 1983)

Hillman, J. (2005). *Senex and puer.* Putnam, CT: Spring.

Hillman, J., & Kerenyi, K. (1991). *Oedipus variations: Studies in literature and psychoanalysis*. Dallas, TX: Spring.

Hollis, J. (2000). *The archetypal imagination.* College Station, TX: Texas A&M
University Press.

Hopcke, R. (1999). *A guided tour of the Collected Works of C. G. Jung.* Boston,
MA: Shambhala. (Original work published 1989)

Howard, J. (2008). *Quests: Design, theory, and history in games and narratives.*
Wellesley, MA: Peters.

Howard, J. (2014). *Game magic: A designer's guide to magic systems in theory and
practice.* New York, NY: CRC Press.

Huizinga, J. (1955). *Homo Ludens: A study of the play element in culture.* Boston,
MA: Beacon Press. (Original work published 1938)

Hunicke, R., LeBlanc M., Zubek, R. (2004). MDA: A formal approach to game
design and game research. Retrieved from
http://www.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/MDA.pdf

Ico [Computer software]. (2001). Tokyo, Japan: Sony Computer Entertainment.

Ihde, D. (2002). *Bodies in technology.* Minneapolis, MN: University of
Minnesota Press.

Ihde, D. (2009). *Postphenomenology and technoscience: The Peking University
lectures.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Indiana Jones Adventure World [Computer Software]. (2011). San Francisco, CA:
Zynga.

Izod, J. (2001). *Myth, mind and the screen.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University
Press.

Jacobi, J. (1974). *Complex, archetype, symbol in the psychology of C. G. Jung.*

    Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1959)

James Bond 007: Quantum of Solace [Computer software]. (2008). Santa Monica, CA:

    Activision Blizzard.

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide.* New York,

    NY: New York University Press.

Johnson, R. (1996). *Inner works: Using dreams and creative imaginations for*

    personal growth. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Journey [Computer software]. (2012). Tokyo, Japan: Sony Computer Entertainment.

Jung, C. G. (1953). *Psychology and alchemy.* In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The collected*

    works of C. G. Jung (Vol. 12). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

    (Original work published 1952)

Jung, C. G. (1976). *Symbols of transformation*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The*

    collected works of C. G. Jung (Vol. 5). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

    (Original work published 1952)

Jung, C. G. (1978). *The spirit in man, art,* and *literature*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The*

    collected works of C. G. Jung (Vol. 15). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University

    Press. (Original work published 1923)

Jung, C. G. (1989). *Memories, dreams, reflections* (R. Winston & C. Winston, Trans.).

    New York, NY: Vintage. (Original work published 1961)

Jung, C. G. (1990). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious*. In R. F. C. Hull

    (Trans.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 9, Part 1). Princeton, NJ:

    Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1959)

Juul, J. (2005). *Half real: Videogames between real rules and fictional worlds.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Juul, J. (2013). *The art of failure: An essay on the pain of playing video games.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Kelly, K. (2008). *The technium: Evidence of a global superorganism.* Retrieved from http://www.kk.org/the technium/archives/2008/10.

Kerenyi, K. (1976). *Hermes, guide of souls: The mythologems of the masculine source of life* (M. Stein, Trans.). Dallas, TX: Spring. (Original work published 1944)

Kittelson, M. L. (Ed.). (1998). *The soul of popular culture.* Chicago, IL: Open Court.

Klepek, P. (2014). Assassin's creed: Freedom cry review. Retrieved from http://www.giantbomb.com/reviews/assassin-s-creed-iv-freedom-cry-review/1900-626/

Konzack, L., (2009) Philosophical game design. In B. Perron & M. Wolf (Eds.), *The video game theory reader 2* (pp. 33-44). New York, NY: Routledge.

Kung Fu Panda [Computer software]. (2008). Santa Monica, CA: Activision Blizzard.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

La Pensée, E. (2014, March). *Indigenous story telling as game design and narrative.* Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Laurel, B. (1993). *Computers as theatre.* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Longman.

Lazarro, N. (2014, March). *The four emotions that monetize free-to-play games.* Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Legend of Mir [Computer software]. (2009). Seoul, South Korea: WeMade
    Entertainment.

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2 [Computer software]. (2009) Santa Monica, CA: Activision.

McAllister, K. S., (2004) *Game work: Language, power, and computer game culture.*
    Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

McGonigal, J. (2006). *This might be a game: Ubiquitous play and performance at the*
    turn of the twenty-first century (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest
    Dissertation and Theses Global. (305363821)

McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is broken: Why games make us better and how they*
    can change the world. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

McGonigal, J. (2011, March 9). *We don't need no stinkin' badges: How to re-invent*
    reality without gamification. Paper presented at Serious Game Summit, Game
    Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Melander, L. (2008). Paradox neverending: Psyche and the soul of the web: A
    conversation with Derek Robinson. *Spring Journal: Psyche & Nature, 80,* 207-
    225.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2006). *Phenomenology of perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). New
    York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 1945)

Merleau-Ponty, M., & Lefort, C. (Ed.) (1968). *The visible and the invisible: Followed by*
    working notes (A. Lingis, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
    (Original work published 1964)

Miller, D. L. (1973). *Gods and games: Toward a theology of play.* New York, NY:
    Harper & Row. (Original work published 1970)

Mook, B. (2000). Phenomenology, analytical psychology and play therapy. In

    R. Brooke (Ed.), *Pathways into the Jungian world: Phenomenology and*

    analytical psychology (pp. 233-251). Florence, KY: Taylor & Frances/Routledge.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Murray, J. & Graud, H. (2014, March). *Beyond fun: Difficult topics inspire story and*

    design. Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Murray, J. H. (2000). *Hamlet on the holodeck: The future of narrative in cyberspace.*

    Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Neville, B. (1992, July). The charm of Hermes: Hillman, Lyotard and the post-modern

    condition. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, *37*(3), 337-353.

Nitsche, M. (2008). *Video game spaces: Image, play and structure in 3D worlds.*

    Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

O'Connor, S. (2013, January). Video Game Confidential. *TedTalk.* Retrieved from

    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEzNrjTzC-s

O'Connor, S. & Beaver, C. (2013, March). *Evolving emotional content in games*.

    Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Over the Hedge [Computer software]. 2006. Santa Monica, CA: Activision.

Pac-Man [Computer software]. (1980). Tokyo, Japan: Namco.

Palmer, R. (1975). *Hermeneutics: Interpretation theory in Schleiermacher,*

    Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

    (Original work published 1969)

Palmer, R. (2001). *The liminality of Hermes and the meaning of hermeneutics*. Retrieved

    from http://www.mac.edu/faculty/richardpalmer/liminaty.html

Papo & Yo [Computer software]. (2011). Montreal, Canada: Minority.

Passage [Computer software]. (2007). Retrieved from

http://hcsoftware.sourceforge.net/passage/

Perron, B., & Wolf, M. Eds. (2009). *The video game theory reader 2.* New York, NY:

Routledge.

Planetfall [Computer software]. (1983). Cambridge, MA: Infocom.

Pohn, K. R. (2006). *Playing the cosmic game: Exploring play's archetypal aspects*

through the kaleidoscope of culture (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from

ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (304906835)

Popovic, Z. & Cooper, S. (2011, March). *Deeper problems, deeper gamification: Solving*

hard real-world problems with games. Paper presented at Serious Game Summit,

Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Pugh, W., & Wreded, D. (2014, March). *The Stanley parable: A negotiation: Expressive*

Choice: Reality: Time: The Stanley parable. Paper presented at Game Developers

Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Raff, J. (2000). *Jung and the alchemical imagination.* Berwick, ME: Nicholas-Hays.

Ramberg, B., & Gjesdal, K. (2009). Hermeneutics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford*

Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2009 Edition). Retrieved from

http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/hermeneutics/

Rheingold, H. (2002). *Smart mobs: The next social revolution.* Cambridge, MA:

Perseus.

Ricoeur, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: Essays on language, action and interpretation* (J. B. Thompson, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, G. L. (1998). *Cyberspace and virtual reality as subtle body: A depth psychological and phenomenological perspective on the soul of technology and the technology of soul* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (252120375)

Romanyshyn, R. (1989). *Technology as symptom and dream.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Rousse, III, R. (2005). *Game design theory and practice.* Plano, TX: Wordware .

Rousse, III, R. (2013, March). *Seven (or so) techniques for writing a moral game*. Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Rowland, S. (2010). *C. G. Jung in the humanities: Taking the soul's path.* New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal Books.

Ryan, M. L. (2001, July). Beyond myth and metaphor: The case of narrative in digital media. *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research, 1*(1). Retrieved from http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/ryan/

Samuels, A., Shorter, B., & Plaut, F. (2000). *A critical dictionary of Jungian analysis.* New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published in 1986)

Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of play: Game design fundamentals.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Schechner, R. (2003). *Performance theory.* New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 1988)

Schell, J. (2010). *The art of game design: A book of lenses.* Boston, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.

Schell, J. (2013, March). *Future of storytelling.* Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Schubert, D. (2011, September). Good grief!: Designing for the darker side of multiplayer. Design of the times, *Game Developers Magazine,* pp. 48-49.

Sells, B. (Ed.) (2000). *Working with images: The theoretical base of archetypal psychology.* Woodstock, CT: Spring.

Shanun, A. (2011). *TTRI: A phenomenological research project using a new role-play Intervention* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (1507304)

Shashoua, K. (2014, March). *Video game Rx: Narratives a therapy.* Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Schulman, H. (1997). *Living at the edge of chaos: Complex systems in culture and psyche.* Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon Verlag.

Sicart, M. (2008, October). Defining game mechanics. *The International Journal of Computer Game Research, 8*(2). Retrieved from gamestudies.org/0802/articles/sicart

Sicart, M. (2013). *Beyond choices: The design of ethical gameplay.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Slater, G. (2008a, February). *Archetypal psychology.* Lecture conducted from Pacific Graduate Institute, Carpinteria, CA.

Slater, G. (2008b, March). *Archetypal psychology*. Lecture conducted from Pacific

    Graduate Institute, Carpinteria, CA.

Spider-Man 2 [Computer software]. (2004). Santa Monica, CA: Activision.

Stanley Parable [Computer software]. (2011). Retrieved from

    http://www.stanleyparable.com/

Star Wars 1313 [Computer software]. (n.d.). San Francisco, CA: LucasArts.

Star Wars Galaxies [Computer software]. (2003). San Francisco, CA: LucasArts.

State of Decay [Computer software]. (2013). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Studios.

Stein, M. (1999). *Hermes and the creation of space.* Retrieved from

    http://www.jungatlanta.com/articles/Hermes-and-the-Creation-of-Space.pdf

Stevens, A. (2006). The archetypes. In R. Papadopoulos (Ed.), *The handbook*

    of Jungian psychology: Theory, practice and applications (pp. 74-93). London,

    England: Routledge.

Survivance [Computer software]. (2013). Retrieved from http://survivance.org/

Swarthout, J. (2003). *The gods of Silicon Valley: Finding mythological meaning within*

    the technologies of the 21st century (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from

    ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (305242735)

Tabula Rasa [Computer software]. (2007). Seoul, South Korea: NCsoft.

Tetris [Computer software]. (1984). Honolulu, HI: Tetris.

Theodore, S. (2011, September). Conan the Illustrator: The life and work of Frank

    Frazetta. Pixel Pusher. *Game Developers Magazine,* pp. 44-46, San Francisco,

    CA: United Business Media.

Thompson, C. (2013). *Smarter than you think: How technology is changing our minds for the better.* New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Tomb Raider [Computer software]. (2013). Tokyo, Japan: Square Enix.

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon [Computer software]. (2001). Montreuil, France: Ubisoft.

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Desert Siege [Computer software]. (2002). Montreuil, France: Ubisoft.

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell [Computer software]. (2002). Montreuil, France: Ubisoft.

Transformers: Autobots [Computer software]. (2007). Santa Monica, CA: Activision.

Transformers: Decepticons [Computer software]. (2007). Santa Monica, CA: Activision.

Turkle, S. (1994, Summer). Constructions and reconstructions of self in virtual reality: Playing in the MUDS. *Mind, Culture, and Activity,1*(3), 158-167.

Vanaman, S. (2014, March). *Pursuing interactive suspension of disbelief.* Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Vanguard Diplomacy: Saga of Heroes [Computer software]. (2007). San Diego, CA: Sony Online Entertainment.

Virtual. (n.d.). In *Online etymology dictionary.* Retrieved from http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=virtual

Virtual. (2015). In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary* (11th ed)*.* Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/virtual

Von Franz, M-L. (1995) *Projection and re-collection in Jungian psychology: Reflections of the soul*. Peru, Illinois: Open Court Publishing. (Original work published 1978)

Von Franz, M-L. (1996). *The interpretation of fairy tales.* Boston, MA: Shambhala. (Original work published 1970)

Walking Dead [Computer software]. (2012). San Rafael, CA: Telltale Games.

Wiener, N. (1954). *The human use of human beings: Cybernetics and society*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Weinberger, D. (2002). *Small pieces loosely joined: A unified theory of the web.* Cambridge, MA: Perseus.

Weise, M. (2011, October). *The future is now: Emergent narrative without ridiculous tech*. Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, Austin, TX.

Williams, W. (2013, March). *We are not heroes: Contextualizing violence through narrative*. Paper presented at Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Winnicott, D. W. (1971). *Playing and reality.* New York, NY: Routledge.

World of Warcraft [Computer software]. (2001). Irvine, CA: Blizzard Entertainment.

Writer, D. (2008, Fall). Our multiple faces. *SLNN Next,* pp. 20-21.

Zimmerman, E. (2009). Gaming literacy: Game design as a model for literacy in the twenty-first century. In B. Perron & M. Wolf (Eds.), *The video game theory reader 2* (pp. 23-31). New York, NY: Routledge.

Zimmerman, E. (2013). Foreword. In B. De Koven, *The well-played game: A player's philosophy* (pp. vi-xx). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Appendix A
Autobiographical Origins of Researcher's Interest in Topic

It is said that our beginnings inform and create the paths of our quests. As I embarked on research exploring virtual space and its influences, I kept wondering what is it that grips me as a woman to both the images and the potential of virtual worlds. Just as a teenage boy immersed in a virtual gaming session, I immersed myself in pondering the phenomenological and psychological implications of the virtual realms in which archetypal energies shape and create our realities.

As I reflect upon the face of my son, transfixed into the realm that lies on the other side of the border of his computer screen, I sense the computer as something more than a mere distraction for the child. This something "more" lurks as a mystery in my consciousness; it is a something that leads me down a path into a search and a quest of my own. The forward movement down this path of inquiry ultimately requires me to "look back," to reflect upon my roots, my origination point of my journey. Thankfully, the required "autobiographical" section of this dissertation required me to examine and discover the origination point of my calling to explore virtual games through the lens of archetypal psychology.

I had a conscious connection to the realization that I was born into technology. As a newborn I would lie in my father's arms while he studied computer algorithms. He was an officer in the military sent to the University of California, Berkeley to learn how to write programming code for the Strategic Air Command.

A grey, windowless, concrete-block, cubic monolithic building was at the center of the military base I lived on as a child. In this windowless structure my father worked. It was in the 1960s and part of the largest and most expensive military projects to date—

more expensive than the Manhattan Project. The acronym for the operation was "SAGE," where mysterious knowledge was contained. It was a "sacred space" of mystery, secrets, and codes at the heart of our base, protected by guards who would salute my father in recognition and honor. To a child the salute was not just military protocol addressing an officer but recognition of a father, a man who wrote code, and a man the government selected to participate in the protection of our country through this new mysterious technology and the manipulation of "numbers." Because of "it"—the code—we as a nation were safe from harm and annihilation. In the center of the monolithic grey block were computers, linked to other identical grey structures around North America as part of the Air Defense Command. Once as a child I was allowed to go past the guards inside to see a demonstration of the operations of SAGE. I entered into a large, dark room with a blue-green glow being emitted from the screen across the entire wall in the SAGE Sector Control Room. Light guns pointed at the screen tracked and sent signals to intercept potential enemy bomber aircraft. I held my father's warm hand as I witnessed a simulated scramble of fighter jets to intercept the enemy. What I saw that day was to become the foundation for most of the technology used to facilitate interactive computing, online systems, real-time computing, array processing, and interactive computer graphics and communications (Everett, 1983).

My father's next assignment was with NATO in Germany. One day he drove us out to a forest and slowed the car down. He pointed to a driveway, which led to nowhere. In the middle of the forest there was a clearing, nothing else. Here he worked, submerged beneath the ground, in a four-story bunker. Again there was a cloak of secrecy around the

code. The subterranean structure was designed to survive a medium nuclear attack with supplies for three weeks.

Whereas many kids had fathers who went to work in offices, on farms, or the local businesses in a town, mine went into a grey monolithic fortress or submerged beneath the ground of the forest floor, protecting our country through the code he tended. Possibly it is these images that now affect my understanding as my own child links into other worlds beyond the walls of his room to fight battles. I recognize my transference to this research endeavor with the question within my psyche: Are these designers like my father with a commitment to tend to the safety and to protect from annihilation? I wonder about the ones who create the code. Are they preparing the way for what lies ahead in our future connections? Is someone creating the code to protect life? Or, is the code the transmutation of our cultural fears of annihilation? And does the fact that my school bus was not a bright yellow school bus but a military green camouflaged bus that drove through tank operations during military practices influence how I view virtual worlds that address apocalyptic themes—and my insistent search for hope for humanity within these imaginary virtual practice fields? In the darkness of SAGE, when I watched—on a screen the size of the entire wall—the tracking of Soviet and US air interaction, I watched an unfolding of consciousness, an extension of the Self both into and beyond our physical materiality and into the future.

My own professional career as an Oracle relational database consultant often took me through security checks, guards, and scans behind locked doors into sterilized facilities protecting "the code," the source of the secrets of the computers of corporations and of the government. The binary brains in hermetically secured rooms were protected

and nursed with care by the staff. I worked with projects of great diversity—from nuclear reactors, to the production of satellites, to Disney theme parks, to the oil companies' tracking of global seismic movement to discover potential oil fields, to the executives concerned with tracking and altering the price of oil at pump. The "silicon heartbeat" of the organization was revered and protected as if it were a queen bee with the supporting bees buzzing around the hive to support the central existence of the silicon organism's life force. My role was to pollinate ideas and discuss the possibilities and potential of the system. I worked with both developers and executives to envision future functionality and possibility of the code.

My high heels clicked down bland hall floors, escorted into the central systems of corporations to view, reflect, and consult on how to maximize the system, expand its functionality, and provide greater access to the data held within its binary code. The data centers were both a world of austere beauty and a mysterious emptiness in blank, artless containers holding the machines. No sunlight, no windows, no fresh air, and yet something so essential and vital was held within—the code. A tension existed for me as I grappled with both the view about the essential nature of the code as well as a struggle with the void of soul.

As a mother I witnessed the integration of my children to technological digital worlds. Transformed into warlocks of immense power my children leveled up to lead virtual friends who reside in real landscapes in distant lands. Real people virtually inhabit our house. When I enter my children's rooms I ask "Who is here with us?" knowing that their rooms are filled with guests, virtual guests, whose presences are as real and vital to them in their rooms as my presence. The realm of "digital code" that was once only

available in locked and guarded, windowless, monolithic structures or buried beneath the

ground is now casually carried in a pocket allowing connection not only across the globe

but across boundaries of imagination . . . and possibility.

This brings me to one use of technology that I am passionate about: video

gaming. Video gaming is an intoxicating entertainment medium embraced across

economic, educational, cultural groups. Through it new opportunities exist for connection

and building communities. My bias is that I believe there is a responsibility to use this

powerful format of the enactment of mythic content in a positive way to guide people in

architecting a life of meaning-making and soul-making.

As a depth psychology graduate student, my first year of fieldwork laid an

important foundation for the interconnection of time and space through the examination

of both the virtual world of the popular, online multiplayer game, *World of Warcraft* and

the physical world grandeur of the cosmos and the Grand Canyon. The result of the

research was a profound, embodied understanding of the placement of our technology

and culture within the greater scope of billions of years and the breadth of the cosmos.

During my second year fieldwork, I set out to investigate whether technologists

understand that they are creationists of the future reality. My research sites included a

combination of attending Virtual Worlds EXPO, a virtual worlds developers conference

and online immersion within virtual sites, including social networking sites, MMORGS

(Massive Multiplayer Online Role Games), YouTube, and various blogs in preparation

for attending and interviewing developers of virtual worlds and games. I interviewed

game designers and visionaries who model and shape participatory virtual realms of play.

As I interviewed designers at various Virtual World EXPOs and Game Developers Conferences (GDC), I noticed their "leaning into" the interview as if it were the most intimate, private, and urgent conversation they could have—as if something deep within needed to be spoken and touched. It was as if I had tapped into an underlying concern that was not being spoken about: the placement of soul in the virtual realm. The arrogant stance, with which I am so familiar from past decades of doing the technological circuits of conferences, is often softened. I noticed a pause and a reflection as designers considered the affects of virtual worlds upon the soul. My awareness of "the field" surrounding these conversations made me understand the need to continue the research.

And with that, I too, lean into the conversation.

Appendix B
Hermeneutic Participatory Inquiry Research Model
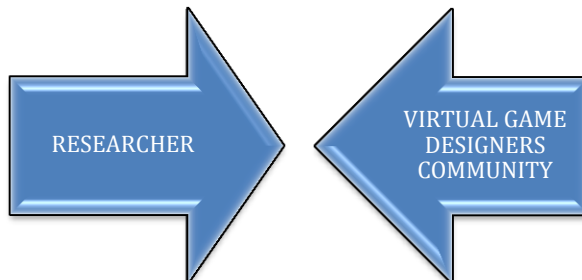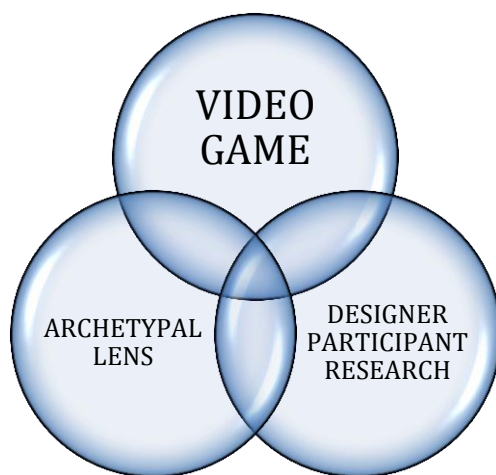
HERMENEUTIC PARTICIPATORY INQUIRY
RESEARCH MODEL

Appendix C
Pilot Study: Games as Theater for the Soul Questions

"Fantasy-images are both the raw materials and finished products of psyche, and they are
the privileged mode of access to knowledge of soul."
(Hillman, 1976, p. xvii)

"By "soul" I mean the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through
reflective speculation, dream, image, and *fantasy*—that mode which recognizes all
realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical."

1. Personifying or Imagining

Myth offers innumerable personifications in imaginal space. It allows a story to be told,
and the player to identify with archetypal forces.

1. PERSONIFYING   OR   IMAGINING THINGS

Research Questions	*Interviewing Questions*
How does the game allow the image to work on us? In other words, do the images of the game tap into something psychological within the player?	Do you think the different images within a game might represent different aspects of the players' personality? If so, are you intentionally designing it or does it just show up in the game?
Do you think there is an affect of "playing" with these fragments of our personality that affects our day world?	Do you feel that different aspects of our personality are played out within the game? If so, what do you feel the relationships are between the images and the personality?
Do virtual games provide us a way of "meeting our individual fragmentation, our many voices within?" (Hillman, 1976, p. 3)	Can you give examples?
Do the virtual games take an inside event and put it outside? (p. 12)	

2. Pathologizing or Falling Apart
(To experience life through the darker perspectives of affliction and anxiety.)

Soul is messy. Like Dante's Inferno and the great classic dramas throughout history, there is a draw to descend into anxiety, fear, confrontation with death and dismemberment, alienation and annihilation. The central themes of pathological confrontations have always been present in culture (plays, religion, film, and games).

2. PATHOLOGIZING OR   FALLING APART

Research Questions	*Interview Questions*
How do you view the role of descent/pathology in the game you design/play? Please give an example of a game you design or play.	Why do you think there is so much dark content within games?
What role do you think this provides the player/or yourself as a designer to immerse in the depths of a descent?	What do you think are the effects for an individual to encounter this material within games?
	What do you think the player is feeling and needing while they engage with the darker elements of the game?
How might these expressions of pathology be expressions of the individual within the greater culture?	The dark side has many elements including violence, anxiety, fear …
	What and why do you use those elements in the games?
	Can you give examples?

3. PSYCHOLOGIZING OR SEEING THROUGH

Research Questions	*Interview Questions*
Does the ritual of the game provide as a vehicle for reflection? In other words, does the opportunity to play/create the game allow engagement where the player/designer is able to see possibilities of behavior for the day world? Please give an example of a game you design or play.	Do you see the game as metaphorical? What do you think the effects are of the ritual of play? Do you think there is a transfer into the person's day world? If so, what do you think it is?
Does the game speak to a cultural wound? Does it move it towards healing?	What do you think of the notion that "You become what you play" or that "Because you play, you don't need that emotion/attitude anymore" (i.e. the play satiates the "need" by allowing you to act out in fantasy mode) What language would you use for "day world"? "Dark side"? Are you explicitly designing/crafting the story to elicit a particular reaction? Do you feel/think you explicitly design for "art" or for "consumer consumption" (manipulation?)

4. DEHUMANIZING   SOUL-MAKING

Research Questions	***Interview Questions***
Does the experience of being within the imaginal realm of the game open up new possibilities?	
Can you think of particular game design, which potentially transforms the players unconscious desires into conscious actions in the day world? Please describe.	
Can you think of game designs which lock players into pathological patterns of the game without providing "a way out," effecting their behavior in their day world?	

5. ENVISIONING   THE FUTURE

What do you see the role of fantasy?
How do you envision the transformation of
the role played within the game to the role
in society?

How do you see your role as a designer of
these games in shaping the future?

What world would you envision ten,
twenty, fifty years from now?
Do the games you create today reflect the
world you *want* in the future? Or the world
you *fear*?

For jobs that impact the psyche, is there
any responsibility to ethics?

Do you feel there are any moral or ethical
standards for yourself as a designer?

6. SURVEY QUESTIONS

What questions should be asked?

Does the conversation of "soul" have any value within game design?

To respond to these questions more completely, is a Non-Disclosure Agreement
required?

7. RESPONDER INFORMATION

Name:

Company:

Title:

Email:

Phone:

Games Designed:

Favorite Games:

Appendix D
Ethics Committee Application

RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This study will explore from a virtual game designer's perspective the archetypal components present within virtual games. The study will employ James Hillman's four processes for soul-making as a lens into a virtual game. The research is a participatory process designed as a guided interview.

1. PARTICIPANTS: The participants in the research will be individuals within the game development industry whom I previously met while attending the GDC conference, GDC Online, IGDA (International Game Developers Association), and the Virtual World Expo. These individuals indicated an interest in participating in my research. I am soliciting 3-7 individuals from within the field of game design for their breadth of experience as professional developers and players of virtual games.

2. PROCEDURES: Prior to the interview I will contact 3-7 potential participants through email to verify their availability and interest in participating within the research project. Once I have identified a participant I will follow up with a phone call or Skype session to discuss the logistics of the interview: time, location, Informed Consent Form, any legal requirements such as nondisclosure agreements for the interview, access to the virtual games under consideration, and ability to provide potential screen shots or video of any gameplay.

    I will travel to all participants' locations for the initial face-to-face interview. Any follow-up sessions may take place in person, through email, Skype, or phone, based upon the appropriateness of communication.

3. CONSENT: Informed Consent Forms and Non-Disclosure Agreements will be essential to my investigation through interviews due to the commercial competitiveness within the virtual gaming industry. I will provide all participants with an Informed Consent Form. In addition, I anticipate being asked to provide an overview of my research project as well as the specific questions I plan to ask to the public relations and legal departments of the companies where my participants work.

    Toward this end, I will submit for approval a brief summation of the purpose of the research, the interviewing technique and sample questions, an overview of how the interview will be conducted, and the possible use of the material. I anticipate that this document will need to be reformatted based upon the unique requirements of the participants' public relations and legal departments. It is possible that, due to confidentiality, the transcripts of the interview might not be allowed to be included in published work.

    Based upon the participants' legal requirements, I will submit any required Non-Disclosure Agreements to Pacifica Graduate Institute for review. It should be noted that for the sake of this study I do not anticipate the need to discuss current projects under development, for I plan to focus on games that already exist in the public marketplace.

4. RISKS: A potential risk is the participant's disclosing of confidential material or violating nondisclosure agreements.

5. SAFEGUARDS: Confidentiality will be maintained at all times: participants will be offered an opportunity to work with a pseudonym, in which case transcribed

and taped materials will not carry identification information and no other party will have access to identifying information. Participants have the opportunity to request anonymity at any time of involvement in the research. For the sake of this study I do not anticipate the need to discuss current projects under development. To prevent nondisclosure and confidentiality, the interviews will focus on games that already exist in the public marketplace. All material related to the participant will be reviewed by the participant prior to submission to ensure confidentiality and ethical representation of content.

6. BENEFITS: An in-depth methodology of investigating virtual games from a soul-making perspective will hopefully lead to the following outcomes: (1) a heightened sensitivity to the role of game elements affect in reflection of individual and cultural "soul-making," (2) an alternative perspective in which to view the play and design of virtual games, and (3) an opportunity for participants to give voice to their feelings and beliefs on what the experience of gaming provides in context to meaning-making.

7. POST INTERVIEW: I will mail each participant's transcribed interview to that participant and follow up with phone and email contact. Participants will be asked to add any additional comments or clarifications following their reviews of the transcripts. This follow-up will also provide opportunity to assess for any negative outcomes from the interview process; request anonymity to protect participant; and to review for any potential violation of nondisclosure agreements.

   If any negative psychological outcome from the interview process is identified, referrals of therapist will be offered, if necessary.

8. ATTACHMENTS:

1. Informed Consent Form

2. Instructions to Participant

3. Research Instruments

4. Research Study Introduction

Attachment 1
Informed Consent Form
Virtual Games: Games as Theater for the Soul

Research for Academic Paper
For Pacifica Graduate Institute
By Susan Savett
(email address)
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

I agree to have Susan Savett ask me a series of questions about the experience of play in digital games.

I acknowledge that I will be offered flexible opportunities to participate (interview, mail, email, or telephone) in filling out a brief survey and in responding to a short-answer questionnaire. I am aware that answering these questions will take about 90 minutes for each portion, depending upon the extent to which I elaborate or contemplate the answers.

I understand that I may have the opportunity to participate in open-discussion interviews online, by telephone, or at the GDC at locales to be mutually agreed upon by Susan Savett and myself.

I acknowledge that my name will not be recorded on the questionnaire and that only the investigator will see or use my answers in the analysis of the data unless I specify other-wise. I understand that I may be able to request anonymity at any time during the study.

I understand that this research is for academic purpose in a dissertation or academic publication and not intended to provide immediate value to me personally.

Information about this study has been given to me by Susan Savett. I can reach her any time I have questions by calling or emailing her as provided above.

I understand that I can refuse to answer any question and can withdraw from this study without consequence at any time.

I am not receiving any compensation for participating in this study.

Please check one:

____ If any portion of my experience is used or quoted, I would like to be referred to by my name.

____ I request anonymity in any work that comes out of this interview.

Date _____   Signature _____

Print Name _____

Email Address _____

Attachment 2

Instructions to Participant

- Interviews will take place in a mutually agreed upon location. The two 90-minute interviews will be conducted on separate days at mutually agreed times.

- Prior to the interviews I will submit a brief questionnaire addressing your gaming background via email or phone.

- The interviews will be taped then transcribed into a written format. Your confidentiality will be respected at all times. Any company nondisclosures will be adhered to.

- You will be asked a series of questions about your experience with virtual games.

- All Copyrights and Intellectual Property Rights laws will be adhered.

- You are free to take a break from the interview or discontinue the interview at any point. You are able to request anonymity at any time during the study. You may drop out of the research at any time. If you should feel psychological discomfort counseling referrals will be provided.

- Following the transcription of the interviews you will be sent a copy of the transcript. After reviewing the document you will be contacted by phone or email and asked to add comment and/or clarification. Added comments will then be included in the final draft of the dissertation.

- If you have any questions regarding the study you may contact me at (email address) or call during business hours at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Attachment 3
Research Instruments

Interviews will be taped and transcribe. To facilitate transcriptions I will use the voice recognition transcription software, *Dragon Dictate* by Nuance Communications. If another product comes to market during the course of research interviews that increases functionality or affordability, without compromising the ethical integrity or the confidentiality within the participant-researcher relation, another product may be substituted.

Attachment 4
Research Study Introduction:
Virtual Games as Theater for Soul

Virtual Games as Theater for Soul is a qualitative study for purposes of fulfilling

doctoral requirements at Pacifica Graduate Institute. Pacifica Graduate Institute, is the

home of the Joseph Campbell archives and archetypal psychologist, James Hillman

archives. Steeped in the depth psychological traditions of Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung,

Joseph Campbell and James Hillman, Pacifica Graduate Institutes looks at what lies

below the surface of individual and cultural events.

This research project examines the relationship between virtual gaming and

psyche through the lens of archetypal psychology. The interviews of this research will

focus on the psychological concepts of archetype, image, and soul as presented within

virtual games.

The research will consist of two 45-90 minute interviews will be conducted at

your convenience. The interviews will reflect upon a virtual game of the participant's

selection that is currently in the public marketplace.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Susan Savett at (xxx) xxx-

xxxx) during business hours or email at savett@vdepth.net.