

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE RAINBOW OF DESIRE:
A BRIDGE FROM THE VIRTUAL TO THE REAL WORLD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts in Theatre

By

Jane E. Hull-Swift

May 2013

The thesis of Jane E. Hull-Swift is approved:

_____ Professor Mary C. Schaffer, Member	_____ Date
_____ Professor Douglas E. Kaback, Member	_____ Date
_____ Professor Ah-jeong Kim, Chair	_____ Date

California State University, Northridge

DEDICATION

To my thesis committee, who told me to write what I feel passionate about!

To my husband, who supported me and took care of me throughout
the process—words can never express how much I thank you!

To my friends, who can finally stop listening to my excuse:

“I can’t go out! I have to work on my thesis!”

To my parents for their love and support!

And finally—to my daughter, who inspires me beyond inspiration!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page	ii
Dedication	iii
List of Tables	vi
Abstract	vii
Introduction	1
Theatre of the Oppressed Glossary	7
Chapter One	
A Brief Background	9
The Theory	12
Osmosis – the First Hypothesis	16
Metaxis – the Second Hypothesis	25
Analogical Induction – the Third Hypothesis	30
Chapter Two	
Establishing a Sense of Community	33
Without Freedom, There is no Life...	38
The Mechanization of the Body and the Mind	40
Suppression of Emotions and Actions	44
The Gamer Personality	46
Definition of Addiction	47
Chapter Three	55
The Power of Acknowledgment	59
The Games	60
The Exercises	65

Character Creation and Memory of the Senses	68
Rainbow of Desire Techniques	76
The Prospective Techniques	77
Image Theatre Work	80
The Introspective Techniques	84
Cops in the Head Techniques	87
Conclusion	92
Works Cited	94
Appendix A: From Desire into Action – Workshop in Oakland, CA.	100
Appendix B: reSTART recovery program information	101
Appendix C: OLGA and OLG-ANON recovery program information	102
Appendix D: Morningside - Video Game Addiction Program Treatment Center	103
Appendix E: Inspirations for Youth: Teen Game Video Addiction	104

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: Comparison between two sets of diagnostic criteria for Addictive Disorder	52

ABSTRACT

THE RAINBOW OF DESIRE:

A BRIDGE FROM THE VIRTUAL TO THE REAL WORLD

By

Jane E. Hull-Swift

Master of Arts in Theatre

The benefits and pitfalls of video gaming and online gaming—specifically MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing games), have generated multiple academic studies over the last two decades, many of which suggest that a growing percentage of the population is becoming addicted to gaming. Even though excessive and problematic online gaming has not been officially classified as an addiction in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), there are those in the mental health field that view this behavior as a significant health risk (Barry 2002, Billieux, *et al* 2013, Griffiths 2005/2008, Han, *et al* 2010, Ming & Peng 2009, Sim, *et al* 2012, Stetina, *et al* 2011, Wiemer-Hastings 2005, Wood 2004, Young 2007/2009). Consequently, there are numerous video game addiction treatment and recovery centers around the world that provide behavioral therapy and a mental health approach to this disorder. One alternative therapeutic component that has not been widely utilized thus far – at least not found to be widely utilized as of this writing – is the use of theatre games,

exercises, and theatrical techniques as a supplementary component to current online gaming addiction recovery programs. With the intention of providing a viable supplementary component, this thesis will explore the oppressive aspects of excessive and problematic online gaming and utilize the theory and praxis of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed—specifically the *Rainbow of Desire* techniques—as a theoretical framework to illustrate the feasibility of applying Boal's techniques to oppressive online gaming scenarios. Ideally, this will provide the foundation for future fieldwork.

INTRODUCTION

We are a visually-driven, digitally-fixated generation that can easily tap into the information highway through multiple platforms such as: the Internet, Facebook, social networking, tablets, and cell phones. One of the most popular forms of digital entertainment, which continues to evolve and become more technically sophisticated with each progressive incarnation, is video games. There are many different types of video games, but this thesis will focus specifically on online gaming—MMORPGs, which is an acronym for ‘massively multiplayer online role-playing games.’¹ These games allow hundreds of gamers from around the globe to join together online via the World Wide Web and play in an ever-evolving virtual world. This is a world open 24-hours a day and it can be easily accessed on any computer from the comfort of your own home.

The benefits and pitfalls of video gaming in general, and online gaming specifically, have generated multiple academic studies to analyze the aesthetic, technological, semiotic, and sociological aspects of digital gameplay. Research conducted over the last two decades suggests that a growing percentage of the population is becoming addicted to the Internet, which can “lead to loneliness and a decline in social engagement.”² Kimberly S. Young, a licensed psychologist and an internationally known expert on Internet addiction and online behavior, indicates that Internet and online gaming allows the users to “create their own social identities, raising the users’ self-

¹ Massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) are video games in which players create an avatar that evolves and interacts with other avatars in a persistent virtual world. (Billieux, *et al* 103)

² In a study conducted at the Stanford Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society, researchers found that use of the Internet could lead to loneliness and a decline in social engagement. While controversial, the researchers concluded that “the more hours people use the Internet, the less time they spend in contact with real human beings” (Young 2007).

esteem. It is this anonymity that gives those with low self-confidence and lacking social skills the desire to create a virtual life for themselves on the Internet. In these cases, the Internet becomes a substitute for real-life social interaction, giving the user an escape from reality” (Wiemer-Hastings 111).³ Online gamers, additionally, can escape reality and interact with a virtual environment—providing gamers with the ability to experience other-worldly dimensions: complete with flying creatures and mystical beings.

As of this writing, the potentially addictive aspects of excessive online gaming, and the negative effects of long term repetitive gaming on the body and mind, have not been formally classified by the psychiatric/psychology system as one of the Addictive Disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM).⁴ Yet, there are those in the mental health field that views this behavior as a significant health risk.⁵ Consequently, there are numerous video game addiction treatment and recovery centers around the world that provide behavioral therapy and a mental health approach to this disorder. A number of these treatment centers view excessive online gaming behavior as “a clinical impulse control disorder, identical to gambling addiction” and that “therapy is the most common course of treatment for video game addicts” (see Appendix

³ Research on Internet addiction originated in the US by Dr. Kimberly Young. She founded the Center for Internet Addiction in 1995 and travels nationally conducting seminars on the impact of the Internet. She is the author of numerous articles, book chapters, and four books on Internet addiction. In 1996, she presented the first paper on the topic at the American Psychological Association’s annual conference held in Toronto entitled, “Internet Addiction: The Emergence of a New Disorder”. Since then, studies have documented Internet addiction in a growing number of countries such as Italy, Pakistan, Iran, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Reports also indicate that Internet addiction has become a serious public health concern in China, Korea, and Taiwan. Treatment centers have emerged across the US and abroad.

⁴ DSM - This manual provides comprehensive classification of officially recognized psychiatric disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association, for use by mental health professionals to ensure uniformity of diagnosis.

⁵ See Works Cited: Barry 2002, Billieux, *et al* 2013, Griffiths 2005/2008, Han, *et al* 2010, Khan 2007, Ming & Peng 2009, Sim, *et al* 2012, Stetina, *et al* 2011, Wiemer-Hastings 2005, Wood 2004, Young 2007/2009.

E). The Morningside Recovery Center ⁶ believes that “dealing with people face to face in group therapy is a big part of recovery for clients who have spent all of their time interacting in a virtual world.” They also suggest that “shyness or social awkwardness is a key feature of the disease” (see Appendix D).

Some *alternative* therapies used at these treatment and recovery centers include: music therapy, art therapy, meditation, and yoga—all of which are beneficial and support the expansion of the senses and the break down of body mechanizations caused by long term repetitive online game playing. One therapeutic component that has not been widely utilized thus far – at least not found to be widely utilized as of this writing – is the use of theatre as a supplementary component to current recovery programs. As with online gaming, theatre can be very interactive and since gamers seem to enjoy the role-playing aspects of the online virtual world, it might be of benefit to translate this role-playing and *game* playing to an aesthetic space where they can interact face to face as a group—as a community.

For Morningside—and other similar treatment centers—the concept of face to face group therapy is, for the most part, passive and discussion-based. Whereas, in the aesthetic space of theatre, face to face interaction allows the online gaming community to experience creative freedom: to fully engage their minds and their bodies through the use of theatre games and exercises. This thesis proposes utilizing theatre games, exercises, and theatrical techniques as a supplementary component to current online gaming addiction recovery programs—as set forth by the theoretical framework of Augusto Boal

⁶ Morningside is a certified treatment program through California Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs and is a member of NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Health.

and based on his Theatre of the Oppressed canon of work: specifically the *Rainbow of Desire* techniques.

Augusto Boal's theatrical canon of theory and praxis encourages "individuals and groups to participate actively in socially engaged, critically reflexive theatre processes and, by extension, to recognize their dynamic and transformative potential in society" (Babbage 305). Boal's work is used worldwide and his "form of theatre helps individuals and communities liberate themselves from oppressive situations and beliefs" (Sullivan, *et al* 218). The term *oppression*, for many of us in North America, may conjure up images of countries, whose people are oppressed by severe social conditions: living in a violent dictatorial environment—charged with political and military corruption. Boal was born in post-depression Brazil in 1931 – at a time of revolution and popular discontent. By the 1960s and early 1970s: the economy worsened, the army staged two coups, trade unions were suppressed, the media was strictly controlled, military rule became more repressive, and a wave of urban guerilla warfare pervaded the country.⁷ Boal's earlier theatre work reflected this oppressive environment of violence and corruption. He sought solutions to the debilitating passive role that governmental and urban guerilla oppressions enforced upon its people.

From this perspective, applying Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed concepts to illuminate and alleviate the causes of problematic online video gaming may seem improbable and extreme, but the word *oppression* can be defined not only as an "unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power," but also as "a sense of being weighed down in body or mind" (Merriam-Webster). This second definition can be applied to those online

⁷ <http://www.localhistories.org/brazil.html>

gamers, who have the need to be consistently engaged with the virtual world for long periods of time—disconnected from the real world, which in extreme cases can jeopardize or risk the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity. When this occurs, this loss of freedom, this loss of one’s potential to live a full life can be viewed as oppression. Excessive game playing can definitely give one the sense of being weighed down in body *and* mind – mechanizing them, thus causing other fractions of self to atrophy.

This thesis will illustrate the oppressive aspects of excessive and problematic online gaming as viewed through the theoretical lens of Boal’s concepts. After exploring these theories, Boal’s praxis will be theoretically applied to an oppressive online gaming scenario. It is the goal of this thesis to provide the foundation for future fieldwork.

Chapter one offers a summary of the fundamental Theatre of the Oppressed (TO)⁸ theories in order to present a cohesive system of effective tools that can be applied as a supplemental component for online gaming addiction recovery programs. The expansion of Boal’s work to Europe led to the birth of the *Rainbow of Desire* techniques, which address individual oppressions in contrast to governmental/military oppressions. Subsequently this inspired Boal to formulate the following hypothesis: “the cops are in our heads, but their headquarters and barracks must be on the outside. The task was to discover how these cops got into our heads and to invent ways of dislodging them” (Boal *Rain* 8). The three hypotheses of *The Cop in the Head* process will then be explored and applied to issues in the online gaming community. A more thorough examination of the

⁸ TO is an abbreviation which is sometimes used for Theatre of the Oppressed and will be used as such in this thesis.

“cops in the head” practical techniques will be conducted in chapter three.

Chapter two will examine how Boal’s concepts of: community, games, and the mechanization of the body and mind correlate to the online gaming community. Key questions that illustrate the oppressive aspects of online gaming and how the loss of freedom can lead to the loss in the quality of life will also be addressed to further explore the feasibility of applying Boal’s theatre techniques as part of an online gaming addiction recovery program.

Chapter three will outline key practical games, exercises, and techniques utilized in a Rainbow of Desire workshop in Oakland, CA. and illustrate the applications of these concepts to common scenarios that gamers seem to struggle with in the online gaming community. As ancillary support, exercises and techniques described in Boal’s books, *The Rainbow of Desire* and *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* will be utilized.

Online gaming terminology will be defined in footnotes when deemed necessary. Below is a list of commonly used terms in Theatre of the Oppressed:

- **Actor:** A person who performs an action, whether onstage or off.
- **Antagonist:** A character in conflict with the story's protagonist.
- **Cop in the Head:** A Theatre of the Oppressed technique aimed at dismantling internalized oppression.
- **Difficultator:** A facilitator who offers challenges to a group as part of a workshop process.
- **Dynamisation:** The process of adding movements, sounds and words into a piece of Image Theatre.
- **Facilitator:** A person who directs the flow of a discussion or workshop. Literally "one who makes things easy."
- **Forum Theatre:** A play performed in front of an audience in which audience members can step onstage, take the place of a character or characters and change the story's outcome.
- **Games/Gamesercizes:** Group activities that get people comfortable with themselves and each other; build trust and develop skills necessary for working with the language of Theatre of the Oppressed.
- **Ideal image:** A desired, improved variation on the Real Image in Image Theatre.
- **Image:** A motionless sculpture made from human figures.
- **Image Theatre:** A form of Theatre of the Oppressed that uses collectively constructed still images to convey meaning.
- **Joker:** The facilitator/difficultator in a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop. For this thesis the terms facilitator or director has been chosen in lieu of 'Joker.'
- **Kinesthetic:** Relating to the body and/or movement.
- **Mask:** An image that an actor takes on to embody a character.
- **Mirror:** When an actor or actors take on the image, movements, sounds, words, characteristics and/or actions of another actor.

- **Objective observation:** Responding to an image with commentary on its physical nature alone.
- **Oppressed:** Anyone who is subject to others having power over them.
- **Oppressor:** A person who has power over another person.
- **Pedagogy of the Oppressed:** A practice of teaching and learning developed by Paulo Freire that inspired his friend Augusto Boal to create Theatre of the Oppressed.
- **Player:** Participant in a theatre workshop.
- **Protagonist:** or “Actor” is the name given for the role of the person who is the focus of the predicament, the one who is in some way seeking to accommodate or be liberated from the types of oppression being addressed.
- **Rainbow of Desire:** A specific therapeutic theatre technique, and also a family of techniques, aimed at dismantling internalized oppression.
- **Real image:** A main character from whose perspective a story is told.
- **Sculpt:** The process of creating images with people’s bodies.
- **Self-sculpt:** To create an image with one’s own body.
- **Spect-actor:** A participant in the Theatre of the Oppressed, both spectator and actor.
- **Subjective observation:** Responding to an image with commentary based on perception, speculation and intuition.
- **Technique:** An intricate Theatre of the Oppressed exercise—more complicated than games.
- **Theatre of the Oppressed:** A system of theatrical games and techniques that examine and dismantle dynamics of oppression.
- **Theatre pedagogy:** The use of theatre to develop language and social awareness; Theatre of the Oppressed is a form of theatre pedagogy.
- **TO:** Abbreviation for "Theatre of the Oppressed."

Theatre of the Oppressed glossary from Philadelphia Theatre of the Oppressed website – <http://tophiladelphia.blogspot.com/2011/12/theatre-of-oppressed-glossary.html>

CHAPTER ONE

The foundation of Augusto Boal's games, exercises and techniques is his theory: one derives from the other. In his book, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Augusto Boal has devised a plan that transforms the spectator into an actor: a spect-actor—changing him from being an object to becoming a subject, from witness into protagonist (126). But, before examining Boal's theatrical theories and how they can be applied to oppressive online gaming scenarios, this chapter will begin with a brief summary of the events that greatly impacted Boal's work and his world, so as to gain a better understanding regarding the circumstances that led to the occasion of his writing *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

A Brief Background

From 1956 to 1971, Augusto Boal was the director of the Arena Theater, in São Paulo, Brazil. The Arena Theater went through several stages before finding its own system—the “Joker” system. During these early stages of the Arena Theater, Boal suggested that with the “Joker” they could propose “a permanent system of theater (structure of text and cast)” which contained “all the instruments of all styles or genres” (Boal *Thea* 176). Instead of performing scenes from plays that had nothing to do with the Brazilian people, the Arena Theater created scenes in an aesthetic space according to the

problems it presented. The “Joker” system is still in use today in theatre of the oppressed workshops around the world—specifically in Forum Theatre.⁹

Initially, in 1956, the Arena Theater embraced the “realist” stage, the goal of which was to stage the exact reproduction of life as it is. They performed classical text written by foreign authors, but instead of trying to imitate foreign accents and foreign acting styles, the Arena’s Brazilian actors spoke in their own language and imitated “the reality visible around them” (160). This stage naturally led to the need for a Brazilian dramaturgy with the goal of creating Brazilian characters for the actors and thus the Seminar of Dramaturgy in São Paulo was founded. However, with this new Brazilian dramaturgy came the challenge of how to transform “young people with almost no experience either in life or on the stage [...] into playwrights” (161). The first play, *They Don’t Wear Tuxedos*, written by the Brazilian playwright, G. Guarneiri, was performed at the Arena Theater in February 1958 and ran for a year. “It represented the first appearance in theater of the urban, proletarian drama.” It was the first of many plays written by Brazilian playwrights during the four years that followed (until 1964), which gave the Arena Theater the creative freedom to close “its doors to European playwrights, regardless of their high quality [and open] them to anyone who wished to talk about Brazil to a Brazilian audience” (162).

This transformation coincided with the flourishing of industry in São Paulo and the emergence of political nationalism, which informed the featured works produced at

⁹In Forum Theatre a problem – in an unsolved form – is presented to the audience (spect-actors), who is invited to suggest and enact solutions. The problem is always the symptom of oppression, and generally involves visible oppressors and a protagonist who is oppressed. In its purest form, both actors and spect-actors will be people who are victims of the oppression under consideration; that is why they are able to offer alternative solutions, because they themselves are personally acquainted with the oppression. (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors* p.xxiv)

the Arena Theater. These works reflected their vision of the world, which at times contained politically charged messages challenging the harsh conditions that accompanied life under a dictatorship. Two military coups occurred in Brazil during this time – in 1964 and then again in 1968 – which enforced intense censorship on the type of works presented at the Arena Theatre.

Despite the censorship, Boal continued to work in opposition to the military regime, which eventually led to his arrest in 1971. It has been stated in several biographies that Boal was walking home from an Arena performance of Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, when he was kidnapped off the street, arrested, and tortured (Paterson 2012). After three months, he was released with a warning not to continue his subversive activities. Boal eventually went into exile in Argentina where he further developed the techniques he began at the Arena Theatre and it was here that he wrote *Theatre of the Oppressed*. So, after experiencing the oppressive effects that those in power can cast upon its people, it may be more apparent why Boal took the position that TO belongs to the oppressed and has to be controlled by the oppressed.

Boal began his theatre career in a politically and socially hostile country and his earlier work dealt primarily with the poor and the working class; those factions of society that had lost their voice and their hope for change. When his work expanded to Europe, Boal began to apply his techniques to oppressions that were less political and more personal such as: the fear of intimate relationships, alienation, social isolation, loneliness, unworthiness, and the impossibility of communicating with others. These more introspective techniques take on the form of "theatre and therapy" and are the foundation of his book, *The Rainbow of Desire: the Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*. It is the

techniques – the praxis – embodied in *The Rainbow of Desire* that will be the focus of chapter three.

An important aspect to consider is that the Rainbow techniques do not stand alone outside the canon of Boal's theatre techniques, but rather, are rooted in the main body of theory, as articulated in the *Theatre of the Oppressed*. In the "Translator's Introduction" of *The Rainbow of Desire*, Adrian Jackson expresses that TO "has stood the test of time, and is constantly refreshed and invigorated by the energetic, urgent extension and development of practice" (xviii). Thus, to understand the Rainbow techniques and specifically the "cops in the head" exercises, it is essential to summarize the fundamental TO theories and concepts in order to present a cohesive system of effective tools that can be applied as a therapeutic component for online gaming addiction recovery programs.

The Theory

TO has two fundamentally linked principles: "it aims (a) to help the spect-actor transform himself into a protagonist of the dramatic action and rehearse alternatives for his situation, so that he may then be able (b) to extrapolate into his real life the actions he has rehearsed in the practice of theatre" (Boal *Rain* 40). Boal utilizes the term spect-actor to illustrate the concept that "the spectators and actors have dual functions, mobile and reciprocal, and the theatrical action becomes one that all participants—actors and audience—can exercise. The spect-actor function is fundamental to all Theatre of the Oppressed activities" (Picher 85). It is vital to understand a key concept that recurs throughout Boal's writings: creative engagement increases the human capacity to imagine multiple possibilities for our world and by encouraging someone to engage in dramatic

action, you stimulate their desire to change instead of accepting that which is oppressive.

As previously indicated in the Introduction, it is in the aesthetic space of the theatre, where the face to face interaction will allow the online gaming community to experience creative freedom: to fully engage their mind and their body through the use of theatre games and exercises. One of the most important functions of Boal's games, exercises, and techniques is that it makes theatre less mysterious—allowing for the language of theatre to become comprehensible and accessible to everyone. The fear of memorizing lines or playing a character is removed, because the players improvise scenarios that are recognizable and identifiable and that are drawn from their own life experiences. In the “Preface to the First Edition” in his book, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal emphasizes that:

Everything that actors do on stage, we do throughout our lives, always and everywhere. Actors talk, move, dress to suit the setting, express ideas, reveal passions – just as we all do in our daily lives. The only difference is that actors are conscious that they are using the language of the theatre, and are thus better able to turn it to their advantage, whereas the woman and man in the street do not know that they are speaking theatre.

(15-16)

In order for the woman and man on the street to embody the language of the theatre in its simplest form, Boal created new or modified existing games, exercises and techniques that are fun, very interactive and encourage participation. These games promote the spirit of play—a freeing of the imagination—and the total sequence of simple-to-more-complex exercises “make up what Boal calls a “subjunctive” theatre, that

is, a theatre designed to question values and structures” (Picher 82). Several of these core exercises and techniques will be explored in chapter three.

Earlier in this chapter, it was discussed that spect-actors are changed from witnesses into protagonists, so that they become the transformers of the dramatic action. The focus is on the action itself and power transfers from the character to the spect-actor, who now takes on the protagonist role and changes the dramatic action through the acting out of various possible solutions. The goal is not to find the “correct” solution, but to have the spect-actors become more conscious of the possibilities presented by all the spect-actors – demonstrating alternatives that challenge a standard model. “The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action” (Boal *Thea* 122). Boal states that a session of TO never ends since the objective is:

Not to close a cycle, to generate a catharsis or to bring an end to a process in development. On the contrary, its objective is to encourage autonomous activity, to set a process in motion, to stimulate transformative creativity, to change spectators into protagonists. And it is for precisely this reason that theatre of the oppressed should be the initiator of changes the culmination of which is not the aesthetic phenomenon but real life. (Boal *Games* 275)

These aforementioned theories and concepts are the foundation of TO, derived initially from Boal’s experiences living in a politically and socially hostile country. When

he expanded his techniques to address individual oppressions—the basis for the Rainbow techniques, Boal initially had reservations about dealing with these “new” oppressions:

For someone like me, fleeing explicit dictatorships of a cruel and brutal nature, it was natural that these themes should at first seem superficial and scarcely worthy of attention. It was as if I was always asking, mechanically: ‘But where are the cops?’ Because I was used to working with concrete, visible oppressions. Little by little, I changed my opinion. I discovered, for instance, that the percentage of suicides was much higher in countries like Sweden or Finland – where the essential needs of the citizen in matters of housing, health, food and social security are met – than in countries like ours, Third World countries. In Latin America the major killer is hunger; in Europe, it is drug overdose. But, whatever form it comes in, death is still death. And, thinking about the suffering of a person who chooses to take his or her own life in order to put an end to the fear of emptiness or the pangs of loneliness, I decided to work with these new oppressions and to consider them as such. (Boal *Rain* 8)

Boal examined these new oppressions internalized by the individual – the cop in the head¹⁰ – the voices representing those oppressive forces that keep an individual from living a healthy and happy life. His exercises create three dimensional images of the voices – physical forms; a character for each cop in the head that can be confronted. He wrote, “I started from the following hypothesis: the cops are in our heads, but their

¹⁰ Augusto Boal. “The Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses.” 1990. In this *TDR* article, Boal explains that “The Cop in the Head,” part of a more general concept within the framework of the theatre of the oppressed, concerns those oppressions that have been internalized. (35)

headquarters and barracks must be on the outside. The task was to discover how these cops got into our heads, and to invent ways of dislodging them” (Boal *Rain* 8).

In Paris in the early 1980s, Boal presented the concept of the “cops in the head” at a workshop, which he ran for a little over two years. Through the workshop process, this concept evolved into “a wide variety of new image-making and dynamisation techniques.” In 1988, as a result of the work generated, Boal “was invited to speak at the International Association of Group Psychotherapists and to demonstrate the Rainbow of Desire technique” (Sullivan 2006). In *The Rainbow of Desire*, Boal explains the process of the “cops in the head” and he proposes the following three hypotheses.

Osmosis – the First Hypothesis

The first of these hypotheses is his concept of “osmosis” – “no individual consciousness can remain unmarked by societal values. There are cops in our head, they must have come from somewhere – and if they are in our head, maybe they are in other people’s heads as well” (Boal *Rain* xx). For example, when we are speaking about one individual case of social isolation, loneliness, unworthiness, or alienation, we are “also talking about the generality of similar cases and we are talking about the society in which this particular case can occur” (Boal *Rain* 40). We can apply Boal’s hypothesis of “osmosis” to the online gaming community in that individual reported cases of oppression among gamers can be a mirror image of what’s happening with other gamers in global societies, thus supporting his concept that no individual consciousness can remain unmarked by societal values.

In the following news articles, it may become evident that for some gamers, the world of online gaming is reshaping their societal values in a negative way. What is interesting to note is many of these articles report on adults neglecting their children, because of their compulsive and problematic game playing. To date, there is substantial research focusing on children and teenagers, who in some cases seem to be more susceptible to problematic online game playing—perhaps due to inadequate self-monitoring skills—but as indicated in the following news articles, adults can be just as susceptible. These news articles focus on individual cases of video game addiction, which highlight the growing dangers of game addiction and add to the statistics of similar cases that have been reported from around the world.

In February 2002, a Louisiana woman sued Nintendo because her 30-year-old son died after suffering seizures caused by playing *Nintendo 64*¹¹ for eight hours a day, six days a week. Nintendo denied any responsibility (Berghammer 2002). In 2005, American, Gregg J. Kleinmark, 24, left his 10-month-old twin boys, Drew and Bryn Kleinmark, unattended in a bathtub for thirty minutes, while he played on his Game Boy Advance three rooms away. The twins drowned (Axxel 2005). In 2009, a young Chinese boy in the Tianjin province committed suicide by jumping from the top of a twenty-four story building, leaving suicide notes written through the eyes of a gaming character and stated that he hoped to meet three gaming friends in the after life (Guttridge *Play.tm*).¹² Also, in 2009, Kim Sa-rang, a 3-month-old Korean child, died from malnutrition after

¹¹ Nintendo 64, or simply N64, is Nintendo's third home video game console, released on June 23, 1996 in Japan, September 29, 1996 in North America, and finally March 1, 1997 in Europe. From -- www.wordiq.com

¹² Headquartered in London, Play.tm is widely regarded as one of the UK's top videogaming destinations. Operational since 2001, Play.tm covers the most important games news, reviews, previews, interviews, videos and more with coverage updated constantly.

both her parents spent hours each day in an internet cafe raising a virtual child on an online game (Salmon 2009). In 2010, in Jacksonville, Florida, Alexandra Tobias pleaded guilty to second-degree murder for shaking her baby to death. She told investigators that the baby boy's crying had interrupted her while she was playing a Facebook game called *FarmVille* (Yahoo 2010). In 2011, a New Mexico woman named Rebecca Colleen Christie was convicted of second degree murder and child abandonment, and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison, for allowing her three and a half-year-old daughter to die of malnutrition and dehydration while she was occupied playing *World of Warcraft*¹³ online (Assoc. 2011).

These stories can be viewed as isolated individual incidences and not as incidences affecting society as a whole, yet it seems countries around the world are recognizing the oppressive qualities that excessive video gaming embody. “The results of a 2006 survey suggested that 2.4% of South Koreans aged 9 to 39 suffer from game addiction, with another 10.2% at risk of addiction” (Faiola 2006). In July, 2007, the People’s Republic of China, where more than 20 million people play online games, introduced an online gaming restriction—Internet games operating in China must require that users identify themselves by resident identity numbers. After three hours, players under 18 are prompted to stop and "do suitable physical exercise." If they continue, their characters gain 50% of the usual experience. After five hours, their characters gain no experience at all, which to a gamer is detrimental, because to advance in the game, the

¹³ *World of Warcraft* (often abbreviated as WoW) is a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) by Blizzard Entertainment. With over 10 million subscribers as of October 2012, *World of Warcraft* is currently the world's most-subscribed MMORPG, and holds the Guinness World Record for the most popular MMORPG by subscribers.

character/player must gain experience ¹⁴ (China 2007). In 2010, the South Korean government asked game developers to adopt a gaming curfew for children under eighteen, to prevent them playing between midnight and 8am (Cain 2010). South Korea has also opened more than 100 clinics for internet addiction and sponsored an "internet rescue camp" for serious cases (Addicted 2011). In addition to China and South Korea, the Netherlands, Canada, and the United States—have responded to the perceived threat of video game addiction by opening treatment centers.

As indicated above, it would seem that several countries are seeing the potential danger of excessive video game playing and are investigating means to combat the negative effects of this type of activity. An additional ally in this campaign and perhaps playing a larger role in exposing these oppressions globally is the media. These stories are not only being reported by means of TV news shows, the Internet, and print media, but also through the re-enactment of similar scenarios on popular TV shows—live action and animation. Case in point, a similar storyline to the 2002 incident of the Louisiana woman suing Nintendo because her 30-year-old son died after suffering seizures caused by playing *Nintendo 64* for eight hours a day, six days a week, was recreated for the TV show, *Boston Legal*. The episode entitled, "Word Salad Days" (2006), presented the scenario of a mother suing a video game company after her 15-year old son dies of a heart attack due to exhaustion from playing a game for two days straight.

¹⁴ To gain experience in video game terminology is to gain an experience point (often abbreviated to Exp or XP) which is a unit of measurement used in many role-playing games (RPGs) and role-playing video games to quantify a player character's progression through the game. Experience points are generally awarded for the completion of quests, overcoming obstacles and opponents, and for successful role-playing. In many RPGs, characters start as fairly weak and untrained—when a sufficient amount of experience is obtained, the character "levels up", achieving the next stage of character development. Such an event usually increases the character's statistics, such as health points and strength, and may permit the character to acquire new abilities or improve existing ones.

Similarly, it appears that the 2009 incident with the Korean couple paying more attention to their virtual child than their real child made enough of an impact on the global society to motivate producers of the TV show *Law & Order: SVU*, to recreate a similar scenario in an episode entitled “Bullseye” (2010). In this episode, a mother and her boyfriend are addicted to a fictitious MMORPG, which leads them to completely neglect their daughter, all the while trying to protect their virtual online son.

Ironically, the futuristic series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, may have offered a premonition of the future of gaming through its episode entitled, “The Game” (1991). In this episode, William Riker brings a video game onto the starship and distributes replicated copies of the game to the crew. They quickly become addicted to the game, because it stimulates the pleasure centers of their brains every time they successfully complete each level. Lieutenant Data, who is a fully functioning android and thus not affected by the game, is able “to rescue the crew from their mind-controlled state by flashing pulses of light in their faces from a handheld lamp” (Erdmann 92). It’s interesting to note, that since this episode aired in 1991, there have been theorists who have focused on the built-in reward systems of the games to explain their potentially addictive nature (LeClaire 2006). Chapter two will further examine these reward/punishment systems as they apply to online gaming.

In the world of animation, popular shows, such as *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill* and *South Park* have presented at times a more humorous take on the negative effects of excessive video game playing, which can be a less in-your-face method of getting the message across to the masses. One example of excessive online gaming was depicted in a 2006 episode of *South Park* entitled, “Make Love Not Warcraft.” In this episode, a high

level video game player named Jenkins goes around killing other players in the online game, *World of Warcraft*. The main characters, Cartman, Kyle, Stan, and Kenny start playing the game every day to try to stop Jenkins, who is depicted as a silent, excessive, obese adult player who has no life. Jenkins has been playing the game nearly every hour of every day for a year and a half since the game was released—reaching a level that game executives thought unreachable. The game executives are concerned that players will become so discouraged because they can't beat Jenkins, that they will cancel their subscriptions, thus putting the company in financial jeopardy. Reluctantly, the executives decide to give the 'South Park' boys the "sword of a thousand truths," a weapon so powerful that it was removed from the game. The boys defeat Jenkins with the sword, which is so satisfying that they continue to excessively play the game.

The Director of Animation for *South Park*, Eric Stough, said that it was the online gaming addiction of one of their animators, Junichi Nishimura, which became the inspiration for the character, Jenkins. "In between animating shots for *South Park*, Jun is always playing Warcraft. For years it was Diablo.¹⁵ We would all tease him about having no life. One day he moved on to Warcraft and now in the game, he walks around and helps players out – giving them spells and weapons. At one point we were going to have the four boys (in the episode) become so intimidated by Jenkins (Jun) that they were going to travel to California and blow up his character's computer. We almost did that to Jun when he was playing Diablo. We were going to toss his computer off a cliff" (Machinima 2006). Fortunately for Jun, he works in an environment that allows him to

¹⁵ *Diablo* is an action role-playing combat-based video game developed by Blizzard North and released by Blizzard Entertainment on December 31, 1996.

play video games. For many gamers who play excessively and compulsively, they run the risk of losing significant relationships, jobs, and educational or career opportunities.

As discussed earlier, there have been theorists who have focused on the built-in reward systems of the games to explain their potentially addictive nature. In *The Rainbow of Desire*, Boal explains that “osmosis” comes about as much by repression as by seduction: “Through repulsion, hatred, fear, violence, constraint, or, by contrast, through attraction, love, desire, promises, dependencies, etc.” It emerges everywhere—“In all the cells of our social life” (Boal *Rain* 41). Focusing on the seductive side of osmosis – through attraction, love desire, promises, and dependencies – it could be inferred that the current popular MMORPGs can be extremely seductive, which can potentially lead to oppression in some cases. “These games are played competitively with others online by using various input devices (e.g., instant messaging, email, on-line video, telephones, and/or software like Skype®)” (Khan, 2007).

Hundreds of people can play these games at the same time and the games occur in real time. MMORPGs are described as “virtual environments with a persistent interaction of people playing games using a self-created virtual character – the avatar” (Wiemer-Hastings 2005). The following gaming elements may provide ample support for Boal’s explanation of “osmosis” coming about through seduction, which could lead to oppression:

The three main factors of playing MMORPGs are: (1) doing quests and achievements, (2) interacting with other players and (3) “leveling-up”¹⁶

¹⁶ The term, “Leveling-up,” in a video game means to increase the capabilities of a character. Each level has an associated mission which may be as simple as walking from point A to point B or as

the avatar. Compared to other online-games, which follow a bounded storyline and become boring or simply end at some point – MMORPGs are endless, because of a widespread system of goals, awards and personal achievements. The avatar rises to a higher level or becomes wealthier and stronger, by collecting valuables and weapons. The relationship between the player and the avatar is described by the players’ affection to the character, which leads to negative feelings if the avatar is under attack or dies. Another important factor is that it is not a simple one-man-show; players have to collaborate in “guilds” (virtual groups of players with their own social rules and structure) to gain higher or more complex goals; sometimes players have to interact in these “guilds” for their own avatars’ survival and form some kind of social community. For many players actually playing the MMORPG is less important than the social in-game interaction. Some players tend to consider that social relationships and interaction in online-games are more satisfying than their offline-relationships. (Stetina, *et al* 473)

Based on this description, it becomes apparent that the player establishes a strong bond to his avatar/character and in a way lives vicariously through the character. He empathizes with the character—he experiences pleasure when the character achieves goals and wins awards, but on the opposite end of the spectrum, the player also experiences fear and loss when this character with whom he identifies sometimes fails or

complex as finding several hidden items in a limited time. When the mission is completed, the player usually moves on to the next level; if it is failed, the player must usually try again.

even worse, dies. During difficult levels of the game, the player has to rely on other characters and it becomes necessary for him to join a guild in order to help protect the survival of his avatar/character. Some of the more elite guilds can have over a hundred members that congregate online from all over the world at anytime of the day or night—online gaming never shuts down; it is open 24/7. A gamer can log onto a game anytime and always find someone to play with. This creates a sense of community, but a virtual community – where the real players are hidden and the actual relationships are established between the avatars—the virtual characters.

This relationship between player and character in the virtual world is similar to the relationship between the audience and characters in a theatrical performance. Boal explains that “the emotion of the characters penetrates us, the moral world of the show invades us, osmotically; we are led by characters and actions not under our control; we experience a vicarious emotion” (Boal *Rain* 42). Some may argue that the audience’s identification with the character is closer within a videogame than in traditional theater: “the audience is the participant, the participant is the player, the player is the character” (Dixon 601). In *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal speaks of the danger of spectators taking on a passive role and giving the power of making decisions to the character. Online video gamers might argue that they do not take on a passive role and that they make decisions for their characters, which determines the direction and outcome of the game. This is true to a certain degree, especially in online games – where there appears to be endless storylines and outcomes – but the structure and design of online games ultimately provide limited options and players’ decisions are connected to definitive outcomes that have

been predetermined by the game designers. So in a way, players are the object being manipulated by the subject—the game itself.

This manipulation can cause some players to become obsessive, because two extremes are happening in the game: pleasure and a sense of accomplishment when the player achieves his goals and gets awarded; and fear and loss when the player loses a battle, which causes his avatar to die. This endless path of extreme highs and lows; can be very oppressive and can perpetuate an addictive cycle of always trying to win. The collection of theatrical games, exercises, and techniques in *The Rainbow of Desire* are focused on breaking this subject-object relationship—this intransitive transmission from stage to audience; from monitor screen to player. Boal explains that no one can be reduced to the condition of absolute object. “So, the oppressor produces in the oppressed two types of reaction: submission and subversion...his submission is his Cop in the Head, his introjection. But he also possesses the other element, subversion. The goal is to dynamise the latter, by making the former disappear” (Boal *Rain* 42).

Metaxis – the Second Hypothesis

This leads us to Boal’s second hypothesis – “metaxis” – which is defined as “the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: the image of reality and the reality of the image” (Boal *Rain* 43). To apply this hypothesis to online gaming addiction, it is first necessary to understand the concept of these two different, autonomous worlds. If one supports the idea that online gaming addiction is not necessarily due entirely to the game, but more specifically to the oppressive images or “cops in the head” of the player, one might see the significance of this type of theatre

therapy. Patrick Markey, a Psychology Professor at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, states that “video games are not simply good or bad for everybody, but for some individuals who have certain dispositions, if they play video games they're much more likely to be negatively affected” (Jayson 2011). It is this faction of gamers that may benefit from this type of theatre therapy.

The key to belonging to both of these two autonomous worlds simultaneously is to have the oppressed-gamer (henceforth referred to as protagonist) create images—like still photographs—of her real life, that is, her real oppression. One can think of it as taking the negative haunting images that are stopping the protagonist from living a full life and physicalizing those images in an aesthetic space—similar to a sculptor chipping away at the undefined block of marble to find the aesthetic image; the vision and at times the voice from within. “This world of images contains the same oppressions that exist in the real world that produces them, but they have been transformed aesthetically” (Boal *Cop* 38). By creating images of her oppressive reality, she can now belong to both of these autonomous worlds—the real and the aesthetic—in an active rather than in a vicarious way.

These physicalized images are produced through a series of exercises that are based on Boal’s Image Theatre techniques. Examples of Image Theatre games and exercises and how they can be beneficial as a therapeutic tool, will be presented in chapter three. Essentially, Image Theatre uses the human body “as a tool of representing feelings, ideas, and relationships. Through sculpting others or using our own body to demonstrate a body position, participants create anything from one-person to large-group image sculptures that reflect the sculptor's impression of a situation or oppression”

(Paterson).¹⁷ The caveat when creating these images is to avoid simple reproductions of reality or symbolic illustrations of the real oppression. Those participants, who are witness to the protagonist's images, should not search for a meaning, an interpretation, or translation of the images, but rather it is necessary for them to identify themselves with her "sympathetically" (Boal *Rain* 44).¹⁸ Her oppression must be theirs.

It may be reasonable to predict that if these images are created in a workshop of participants from the online gaming community, this need to identify with the protagonist sympathetically might be easier to attain. This community, as with others, has a specialized language used only by gamers, so it would follow that if the participants are unfamiliar with this language, it would be difficult to identify, communicate verbally and non-verbally, and to fully engage in the games and exercises. This doesn't mean that the protagonist's images of oppression have to be identical to the participant's oppressions, but ideally recognizable and identifiable. Once the images are sculpted, the protagonist plays with the reality of the images, not changing the oppression, but rather moving it into the aesthetic space. Boal describes the process in this way:

The oppressed must forget the real world which was the origin of the image and play with the image itself, in its artistic embodiment. He must make an extrapolation from his social reality towards the reality which is called fiction (towards theatre, towards image) and, having played with the image, he must take a second extrapolation, now in the inverse direction,

¹⁷ This definition of Image Theatre was given by Augusto Boal during his presentation at the third 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed conference,' which was held in April 1997 at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Doug Paterson, Professor of Theatre at University of Nebraska and founding director of a Center of the Theatre of Oppressed in Nebraska – wrote a summary of this presentation.

¹⁸ Boal describes a shift from empathy to sympathy: the oppressed are no longer led, but lead; not touched by somebody else's emotions, but produce their own; they control their actions; they are the subjects. This is when the oppressed become the artists. (*The Rainbow of Desire*, p.42-43).

towards the social reality which is his world. *He practices in the second world (the aesthetic), in order to modify the first (the social)*...if the oppressed-artist is able to create an autonomous world of images of his own reality, and to enact his liberation in the reality of these images, he will then extrapolate into his own life all that he has accomplished in the fiction. The scene, the stage, becomes the rehearsal space for real life.

(Boal *Rain* 44)

In this second hypothesis, Boal speaks of the necessity to belong completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: “the image of reality and the reality of the image” (43). In Boal’s dual-world concept, he uses games and exercises that creatively engage us, which makes it easier to access our imaginations, thus giving us the creative freedom to let go of the oppressions that seduce us and to stimulate the desire for change. For online gamers, there also exists a dual-world concept: the primary world, which is the real world we live in and the secondary world, which is the virtual world of the game.¹⁹ A common thread that links the gamer’s secondary world to Boal’s secondary world is the aesthetic space,²⁰ “which serves as a means of separating actor from spectator; the one who acts from the one who observes” (19) or in the case of online games, the character/avatar from the gamer.

In a Theatre of the Oppressed session, there are no “*spectators, only active observers*” (40). Boal suggests that “the human being alone possesses this faculty for

¹⁹ This concept of primary and secondary worlds with regards to video gaming is discussed in Neils Clark and P. Shavaun Scott’s book: *Game Addiction: the Experience and the Effects*. I have adopted this concept in this thesis, because it illustrates a dual-world concept that is comparable to Boal’s concept of *metaxis*.

²⁰ The word ‘aesthetic’ in its Greek root means, ‘of or pertaining to things perceptible by the senses.’ (Boal *The Rainbow of Desire* 18)

self-observation in an imaginary mirror.” Based on Boal’s concept, the ‘aesthetic space’ “offers this imaginary mirror. Therein resides the essence of theatre: in the human being observing itself. *The human being not only ‘makes’ theatre: it ‘is’ theatre*” (Boal *Rain* 12). While in the aesthetic space of Boal’s secondary world, if an action is performed in a theatrical fiction by the protagonist—the oppressed person himself—instead of passively allowing a “surrogate” actor to perform an action, then change can occur in his real life (Boal *Cop* 42).

The secondary world of the online gamer is a virtual aesthetic space that taps into one’s imagination and often satisfies the desire to perform feats that would be impossible in the real world, but it does not provide a physical aesthetic space to perform an action or to sculpt images of oppression that are seducing the oppressed/gamer from living life to the fullest in the primary, real world. The following is a description of what happens when the oppressed person—in an aesthetic space during a TO session—is enabled to observe himself in action:

...since his own desire to show obliges him both to *see* and to *see himself*
– this theatrical process of recounting, in the present, and in front of
witnesses ‘in solidarity,’ a story lived in the past, offers, in itself, an
alternative. (Boal *Rain* 25)

To transfer the online gamer from the virtual aesthetic space to the physical aesthetic space, the gamer/protagonist must shift his attention not only towards other people and other things, but also onto himself. “The protagonist acts and observes himself in action, shows and observes himself showing, speaks and listens to what he himself is saying” (26) and in doing this, “the protagonist acquires knowledge about

himself” (28). In a session of Rainbow of Desire, the participants should be able to identify with the protagonist’s images of oppression, so that they can help the protagonist to (1) see himself as he sees himself and (2) help him see himself as he is seen, through witnessing and participating in the images of oppression. The practical side of this process will be described in more detail in chapter three.

As mentioned previously, the ideal scenario is that the workshop participants are part of the same social group: in this case, the online gaming community. When an individual oppression does not coincide with the particular circumstances of the participants, then empathy becomes the dominant feeling and the participants become passive spectators. When this occurs, the session is no longer the Theatre of the Oppressed, but rather the theatre for one who is oppressed.

Analogical Induction – the Third Hypothesis

This leads us to the third hypothesis: analogical induction. Boal describes this hypothesis as such:

If, setting out from an opening image or scene, one proceeds by analogy to create other images (or scenes) produced by the other participants in the session around their own similar individual oppressions, and if, with these images as the starting point, one arrives by induction at the construction of a model untrammelled by, disengaged from, the singular circumstances of each specific case, this model will contain the general mechanisms by means of which the oppression is produced, which will allow us to study

sympathetically the different possibilities for breaking this oppression.

(45)

In other words, by utilizing analogical induction, the players can offer several perspectives of each situation, some of which may not have even occurred to each protagonist. Since they are approaching the scene from a distant analytical perspective without being personally involved, these perspectives can offer multiple points of reference for the protagonist. They are not interpretations or explanations, just different points of view that helps the protagonist to reflect upon her own actions and on possible alternative actions. Boal suggests that in the therapeutic process, “the ‘patient’ is not a passive recipient of treatment, but ... is the director of his or her own therapeutic process, with the presence of a participating audience acting as a multiple mirror to enable new and multiple readings of past (and always present) events” (Boal *Rain* xxii–iii).

An excellent way of viewing the therapeutic techniques of Rainbow and “cops in the head” – which are interlocked with the three hypotheses described previously – is to equate the concept to the following metaphor:

When white light is projected onto a prism, all its constituent colors are revealed in a rainbow pattern. Similarly the group members can each reflect a different facet of the protagonist’s inner state. Members of the group portray the “cops” that live in our heads, or the various “colors” of our desires. Several participants may each share a story, and the group can choose which story resonates for them, beginning and ending with an improvisation on an actual encounter with a real-life antagonist. (Sullivan 2007)

The group dynamic is extremely important in this work, because they provide these perspectives that offer multiple points of reference for the protagonist. When one is immersed in an oppressive situation, not all the “cops” in the head are readily observable. Through this process, it becomes evident that a community which shares common oppressions can observe a scenario presented by the protagonist, and offer different points of view that helps the protagonist to reflect upon her own actions, because this scenario is identifiable and recognizable. This reflection in turn is then extended to the community, the members of which looks upon their own actions and ideally sees their own “cops in the head.”

CHAPTER TWO

Before exploring the therapeutic applications of the games, exercises and techniques from Augusto Boal's books: *The Rainbow of Desire*—specifically the “cops in the head” exercises—and from *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, further discussion of the online gaming community and the possible negative effects of long term repetitive gaming on the body and mind are necessary. This chapter will examine how Boal's concepts of: community, games, and of the mechanization of the body and mind, can be extended to apply to the online gaming community. Key questions that illustrate the oppressive aspects of online gaming and how the loss of freedom can lead to the loss in the quality of life will also be addressed to further explore the feasibility of applying Boal's theatre games, exercises, and techniques as part of a video game addiction treatment and recovery program.

Establishing a Sense of Community

Prior to launching into specific Rainbow techniques that are utilized in a workshop setting, it is vital to first establish a sense of community among the players. There is inevitably an uneasy feeling, perhaps even a bit of social awkwardness, when meeting people for the first time; especially in a workshop setting where theatre games and theatrical techniques are being introduced to a community for the most part of non-actors. This sense of belonging to a community is necessary in order to build relationships and trust, which allows the players to ideally become open to experience the benefits of utilizing theatre as a potential therapeutic tool. As mentioned previously in

chapter one, every process in theatre of the oppressed begins with games, which immediately connects a community and brings together two essential characteristics of life in society: “they have rules, as does society, which are necessary in order for the *Games* to be enacted; but they also require creative freedom, so that the *Game*, or life, is not transformed into servile obedience. Without rules, there is no game, without freedom; there is no life” (Boal *Aesthetics* 4).

Community is especially important in online gaming. As stated earlier, in many MMORPGs, a gamer can only go so far and there comes a point when he will need to collaborate with a “guild” to help ensure his avatar’s survival and to achieve higher and more complex goals. These guilds become a social community and as discussed previously, for some players, their “social relationships and interaction in online-games are more satisfying than their offline relationships” (Stetina, *et al* 473). However, these virtual communities connected to online gaming are limited, primarily due to the fact that the face-to-face, physical connection is missing.

There is a definite distinction between relationships in the primary world—the real world we live in, and the secondary world—the virtual world of online video games. Yes, it is possible to build relationships with the online community and some guilds are very social, because they focus on relationships and personalities. Bonds and friendships can be created online and in some cases these relationships carry over into real life. Unfortunately, there also exist those guilds that focus on “raiding,”²¹ which in the gaming community becomes essential when trying to advance to the higher levels of the game.

²¹ A “raid” is a type of mission in an online video game in which a very large number of people (larger than the normal team size set by the game) attempt to defeat a boss monster, who is an enemy-based challenge controlled by the computer. This type of objective is most common in MMORPGs, where the servers are designed to handle the number of users.

These are the guilds that this thesis will address, since they find that achieving in-game goals are more important than the players trying to achieve them, which can lead to an “every man for himself” mentality.

In many societies, people are judged by their reputations and their status in the community, which is mirrored in the secondary world of online gaming. Gaining entrance into the most elite guilds is based not only on ability and level of accomplishment—which is achieved by a player only after investing an astounding amount of time playing—but on reputation, trust, and responsibility. The degree to what is expected of a gamer to maintain his status and reputation in the guild can become extreme and human beings are often objectified, which revisits an earlier concept that players are the object being manipulated by the game itself or in this case by other guild members. In their book, *Game Addiction: the Experiences and the Effects*, Neils Clark and P. Shavaun Scott explain the consequence of when players objectify other players and what happens to those that are objectified:

... gamer[s] begin to perceive another living person as just another “structural characteristic”²² in the game—just one more button that has to be pushed for them to win. When that structural characteristic doesn’t perform sufficiently, whether due to lack of a good gaming computer, sleep, or anything else in the primary or secondary worlds, reputation and trust diminish. When the “structural characteristic” simply doesn’t show

²² In an online video game, “structural characteristics” include: social features, manipulation and control features, narrative and identity features, reward and punishment features, and presentation features (King, Delfabbro, and Griffiths. “The Role of Structural Characteristics in Problematic Video Game Play: An Empirical Study.” 2011).

up, there's usually no reasoning that will keep that reputation and trust from taking a major hit, whether the person needed to eat a meal, spend time with their children, or anything else. Not only is it shocking to what degree otherwise compassionate gamers objectify one another, but perhaps more shocking are the degrees to which they do it to themselves. (78)

This degree of expectation to maintain one's status, reputation, and level of trust within a guild community can transform into a substantial form of peer pressure that drives some gamers to alienate and ignore relationships, reputations and responsibilities in the primary world. The desire to belong to a community and the possibility of raising one's status within a community can be extremely seductive, but when life in the secondary world takes precedence over life in the primary world, it can become extremely oppressive and isolating.

The behavioral principles that occur in online gaming are comparable to B. F. Skinner's formal theory of operant conditioning, which views human motivation and the resulting behavior as a very simple system of reinforcement and punishment (Cherry 2013). A player is rewarded for every task that is achieved and in a guild, the player's reputation and status is reinforced by other players. On the contrary, if a player lets his primary life relationships and responsibilities take priority over his secondary life relationships and responsibilities, the player can be punished by the guild and his reputation and status can be negatively impacted. If we re-examine Boal's definition that *Games* immediately connects a community in the [primary] world and brings together two essential characteristics of life in society: rules and creative freedom, it may now be

apparent that this connectivity and essential characteristics are not completely met in the secondary world of online gaming. Yes, online games do have virtual connectivity and rules, but what of the creative freedom? The following is a description of what typically happens when members of a guild join together to do a raid or to complete a mission:

Raids or missions can last anywhere from several hours to several days; the game itself never ends. In fact, the start and end times of each mission are dictated by the guild leader. For example, a guild leader may live in Tokyo and decide to begin a six-hour game beginning at 12 p.m. on a Wednesday. Given that members can reside anywhere in the world, players who live on the east coast of the United States who choose to join the mission must begin when the mission begins, which would equate to a start time of 11 p.m. and an end time of 5 a.m. on Tuesday. This would have obvious impacts on sleep and school [or work] performance. The point is that membership on these teams becomes very important as each individual becomes dependent upon others to successfully play their role in order to accomplish the mission's goals. (Hagedorn 2011)

Boal stresses that games require creative freedom, so that the *Game*, or life, is not transformed into servile obedience. The word “servile” can be defined as being too willing to agree with somebody or to do anything, however demeaning, that somebody wants and that it also relates to slaves or the condition of slavery (Encarta). If one looks at the degree that some players are enslaved by their need to keep playing the game in order to maintain status, reputation and trust within the guild community, it might

become clear that the lack of creative freedom when playing an online video game can lead to servile obedience. This further clarifies Boal's statement that "...without freedom, there is no life" (Boal *Aesthetics* 4).

Without Freedom, There is no Life...

That faction of gamers who become all consumed by the secondary world, lose their freedom, which can lead to the loss of life: the emotional life, the spiritual life, and as we have seen in chapter one, in extreme cases, the physical life. The skills needed to function well in life: "being aware of yourself; being able to monitor yourself; and being able to change what you're doing when things get off-kilter" (Clark 100) – begin to decline and the players loses clarity of what they are sacrificing in the primary world in order to maintain agency in the secondary world.

The following is a list of questions that can be viewed on the On-Line Gamers Anonymous (OLGA) website. These questions function as a screening tool for gamers to use as a form of self-analysis to support their decision on whether or not their video gaming has become excessive and problematic. Many of the video game addiction treatment and recovery centers have a similar set of questions that are used as part of their diagnostic criteria to determine addiction. A number of these questions align with the statement set forth above: without freedom, there is no life:

- Do you have difficulty staying away from gaming for several days at a time?
- Do you tell yourself you can stop playing the game any time you want to, even though you keep playing when you don't mean to?

- Do you feel a sudden rush of intense joy/sense of euphoria and relaxation after an in-game accomplishment?
- Do you prefer the excitement of gaming to intimacy with your partner?
- Do you experience stronger emotions while in your online game than you do in real life?
- Do you feel guilt, shame, anxiety or depression around the time you spend gaming?
- Do you feel preoccupied with gaming (do you think about previous gaming activity or anticipate your next session)?
- Have your sleep patterns changed or do you lose sleep due to late-night raids/gaming?
- Do you eat at the computer while gaming or do you skip meals to game?
- Are you unable to predict time spent gaming?
- Do you try to hide how long you've been gaming?
- Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop your game playing?
- Has your excessive gaming caused trouble at home?
- Have you missed work/school because of your game playing?
- Have you withdrawn from real life hobbies?
- Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of your game playing?
- Have you given up or reduced time spent at important social, occupational, or recreational activities in your real life to play the game?
- Have you lied to family members, a therapist, or others to conceal the extent of your involvement with gaming?
- Do you deny, rationalize and minimize the negative consequences of gaming?
- Do you spend real money on the purchase of in-game items?

- Do you often fear that life without gaming would be boring, empty, and joyless?
- Do you feel the need to play games for increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?
- Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop your gaming? Does it go away once you have started gaming again?
- Have you experienced physical effects from excessive gaming (e.g. carpal tunnel, eye strain, weight change, back ache, sore neck, arms, wrist)?

These questions illustrate the oppressive aspects of video gaming and how the loss of freedom can lead to the loss in the quality of life. Any one of these questions can be developed and physicalized in an aesthetic space—starting with an image and expanding to an improvised scenario to which Rainbow techniques can be applied. In a Rainbow of Desire workshop setting, the application of Rainbow techniques to an improvised scene would happen much later. Boal’s process begins with games and exercises that deal with the physical body, where the participant can reconnect and conduct a dialogue with their body and other bodies—with and without words.

The Mechanization of the Body and the Mind

The reason Boal begins with the body, is because our lives are filled with repetitive movements—we perform the same activities over and over again which can be embodied as “a series of mechanizations, as rigid and as lifeless as the movements of a machine” (Boal *Games* 11). The body and the mind become mechanized and issues arise when these repetitive movements have become so embedded in our body that are mind accepts them as “normal” operations and we become unconscious of the sometimes

negative effects of these repetitive movements. With this concept in mind, it becomes evident why games are a key component of the Rainbow of Desire process: they are not only used to bring people together as a community, but they are used in the de-mechanization of the body and the mind. In *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal describes how the body of an office worker can become mechanized, because usually this type of job involves sitting in front of a computer, where “from the waist down the body becomes, during work hours, a kind of pedestal, while the arms and fingers are active” (127).

This type of body mechanization can also be seen with video gamers—specifically online gamers—who sit in front of a computer and use the keyboard to manipulate their character. Clark and Scott expand on this concept, by suggesting that online gamers use computers as a type of limb—another form of mechanization: “monitors as a kind of “eye,” headphones as “ears,” a keyboard, mouse or input device as “motor skills,” allowing us to move about. At the same time, those sensations also allow the inflation and extension of our consciousness” (Clark 71). In one sense, the mechanization of a gamer can be viewed as the melding of body, mind, and machine. This notion of using computers as a type of limb; an inflation and extension of our senses, adds a new dimension to Boal’s concept of repetitive movement leading to the mechanization of the body and the mind. In *Game Addiction*, Clark and Scott further illustrate their viewpoint by explaining that video games:

take our senses beyond the confines of reality and they expand our expectations beyond what’s available in life... The experiences being enabled by this limb are being measured daily. You can’t tame a dragon

in reality. You can't conquer a galaxy. Removing this limb hurts...New technology isn't just about new senses – the limbs, but unique ways of being – what the limb provides. When a gamer stops entering secondary worlds...the need to re-enter a game may have everything to do with losing a real part of themselves. (71-72)

Using an unorthodox analogy, a gamer separated from his computer—from the secondary world—could be equated to a person experiencing a type of “phantom limb syndrome.”²³ When they are away from the game, it's as if the computer is still attached to their body and the brain continues to receive messages from nerves that originally carried impulses from the missing “limb.” This analogy aligns with Clark and Scott's suggestion that gamers use the computer as an extension of their body and their senses.

An additional stratum to explore is Boal's theory of what happens to the mechanized body and mind: “The body, in work as in play, as well as producing stimuli, responds to those it receives, creating, in itself, a muscular mask as strong as the mask of social behavior – both of which act directly on the thought and emotions which thus become stratified” (Boal *Aesthetics* 5). Boal suggests that the body produces and responds to all manner of stimuli, which acts directly on our thoughts and emotions. Stimuli are filtered through the senses and if we focus for a moment on the idea that our sense of vision is a key sense when interacting with an online video game, then we move into the realm of perception: how we make sense of the world. In her article, “Perception

²³ A phantom limb is the sensation that an amputated or missing limb (even an organ, like the appendix) is still attached to the body and is moving appropriately with other body parts. <http://www.news-medical.net/health/What-is-a-Phantom-Limb.aspx>

and Visual Communication Theory,” Ann Marie Barry states that in terms of the perceptual process, the visual experience is always real to the emotional system:

If while we are watching a film or television, the experience gets too uncomfortable, we can suspend our emotional belief by calling on our intellect to restore emotional balance, but this kind of rational action can only counteract the experience to a certain extent, and it has limitations, as everyone who has experienced nightmares after watching a scary movie knows. The brain’s amygdale²⁴ remembers the emotional shape of the viewed experience and stores it for future survival. Emotions are an integral and holistic preparatory part of reasoning; logical reasoning influences behavior only by serving as a delayed rational check on intuitive perceptions. (99)

The visually captivating worlds of the more technically sophisticated online video games can create a disparity in one’s perceptions of what is real or fantasy, “because the human eye lacks any inborn mechanism for separating the visual stimulus of real experiences from that of media experiences...” (Clark 35). This lack of separation mechanism supports Barry’s research that with video games the “potential for altering brain structures and function is even more significant than repeated film and television viewing” because of the interactive nature of video games, which causes players to initiate action and “not merely to watch it in the process of play.” She also suggests that

²⁴ The amygdalae are almond-shaped groups of nuclei located deep within the medial temporal lobes of the brain. Shown in research to perform a primary role in the processing of memory and emotional reactions, the amygdalae are considered part of the limbic system.

“as video games become even more realistic with increased screen resolution, there is even more pressing need for neurological research on media effects” (Barry 97).

After considering the types of repetitive movements gamers might experience and how the production and reception of stimuli via the body and the senses acts directly on our thoughts and emotions, it becomes vital to address the possible negative effects of long term repetitive movement. Boal suggests that by carrying out the same movements for long extended periods of time, it mechanizes the body “to execute these movements as efficiently as possible, thus denying themselves the possibility of original action every time the opportunity arises...He must relearn to perceive emotions and sensations he has lost the habit of recognizing” (Boal *Games* 30).

Suppression of Emotions and Actions

In a manner of speaking, the body and mind become ‘stuck’ in repetitive patterns especially if these patterns consistently occur over a long period of time. As a result of this fixated condition, other parts of our emotional, sensorial, and physical selves atrophy—they become suppressed. Boal suggests that the suppression of emotions and actions is due to two causes:

External, social coercion and/or internal, ethical choice. Fear and morality. I do or not do thousands of things, I behave or do not behave in thousands of different ways because I am constrained by social factors, which force me to be this or stop me from being that. (Boal *Rain* 35)

These social factors become our “cops in the head” – the voices of social coercion and/or ethical choice—fear and morality. Some of these cops are buried so deep within

our subconscious that their effects are virtually unknown, or merely forgotten and not easily verbalized. In order to understand how deep certain memory triggers are buried in the subconscious, one just has to reflect on a time when a certain situation, phrase, or action caused an unreasonable or irrational reaction—a reaction that even the perpetrator could not explain. After considering what has been discussed thus far regarding gamers being enslaved by their need to keep playing the game in order to maintain status, reputation and trust within the guild community and by the mechanization of the body and mind from repetitive movement, it might be more apparent how certain gamers can be seduced and oppressed by online gaming activities.

The suppression of our freedom of expression and action leads to the reduction of our potential as a person. From the time we are born, we are instructed by many outside sources—our family, significant others, teachers, communities, churches, legal system, government—what is right, what is wrong, what is acceptable behavior, and what is forbidden. These voices define who we are, how we conduct ourselves, and what we do and say in certain situations. Boal suggests:

There is one external morality, conditioned by the outside world, and another internal morality conditioned by habit. Both forces, a welter of obligations and interdictions, constrain us. We always remain the *person* we are, but we only transform a tiny portion of our potentiality into acts. I shall call this reduction *personality*. (Boal *Rain* 35)

We present to the world that part of ourselves—the personality which is socially tolerable and acceptable, and the rest we keep hidden. Perhaps this is why certain people

choose a career in acting, because those parts that are kept hidden are allowed to emerge in various characters without fear of consequence or punishment.

The Gamer Personality

Ironically and perhaps another reason a gamer can easily be seduced by online gaming, is that in the secondary world, a person has the opportunity to fight against these forces, against this conditioning by the outside world and by the internal morality—in essence, wipe the slate clean. People in the online community don't know anything about you: who you are or what you look like, unless you tell them. This gives the player the freedom to recreate and reinvent himself, even though the 'self' is personified as an avatar, which in reality is fictional and this personality only exists within the context of the game and the gaming community. At this point it may be interesting to note that the personality of a gamer's avatar is almost as important as its level of skill.

In many popular MMORPGs, the players can select what the avatar looks like: race, gender, body structure, facial features, hair color, and eye color. They can choose their profession, their favorite archetypes: such as medieval warriors, wizards, dwarfs, elves, fairies, etc. The talents, traits, and physical features that the person may be lacking in the primary world can be accentuated and enhanced in the secondary world. A persona—a personality—is created and as in the primary world, someone with good looks and a good personality can sometimes have an advantage and get further in life than those who do not have these qualities. However, in extreme cases, as was revealed in chapter one, for some gamers—like the young Chinese boy in the Tianjin province who committed suicide by jumping from the top of a twenty-four story building and left

suicide notes written through the eyes of his gaming character—the personality of the avatar and gamer can become one and the same.

In both the real world and the virtual world to a certain degree, outward appearances can be deceiving: on the surface we may see healthy and happy people with a lot going for them, but under the surface are hidden dark memories that may be forgotten—suppressed for the moment: memories containing the external, social coercion and/or internal, ethical choice—fear and morality—the cops in the heads. Theatre provides the opportunity to unearth and witness these “cops” and the possibility to change that which constrains us: to physically see the “I do or not do thousands of things,” and the “I behave or do not behave in thousands of different ways”—those things that reduce our potential as a person. Perhaps the online video game personality provides an escape from the restrictions of life – from the suppression of our freedom of expression and action in the primary world – and brings the gamer a sense of release and relief from that which constrains him in the primary world. It is important in life to find positive and constructive outlets that provide release from the negative and stressful aspects of living in the real world, but when these outlets begin to permanently replace living life to its full potential, it can become problematic.

Definition of Addiction

This brings up the question of addiction. This thesis focuses on Augusto Boal’s theatre techniques with the goal to provide a theoretical and practical framework that can be applied and utilized as a potential treatment component for online gaming addiction programs. It does not suggest that these techniques should replace current treatment

practices, but rather be used as an additional technique that may be beneficial for gamers undergoing treatment. The author of this thesis is not a certified therapist and does not have a degree in any of the mental health fields; therefore, in an effort to provide general information on current research studies and theories regarding “video game addiction,” the following citations are from articles published, within the last decade, in various social, behavioral science, and mental health journals.

As mentioned in the Introduction, it is important to note that the term “addiction” when referring to excessive and problematic online video game playing has not been officially classified as such in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM). In fact, there is considerable debate among mental health professionals and academics regarding whether “addiction” is an appropriate term to be applied to the activity of playing online video games. Several research studies categorize problematic online video game playing as an “impulse control disorder,” which is a term associated with pathological gambling and substance-abuse disorders. Correlations have been made in specific studies indicating that “video games and gambling activities share common risk factors” (Wood 2004).

Others advocate using “the term ‘Pathological Technology Use’ (PTU) rather than addiction, based on the principle that the technology is not in itself “bad” or “good” in the way that some substances are physically harmful. Instead, the problem is attributed to the use” (Sim 751). Ming Liu and Wei Peng adopt the term “dependency” to describe the psychological state in the context of playing massively multiplayer online games, because “withdrawal symptoms will occur when MMOG playing is not available as expected.” (Liu 1307). Liu and Peng also introduce the theory of “preference for a virtual life (PVL)

as a cognitive contributor of psychological dependency on MMOG playing” (1307). A number of studies indicate that “due to the similar problematic behaviors observed in individuals with on-line game addiction and substance dependence, several treatment methods for substance dependence have been recently applied for the treatment of on-line game addiction” (Du, Jiang, & Vance, 2010; Han, Hwang, & Renshaw, 2010; Young, 2007).

The various theories and research studies that have been conducted with regards to the categorization of excessive and problematic online gaming, seem to stem from inconsistencies concerning “how addiction is defined, and whether it is possible for some excessive online video game playing behaviours to meet this definition” (King 2011). One comprehensive definition of addiction, which was proposed by Dr. Lain (Rif) Brown—a behavioral psychologist specializing in addictions, compulsions and compulsive gambling—and adopted by Mark Griffiths—a Professor of Gambling Studies at Nottingham Trent University in England, and Director of the International Gaming Research Unit—states:

...any repetitive behaviour may be considered “addictive” if a person demonstrates all of the key features or “components” of addiction. These components include: (a) *salience*, meaning the activity is the most important thing in the person’s life, and causes preoccupations and cravings at all times of the day, (b) *tolerance*, the process whereby the person must spend increasing amounts of time engaged in the activity to achieve former mood-modifying effects, (c) *withdrawal*, the unpleasant emotional state or physical effects that occur when the activity is suddenly

discontinued or reduced, (d) *relapse*, the tendency for repeated reversions to earlier patterns of use, and for even extreme patterns of use to be restored quickly after long periods of abstinence or regulation, (e) *mood modification*, the mood altering experience (e.g., an exciting “buzz” or tranquilising “numbing”) associated with engaging in the activity, and (f) *harm*, the conflict between the user and other commitments, including work, education, social life, and/or hobbies. (Griffiths 2005/2008)

This definition aligns with several points regarding the oppressive elements of excessive and problematic online gaming that have been discussed in this paper thus far.

Aviel Goodman—a psychoanalytic psychiatrist in private practice and the director of the Minnesota Institute of Psychiatry—defines ‘addiction’ in his article, “Addiction: Definition and Implications” for the *British Journal of Addiction* in the following manner:

Essentially, addiction designates a process whereby a behavior, that can function both to produce pleasure and to provide escape from internal discomfort, is employed in a pattern characterized by (1) recurrent failure to control the behaviour (powerlessness) and (2) continuation of the behaviour despite significant negative consequences (unmanageability).
(1403)

In this article, Goodman goes on to propose a set of diagnostic criteria for Addictive Disorder, which he presents in a format similar to that which is exhibited in the

DSM-III-R.²⁵ Earlier in this chapter, a comparable set of diagnostic criteria was set forth as a series of questions to be utilized as a self-evaluation tool for gamers, who may be experiencing the negative effects of excessive and problematic game play. The questions are utilized as part of the diagnostic evaluation tool for the 12-step treatment program—On-Line Gamers Anonymous (OLGA). An important observable fact that seems to be consistently pervasive between what Goodman refers to as the psychiatry/psychology systems and the addictionology /12-step system²⁶ is that, “the traditional distrust, lack of communication, and lack of cooperation” between these systems have “seriously impeded the development of more comprehensive, effective approaches to the understanding and treatment of addictive disorders and those who experience them” (Goodman 1403).

To illustrate a common thread between these systems, the table on the next page provides a comparative study between Goodman’s set of diagnostic criteria for Addictive Disorder²⁷ and the set of diagnostic criteria utilized by OLGA. Goodman’s diagnostic criteria support his definition of addiction and place it within the conceptual network of scientific psychiatry. When comparing his diagnostic criteria, which are formatted for the psychiatry/psychology systems, with that of the addictionology/12-step system, the utilization of similar tools becomes apparent—there is a common thread.

²⁵ DSM-III-R - *Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*–3rd Edition Revised

²⁶ Addictionology is the study and treatment of addictions

²⁷ Goodman - *Diagnostic criteria for Addictive Disorder* p.1404

Goodman's Set of Diagnostic Criteria	OLGA Set of Diagnostic Criteria
A. Recurrent failure to resist impulses to engage in a specified behavior.	* Do you have difficulty staying away from gaming for several days at a time?
B. Increasing sense of tension immediately prior to initiating the behavior.	* Do you tell yourself you can stop playing the game any time you want to, even though you keep playing when you don't mean to?
C. Pleasure or relief at the time of engaging in the behavior.	* Do you feel a sudden rush of intense joy/sense of euphoria and relaxation after an in-game accomplishment? * Do you prefer the excitement of gaming to intimacy with your partner? * Do you experience stronger emotions while in your online game than you do in real life?
D. A feeling of lack of control while engaging in the behavior.	* Do you feel guilt, shame, anxiety or depression around the time you spend gaming?
E. At least five of the following: (1) frequent preoccupation with the behavior or with activity that is preparatory to the behavior	* Do you feel preoccupied with gaming (do you think about previous gaming activity or anticipate your next session)? * Have your sleep patterns changed or do you lose sleep due to late-night raids/gaming? * Do you eat at the computer while gaming or do you skip meals to game?
(2) frequent engaging in the behavior to a greater extent or over a longer period than intended	* Are you unable to predict time spent gaming? * Do you try to hide how long you've been gaming?
(3) repeated efforts to reduce, control or stop the behavior	* Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop your game playing?
(4) a great deal of time spent in activities necessary for the behavior, engaging in the behavior or recovering from its effects	* Has your excessive gaming caused trouble at home? * Have you missed work/school because of your game playing? * Have you withdrawn from real life hobbies?
(5) frequent engaging in the behavior when expected to fulfill occupational, academic, domestic or social obligations	* Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of your game playing?
(6) important social, occupational or recreational activities given up or reduced because of the behavior	* Have you given up or reduced time spent at important social, occupational, or recreational activities in your real life to play the game?
(7) continuation of the behavior despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent social, financial, psychological or physical problem that is caused or exacerbated by the behavior	* Have you lied to family members, a therapist, or others to conceal the extent of your involvement with gaming? * Do you deny, rationalize and minimize the negative consequences of gaming? * Do you spend real money on the purchase of in-game items?
(8) tolerance: need to increase the intensity or frequency of the behavior in order to achieve the desired effect or diminished effect with continued behavior of the same intensity	* Do you often fear that life without gaming would be boring, empty, and joyless? * Do you feel the need to play games for increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?
(9) restlessness or irritability if unable to engage in the behavior	* Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop your gaming? * Does it go away once you have started gaming again?
F. Some symptoms of the disturbance have persisted for at least 1 month, or have occurred repeatedly over a longer period of time.	* Have you experienced physical effects from excessive gaming (e.g. carpal tunnel, eye strain, weight change, back ache, sore neck, arms, wrist)?

Table 1: Comparison between two sets of diagnostic criteria for Addictive Disorder

Based on his definition, Goodman provides an explanation of what seems to trigger addictive disorders. His theory is that addiction equals dependence plus compulsion:

Dependence involves an attempt to achieve a pleasurable internal state via gratification of needs, basic or derived. In the terminology of learning and behaviour theory, the process by which dependence gratification motivates behavior would be described as positive reinforcement. Compulsion involves an attempt to evade or avoid an unpleasurable/aversive internal state (e.g. anxiety, grief, guilt, shame, rage). This corresponds to a negative reinforcement paradigm. Among the distinguishing features of addictive disorders is this combination of gratification and escape from internal discomfort (as implied by items C, B and E (9) in the diagnostic criteria list [see Table 1]). Hence, the concept of addiction represents a synthesis of dependence and compulsion. (1405)

These positive/dependence and negative/compulsion reinforcement paradigms support the previous discussion of B. F. Skinner's system of reinforcement and punishment and how it relates to online gamers. A player attempts to achieve a pleasurable internal state via gratification by achieving game goals and gaining rewards and experience points. On the other hand, a player also attempts to evade or avoid an unpleasurable/aversive internal state (e.g. anxiety, grief, guilt, shame, rage), which could be caused by a real world situation or a virtual world situation: such as having his reputation and status being negatively impacted or by being ostracized by the guild.

Goodman suggests that optimal treatment for an addictive disorder “would require that both positive and negative reinforcement processes be addressed,” which would involve the trust, communication, cooperation, and the collaboration of the psychiatry/psychology systems and the addictionology/12-step system (1406).

For Goodman, the addictive process “is the compulsive dependence on an (apparently self-initiated and self-controlled) external action in order to regulate the internal state” (1407). For online gamers, the addictive process would be their compulsive dependence of being immersed in the secondary world in order to regulate their internal state. For Boal, there is the additional layer of external and internal forces that suppress one’s emotions and actions: the external, social coercion and/or internal, ethical choice. Fear and morality: an external morality, conditioned by the outside world, and an internal morality conditioned by habit. It is the life-defining voices of the external social factors—our family, significant others, teachers, communities, churches, legal system, government—that impact the thoughts and emotions determining our internal state. Addressing this additional layer of suppression/oppression in an aesthetic space—using theatre as a tool that allows us to witness these forces that constrain us and change the dramatic action in a positive direction—can potentially be a supplemental component that can enhance the optimal treatment plan that Goodman has outlined in his article.

CHAPTER THREE

While attending a Rainbow of Desire workshop in Oakland, California,²⁸ I was able to participate and observe firsthand how the “cops in the head” hypotheses described in chapter one can be put into practice. Through this process, it became apparent that this methodology can be used as a valuable tool when working with online gamers, who are struggling with balancing their game playing in the secondary world with their life in the primary world. This workshop provided the practical framework that demonstrated how Boal’s concepts of community, games, and of the mechanization of the body and mind, can be extended to apply to the online gaming community.

The main facilitator of this workshop, Hector Aristizabal, is a psychotherapist, activist and theatre artist who survived civil war, arrest, and torture in his native country of Colombia. Aristizabal has worked extensively with Augusto Boal, so the essence of Boal’s work was evident in the workshop techniques presented. The focus of the workshop was to provide training to facilitators – from various fields – in Rainbow of Desire and “cops in the head” techniques, but Aristizabal also infused psychodrama, ritual theater, drumming, and storytelling elements. Boal would be the first to say that his writings are not a rule-book and that “the techniques should be adapted to suit the participants, not vice versa. Boal’s entire theatrical career is based on the disruption and subversion of theatrical ritual, even his own invented rituals” (Boal *Rain* xxiii).

²⁸ See Appendix A: “From Desire into Action.” For more information about Hector Aristizabal and Alessia Cartoni, refer to, <http://imagination.org/artists/hector>

In this chapter, key practical games, exercises, and techniques utilized in the Oakland workshop will be described and theoretically applied to one of the oppressive scenarios in the online gaming community: a scenario that has been perceived as a common thread to addiction by current therapy practitioners in the behavioral therapy and mental health fields.²⁹ Additionally, exercises and techniques described in Boal's books, *The Rainbow of Desire* and *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* will be utilized as ancillary support for the therapeutic aspect of this work as a viable component in online gaming addiction recovery programs.

As mentioned in chapter two, when initially coming together in a workshop situation with a group of players who do not necessarily know each other and who may have never participated in theatre games and exercises, it is vital to establish a sense of community. From the very first moment of connection – a village should be created by joining together in a circle, which many believe is an ancient and universal symbol of unity, wholeness—a sacred space, a safe space. It is also important to emphasize to the group that one does not need to be a trained actor to participate in these games and exercises. As indicated by the title: *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, the games and exercises in this book can be utilized by trained and untrained performers—“it is fundamental to Boal's work that anyone can act and that theatrical performance should not be solely the province of professionals” (Boal *Games* xxii). However, Boal does stress that the choice to participate is up to the individual.

²⁹ See Chapter Two—the online video game scenario is based on one of the questions from Table 1 – set of diagnostic criteria used as a screening tool for online gaming addiction from the OLGA website.

Each of these games and exercises are utilized for specific purposes and Boal explains the overall goal of each category as follows:

The goal of the exercises is a better awareness of the body and its mechanisms, its atrophies and hypertrophies, its capacities for recuperation, restructuring, reharmonisation. Each exercise is a 'physical reflection' on oneself. A monologue. An introversion. The games, on the other hand, deal with the expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages. The games are a dialogue, they require an interlocutor. They are extroversion. (Boal *Games* 48)

The mechanization of the body has been previously discussed and it has been suggested that by carrying out the same movements for long extended periods of time, it mechanizes the body "to execute these movements as efficiently as possible, thus denying themselves the possibility of original action every time the opportunity arises" (Boal *Games* 30). Boal also suggests that "we feel, listen and see according to our specialty; the body adapts itself to the job it has to do" (49). These exercises and games are designed for not only the de-mechanization of the body, but also the "de-specialisation" (49). Based on what has been discussed thus far about how gamers use the computer as an extension of their body and their senses, it may now be evident that if the goals of these exercises and games are achieved, the de-mechanization/de-specialization of the body and mind and the restoration of its expressivity are possible.

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, this is not a rule book and the techniques should be adapted to suit the participants. The games and exercises listed in *Games for*

Actors and Non-Actors and in *The Rainbow of Desire* do not need to be done in any specific order nor do they need to be done in their entirety—suggestions are given, which can be used as a guideline. It should also be noted that TO practitioners in the field may do variations of these games and exercises based on their experience, comfort level, and on what has been successful for the communities with which they work. This was the situation in the Oakland workshop. Some of the games and exercises performed in the workshop were not exactly executed as described in Boal’s books, but were in fact variations of them. Even Boal states that “some of the games have been adapted to our needs (with children’s games as the starting point, for example), some have been invented in the course of our practice, and...some are as old as Brueghel”³⁰ (Boal *Games* 48).

Several good examples of adapting games to meet the needs of the community were presented at the workshop in Oakland. As these variations occur throughout this chapter, both the Boal and workshop version of a game or exercise will be briefly describe to illustrate this adaptability to suit the participants. Case in point, one particular game variation presented at the workshop immediately provided a potentially powerful workshop opener for a community of gamers experiencing the negative effects of excessive online gaming. We played a game that focused on the importance of acknowledging another’s existence. This exact exercise wasn’t included in either book, but as described below in the section on “Games” it could be seen as a variation of a

³⁰ This is a reference to Flemish painter, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, who painted "Children's Games" in 1560. The summer townscape that is devoid of adults is rich in detail about medieval children—especially at play. The painting provides a window into amusements and recreations in the past in its detailed depiction of some 200 children engaged in nearly 80 different games and play activities. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/332>

game called “Good day” – which can be found in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*.

Aristizabal adapted this game in such a way so as to stress the importance of letting someone know that they are seen. If one thinks of the isolating environment in which an online gamer plays and that the only real acknowledgment they receive is based on their performance in the game, it becomes clear how playing a game in an aesthetic space that lets someone know that they are really seen and acknowledged might be of value when working with a community of online gamers. Additionally, in the secondary world, it’s the gamer’s avatar that is visually acknowledged, not the person operating the controls.

The Power of Acknowledgment

Why is it important to take the time to acknowledge each other? As previously discussed, fear and morality can effect what we do and say in life. Certain social factors can create environments and situations where one is told from a young age not to look someone in the eye: it could be fear-based or culturally-based. Consequently, there is a lack of acknowledgment and validation of existence, which can turn people into objects—an obstacle to maneuver around—rather than someone to interact with—the subject. One only needs to observe how people act and react during rush hour in a big city: walking through a large crowd on the streets or in a subway station. Add to that scene, the plethora of technological hand devices—smart phones, iPads, Gameboys, etc.—and it becomes obvious that a person’s focus is increasingly diverted down to a screen instead of out towards other human beings. For the online gamer playing an MMORPG, the focus is on a computer screen and for the most part, the gamer’s

perception of another living person is that they are just another “structural characteristic” in the online video game.

This acknowledgment and validation of existence is a key component of Boal’s work: which stresses that a person “frees himself from his condition of spectator and takes on that of actor, in which he ceases to be an object and becomes a subject, is changed from witness into protagonist” (Boal *Thea* 125-26). Essentially, one takes on the condition of the actor, takes control of his own body, knows his own body, and becomes the doer; the transformer of the dramatic action. Boal’s games and exercises initialize this acknowledgment and validation of self and others as subjects and not as objects. The games are interactive, but unlike online video games, an essential component of these games is the existence of real, not virtual, players gathered in an aesthetic space, where physical contact between human beings is possible. Boal’s “*Games* facilitate and oblige this de-mechanization, being, as they are, sensory dialogues where, within the necessary discipline, they demand the creativity which is their essence” (Boal *Aesthetics* 5). For the purpose of this thesis, Boal’s use of the word “actor” will be utilized instead of the word “participant” to support his concept that we are all actors—the transformers of the dramatic action.

The Games

The following are two of the games and their variations that were played in the Oakland workshop. The name and description of the game as it appears in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* will be listed first followed by the description of the workshop’s variations. Many games were played at the beginning of each day of the workshop, but

for the purpose of this thesis, two have been chosen as examples of games that can activate the “expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages” (Boal *Games* 48).

Good Day: Boal describes this game as “especially useful when starting a Forum Theatre session with lots of people who have never met before: everyone has to shake hands with a stranger and say their own name; they can only let go of the other person’s hand when they have grabbed another hand – to whose owner they will say their name and so on” (85).

In the workshop, we did the following variations of this game:

1. Variation #1: The actors stand in a circle facing towards the center. One by one each person in the circle does a movement and says their first name. Everyone in the circle repeats the same movement and says the name back to the person—acknowledging that they are seen.
2. Variation #2: The actors randomly move around the room and when the facilitator yells ‘Freeze!’ one actor immediately connects with another actor nearby. Each person in the pair takes turns doing a movement and saying their name, which the partner repeats and vice versa. After doing this for a while, the facilitator then asks the actors to exaggerate the movement and add a sound as they say their names.

This is an excellent game of acknowledgment and additionally as the movements and sounds become more exaggerated—more dynamised, one could sense how Boal’s concept that games require creative freedom in addition to rules, comes into play. For

some actors, the movements began small and when they said their names, it was in a quiet tone. With the exaggeration of movement and sound, the actors began to become more extroverted and expressive. The body and mind were activated in a new way, the senses expanded and opened up to emit and receive messages and enter into a dialogue. For gamers – whose environment is in front of a computer, which allows them to occupy very little space and limits the expressivity of the body – this game is an excellent tool to re-introduce their body to filling a larger space and to creative expression.

The Movement Comes Back: The actors sit in a circle, one behind the other, each person placing their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them, in order to keep roughly an arm's length apart. One actor starts a repetitive action (a rhythmic tap or squeeze or whatever) on the shoulder of the person in front of him, who must then repeat exactly the same thing on the person in front of her, and so on, till the motion returns to the person who started it. At that point, the originator changes the motion or the rhythm or both (75).

In the workshop, we did the following variations:

1. Variation #1: The actors stand in a circle facing towards the center. A leader makes a motion and sends it around the circle in one direction with each person repeating the motion until it returns to the person who started it. At that point, the originator changes the motion and sends it around in the opposite direction. The movement of this motion around the circle needs to happen very quickly, which allows the body to freely emit and receive messages without the intrusion of thought.

2. Variation #2: The actors stand in a circle facing towards the center. Two leaders each make a motion and send it around the circle in opposite directions with each person in the circle repeating each of the motions as they arrive. When the motions return back to each leader, two different motions are sent around in the opposite directions. The movement of these conflicting motions around the circle needs to happen very quickly.
3. **Super Hero – part one:** In this variation, the actors stand in a circle facing towards the center. The facilitator invents a name for a super hero (i.e. Super Woman) and creates a gesture and a sound that represents that super hero. The gesture determines the direction that the motion will travel around the circle. Each actor, however, has the option to change the direction at any time, which can provide the opportunity to briefly stop the repetitive movement and to catch people off guard. The dynamics of the character's gesture and sound can vary in speed and volume based on the creator's decision, but part of the rules for this character is that the dynamic as well as the gesture and sound must be repeated exactly by each actor as it travels around the circle.
4. **Super Hero – part two:** A second actor invents the name of a nemesis to the super hero (i.e. King Kong) and creates a gesture and sound that stops the super hero's motion and makes it travel in the opposite direction. As with Super Hero - part one, each actor has the option to play the role of the nemesis to stop and change the direction of the super hero motion. Additionally, each actor can continue to randomly change the direction of the super hero's motion – more opportunities to stop repetitive movements and catch people off guard.

5. **Super Hero – part three:** A third actor invents the name of second nemesis to the super hero (i.e. Spider Woman) and creates a gesture and sound that directs the motion across the diameter of the circle to an actor standing opposite in the circle. The person that gets ‘zapped’ by this second nemesis decides which direction to send the super hero motion. As with Super Hero - part one and part two, each actor has the option to (a) play any role—nemesis or super hero—at any point of the game and to (b) determine the direction of the super hero motion. More characters can be added to this game—each with their own dynamic gesture, sound, and set of rules—it really depends on the amount of time allotted for the game.

As you can see, the variations in this game are endless and it allows the actors to be very creative. In the Super Hero variations, the game encourages the actors to decide the name, the dynamic gesture and sound of a character, and to assign the rules that accompany each character’s gesture and sound. The Super hero variations of this game could be very appealing to a community of gamers, who for the most part play games that deal with other-worldly characters, many of whom have super human abilities.

As discussed in chapter two, in the online gaming world, gamers can choose what their characters look like, what their abilities are, and what their role is within the virtual society, but their choices are limited to what the game designers have programmed into the game. In the Super Hero game, each actor not only has the opportunity to create their own characters, but during the playing of the game, they can decide which character to play and determine the direction of the motion. The variations in gestures, sounds, and

dynamics in this game can help in the “expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages,” and it can promote dialogue and connectivity among the players in a fun and engaging manner. Furthermore, having the actors set their own rules and parameters of the game, gives them awareness and control of their bodies—making them the subjects of the game, not the objects.

The Exercises

Boal states that the goal of the exercises is “a better awareness of the body and its mechanisms, its atrophies and hypertrophies, its capacities for recuperation, restructuring, reharmonisation.” He also refers to the combination of his games and exercises as “gamesercises” – “there is a fair proportion of exercise in the games and a fair proportion of game in the exercise. The difference on the whole is one of didactic intent” (48). The games are extroversion and the exercises are introversion—“each exercise is a ‘physical reflection’ on oneself” (48). The description of the following exercise provides an excellent example of what Boal means when he states that each exercise is a ‘physical reflection’ on oneself.

This exercise is the first in a series of rhythm exercises that help the actors “understand that it is important to find ‘inner’ rhythms and not to seek to make portraits of people or, even worse, caricatures” (92). The exercise description is a lengthy citation from the *Games* book, but one that needs to remain intact to maintain clarity. This exercise was performed in the workshop with very little variation:

A Round of Rhythm and Movement: The actors form a circle. One of them goes into the middle and makes any kind of movement, as strange or unusual as she likes,

accompanied by a sound and in a rhythm of her own invention. All the others imitate her, trying to reproduce exactly her movements and sounds, in time with her. Then, still making her movement and sound, this leader approaches and stands opposite someone in the circle, challenging them to take her place; this person goes into the middle and slowly changes the movement, the rhythm and the sound in any way she likes. Everyone follows this second leader, who then challenges a third person and so on.

The person who goes into the middle can create any rhythm of body and sound she likes, as long as it isn't something she does in her daily life. There must be no fear of the ridiculous, the grotesque, or the strange. If everybody is ridiculous, no one is!

Everyone else must try to reproduce everything they see and hear, as precisely as they can – the same movements, the same voice, the same rhythm, etc. If it is a woman who is in the middle, the men in the circle must try not to produce a 'masculine' version of the movement, but to reproduce exactly what they have perceived; and vice versa.

What is happening here? What mechanism? Simple – in the act of trying to reproduce someone else's way of moving, singing, etc., we begin to undo our own mechanizations. By our reproduction, we are usefully relaying to that person our vision of her, but more importantly we are working to restructure our own way of being, in many different fashions (since many actors will go into the middle).

We do not do a caricature, because though that would lead us to do different things, we would be doing them in the same way (our own). We try to understand and make an exact copy of the exterior of the person in the middle, in order to gain a better sense of their interior. (92)

1. Variation #1: We did the above exercise as it was described and then we did a variation with music. The facilitator played music and we created our own rhythmic movements to the music. As we moved around the room, we would find others who had similar rhythmic movement and homogenize our movements. The more that we homogenized and harmonized our movements with others around us, the more we were able to let go of our own mechanized moves.

Without Leaving a Single Space in the Room Empty: This exercise is part of the space series of exercises which are used to engage all the senses. All actors must walk around very quickly (not running) trying to ensure that their own bodies are always more or less equidistant from everyone else's, and that they are all spread out over the whole floor-space of the room. From time to time the [facilitator] says 'Stop'. At that moment, everyone must immediately come to a halt – it should not be possible to see a significantly empty space in the room. The main thing is not to come to a halt before the 'Stop'. Whenever anyone sees an empty space, they go and fill it with their body, but they can't stay there, so a moment later it is empty again, except that someone comes to fill it, but he can't stop there either...(127)

1. Variation #1: We did this exercise first and then did a variation where the facilitator told us to look for “grandma's ring” and that it was urgent that we find it right away. This added a new dimension to the exercise, because we were actively looking for something, which changed the dynamic and levels of the exercise.

2. Variation #2: We started the exercise as described in the book—quickly moving around the room and trying to fill the empty spaces whenever the facilitator yelled ‘Stop.’ Then the facilitator added a new element to the exercise: he would also yell out directions like: touch your head, grab your butt, touch the floor, jump up and touch the sky, etc. After doing this variation for awhile, the facilitator added yet another element to the exercise: whatever he yelled out for us to do, we had to do the opposite. For example: if he yelled touch your heads, we would grab our butts, if he yelled touch the floor, we had to jump and touch the sky; when he yelled stop, we had to keep moving, etc. This variation succeeded in breaking down mechanized movements that are a part of daily life, by making the mind and body focus on doing the opposite of what is considered ‘normal’ to our bodies and minds.

Character Creation and Memory of the Senses

Another important series of games and exercises in the *Games* book that are beneficial to do before moving into the Rainbow techniques are called: “Games involving the creation of characters” and “The memory of the senses.”

Boal recommends using “Games involving the creation of characters” when starting with a new group of non-actors. These games help people “accept the idea of ‘playing’ as we play in the theatre; they help people lose some of their inhibitions” (165). Online gamers are use to playing characters in a virtual world – where they can hide behind their avatar, but it is quite a different story when you have to portray a character in front of real people. It is important that the scenarios used in these games are familiar to

the community, so role-playing in the primary world becomes more natural. Additionally many of the improvised scenes are performed at the same time, without an audience present, which facilitates the stripping away of some of the inhibitions.

“The memory of the senses” helps us “to reconnect memory, emotion and imagination when rehearsing a scene or preparing a future action” (171). Gamers live a vivid fantasy life in their secondary world: a life that involves the use of all their senses, which connect to memory, emotion and imagination. If gamers are immersed in the secondary world for a long period of time—with their attention consistently focused on what’s happening to their avatars—can this cause them to disconnect with their own memories, emotions and imaginations in the primary world? Clark and Scott suggest that when we pay attention to something that it will “be mulled over alongside working memory, where the brain actually works to understand situations” (45). They go on to describe what they believe happens when a gamer spends the majority of their time focusing their attention on the video game:

If we’re busy thinking about what’s happening inside a game, then everything else is much more likely to fade away, or at least dim in comparison. In the long term, giving priority to a game means that we’re not going to have any long-term memory for things that happened in the primary world. (45)

These exercises will help with this reconnection of memory, emotion and imagination in the primary world. Since Rainbow work derives from scenes created by the community based on problems in their own lives, it is important that they feel

comfortable using the language of the theatre as their tool of expression. These games and exercises introduce this language in a more comprehensible manner. To begin with, we will look at two of the “Games involving the creation of characters” that were used in the workshop.

The Two Revelations of Saint Teresa: Boal clarifies that this title does not signify any religious connotation, but rather was named after the place in Rio de Janeiro where it was invented. The group decides what kind of interpersonal relations it wishes to investigate – husband/wife, parent/child, teacher/student, doctor/patient, etc. Only close, charged relationships should be selected. Then the group forms into couples, in which the partners decide only: (1) who plays what; (2) where they usually meet; (3) their age. The improvisation begins when the couples meet. They must say to each other the things they think those characters would usually say, and do what they believe they would usually do, including all the usual conversational clichés. After a few minutes the [facilitator] says, ‘One of you make the first revelation.’ Then, in character, one of the partners must reveal to the other something of great importance which has the potential to change their relationship, for better or worse. The other partner must display what they consider would be the most probable reaction. A few more minutes of this, and then the [facilitator] tells the second one to make an important revelation as well, and in turn, the first person reacts accordingly. Another interval, then the [facilitator] says one of them must leave: they improvise the separation, of whatever kind – a ‘see you tomorrow’ or a ‘good night’ or a ‘goodbye forever.’ (169)

1. Variation #1: In the workshop, we followed the format of this game, but we were told before the improvisation began that one member of the couple has a secret that they desperately need to tell their partner, but they are concerned how their partner will react and how it might affect their relationship. The scene begins and the secret is told. After an interval, the facilitator puts the action on pause and announces that the other partner has a secret to reveal as well. The scene continues until the facilitator tells the couples to end their meeting and improvise the separation as described above.

These improvised scenes happened at the same time, so that the couples did not have to feel inhibited by doing their scenes in front of an audience. After the game was over, we sat in a circle to discuss what happened. Two key phrases seemed to be consistently voiced among the couples: ‘the situation felt very real’ and ‘the secrets that were revealed in this fictional theatrical setting deeply resonated with them.’ This supports Boal’s suggestion that only close, charged relationships should be selected by the group for this game, because this will allow the actors to more fully identify with or at least recognize the characters in the scenes. This next “Games involving the creation of characters” that was performed in the workshop was extremely powerful.

The Blank Character: The protagonist imagines someone, a real person who is one of his oppressors. This person must be a concrete person, not an abstraction like ‘the education system’...but a real person, well known to the protagonist, a person through whom those oppressions emerge. Facing him stands totally neutral the blank character who has no idea what the protagonist is thinking. The game begins when the [facilitator]

says: 'Only the eyes.' From that point on, the protagonist must start impersonating his oppressor and thinking intensely all his oppressor's thoughts, expressing all his feelings, but...only through his eyes. The blank characters will understand and feel something. After a short time, the [facilitator] will say 'The eyes and the whole face', allowing the protagonist to express himself also through the face. Then, 'Eyes, face and arms' followed by 'The whole body, on the spot' and 'The whole body anywhere in the space', which allows the protagonist to move around. And 'The voice, but no words' and finally 'Dialogue' when both start expressing their thoughts and feelings through all the languages at their disposal. Through these various stages, the blank characters slowly perceive who the protagonist/oppressor is, where they are, and the relationship between them – and then can express that on the same level as the protagonists: through their eyes, the face, arms, etc. At the end, the blank character must speak first and say what he got from the protagonist and at what point. (170-71)

1. Variation #1: We did a series of walks before beginning this exercise, which was an excellent way of connecting with a specific real person that one considers an oppressor. We first walked around the room as ourselves – the protagonist. Then the facilitator told us to think of a specific person we have a relationship with which we feel is one of our oppressors. We continued walking around the room thinking of this person until the facilitator asked us to let our body move in a way that reflects how we feel when being oppressed by this person. After an interval, we were asked to add a sound that accompanies the movement – no words, just sound.

After another interval, the facilitator asked us to think about how our

oppressor moves and to imitate that movement. Then we were asked to exaggerate our oppressor's movement—to play with speed, levels and directions. Then we were instructed to add a sound to accompany the exaggerated movement. After we ended this series of walks, we picked a partner and did the blank character game as described above.

Based on feedback provided by the pairs, one of the most surprising effects of this game was the amount of pain and emotion that the blank character felt and understood. The majority of the blank characters in the workshop were moved to tears, which in turn emotionally affected the protagonists. At the end of the game, when the blank characters spoke first about what they received from the protagonists and at what point, it was extremely interesting how accurate their reactions were to what the protagonists were projecting. The dialogue between blank character and protagonist at the end of the game was in private and then the option was given to share with the group.

Moving on to “the memory of the senses” exercises—we combined and did variations of two of these exercises in the workshop: “Memory and emotion: remembering a day in the past” and “Memory and emotion and imagination.” As previously done, I will first describe the exercises as written in *Games* and then describe the variations that were done in the workshop. It should be noted that on the day these exercises were performed in the workshop, we had a group of high school students join us and they each partnered up with an adult in the workshop to recount their stories.

Memory and Emotion: Remembering a Day in the Past: Actors pair up. One actor will recount a day in their past (last week or twenty years ago) when something really

important happened, something which made a profound impression on them, the memory of which provokes emotion, even today. The actor recounting the story must have a co-pilot; people's experiences are not the same – as the co-pilot listens he is at the same time creating another image in his mind. The co-pilot should help the person to link the memory to the sensations, by asking lots of questions related to sensory details. The co-pilot is not a voyeur; he should use the exercise to try to create the same event in his own imagination, with the same details, the same emotion, the same sensations – which will be different, of course, because they will be his own. (172-73)

Memory and Emotion and Imagination: The same system – with the help of the co-pilot you try to remember something which really happened. You try to reawaken the emotions and sensations you felt at the time, but this time the co-pilot (who must be a genuine co-pilot, co-feeling the same sensations and sharing the same images) now has the right to introduce various elements which were not in the original version: extra characters, additional events. And the actor-protagonist must introduce these new elements into his imaginary world. Thus both protagonist and co-pilot are actors in the creation of a story, part reality, part fiction, but moving in its totality, evocative of powerful images and sensations. With practice, the fictional elements introduced by the co-pilot can become further and further removed from the reality, even to the point of surrealism. But people should set out from the probable and the possible to arrive at the improbable and impossible, which can still generate emotions and awaken sensations. (173)

1. Variation #1: We divided the entire group in half: Group A and Group B. Within each group, we paired up and each pair decided who would be the protagonist recounting a day in the past and who would co-pilot. The facilitator instructed the protagonists to pick a really important event that happened to them between the ages of three and five. It should be noted that this age range was not set in stone and could vary—it was a device used to aid the protagonists in picking an event from a specific time period in their lives, so as not to overwhelm them with too many choices. What’s important with this exercise is that the event made a profound impression on the protagonist, the memory of which provokes emotion, even today. When something happens that makes a powerful impact on a person, recalling images and sensations connected to the event is usually more accessible. The balance of the exercise followed the description given for “Memory and emotion: remembering a day in the past.” As with “Games involving the creation of characters,” all of the pairs did this activity at the same time.
2. Variation #2: For the second exercise: “Memory and emotion and imagination,” we stayed in the same groups and in the same pairs, but we did not change stories. The co-pilots in Group A were told to introduce a new element into the story by doing an interpretive dance for the protagonist that reflected the emotions and images they received when listening to the protagonist recount the story. The co-pilots in Group B were told to perform their version of the story for the protagonist as if they were singing about the story in a Peking Opera. Both groups did their versions of the exercise at the same time. At the end of the exercise, the facilitator asked the pairs from Group A to go into an area of the room designated

as the stage. Together they performed their interpretive dances—each pair of protagonist/co-pilot performed their own story—all at the same time in front of their audience – Group B. After their performance was over, the groups switched and Group B took the stage and together they performed the Peking Opera version of the story—each pair of protagonist/co-pilot performed their own story—all at the same time in front of their audience – Group A.

Witnessing the stories happening simultaneously – each with their own mixture of reality and fiction – can be a very moving experience; regardless that the audience is unaware of what each story is about. The movements and sounds can evoke one’s own powerful images and sensations.

By this point in the workshop, the group should be ready to move into the more complicated “cops in the head” techniques. Keep in mind, this thesis has provided examples of only a few key games and exercises that were actually performed during the workshop. Depending on the length of the workshop and its focus, many more games and exercises can be performed to achieve Boal’s goals of the actor gaining better “awareness of the body and its mechanisms, its atrophies and hypertrophies, its capacities for recuperation, restructuring, reharmonisation” and of regaining greater “expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages”(48).

Rainbow of Desire Techniques

The framework for theater and therapy work in *The Rainbow of Desire* is comprised of three types of techniques: the Prospective techniques, the Introspective

techniques, and the Extraversion techniques. Essentially, these three types of techniques are described as follows:

Prospective techniques lay the groundwork, mining the surfaces of issues and situations from various points of view offered by workshop actors [image theater work]...Introspective techniques penetrate the surface and illuminate the subtext of actions and relationships portrayed in a series of improvisations [includes “cops in the head” work]...Finally, the protagonist incorporates multiple insights and perspectives gleaned from the Introspective work into the Extraversion process that brings the original embryonic scenes back into action [breaking the oppression].

(Sullivan *Web* 2006)

This thesis focuses on the Prospective and Introspective techniques and will hypothetically apply specific exercises from these techniques to one oppressive online video game scenario. This scenario is derived from the set of diagnostic criteria utilized to diagnose addictive disorders by the psychiatry/psychology systems and the addictionology /12-step system.³¹

The Prospective Techniques

In a Rainbow of Desire session, work with a new group should begin with creating images, which Boal explains “establishes a relationship between individual, singular problems and the collective problems a group is experiencing” (Boal *Rain* 77).

³¹ See Table 1 in Chapter Two

He goes on to suggest that there are only three types of relationships between actor and image that will lead to fruitful and creative results. Here is a brief summary of each:

1. Identification: 'I am exactly like that'...[this] is the strongest of these three types of actor-image relation, since it is the actor's own personality which animates it, her own sensibility, rather than just the approximate knowledge she may have of another person's sensibility. (Boal *Rain* 68)
2. Recognition: 'I am not like that at all, but I know exactly the sort of person it's talking about!'...The actor will be mobilized by her knowledge of an 'other', by real-life experiences she has had with an 'other'; she will be mobilized not because the image relates directly to her but because it relates to this 'other', whom she knows well. (69)
3. Resonance: 'She is like that, but she could be different'; I am not like that, but I would like to be'; 'She could be worse'; 'I don't know, but I have a feeling'...this form of relation can be said to exist when the image or the character awakens in the actor feelings and emotions which she can only vaguely identify or delineate. (69)

If the session is comprised of actors from the online gaming community, the first and second type of actor-image relationships will probably be more prominent, but the key to the effectiveness of these techniques is based on the intensity and passion "with which the actor commits herself to the image or character and its animation" (Boal *Rain* 69).

Before beginning the image theatre work, it might be beneficial to have this community of gamers take a moment to focus on specific oppressive issues that affect them. In the Oakland workshop, if we wanted information about ourselves to remain private, we would do a blind vote—participants close their eyes and raise their hands in response to the questions or statements that apply to them. This method allows the participants to freely express their feelings without the fear of judgment. Applying this method to a community of gamers could be accomplished as follows: the facilitator will inform the group that a set of questions used as a self-evaluation tool will be read out loud.³² Participants do a blind vote. Using this method will ideally allow the facilitator to narrow down the list to include the key questions that seem to apply to this group.

Once all the responses are tallied, the facilitator will let the group know which questions received the most responses. This method is not meant to invalidate participants who may have felt other questions on the list applied to them more, but to facilitate the selection of oppressive scenarios from which images and eventually scenes can be created—scenarios with which the majority of the group can identify with and recognize.

For the purposes of this thesis, the Rainbow techniques will be hypothetically applied to the following question from the list of diagnostic criteria: ‘Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of your game playing?’ All image and scene work described below will be based on this question.

³² See Table 1 in Chapter Two

Image Theatre Work

As discussed earlier, the actor-image relationships will be more effective if the actor is passionate about the image he is sculpting: this passion and intensity will lead to more fruitful and creative results. It should also be noted that in the earlier stages of image work, no words are used. Boal states that “Image is a language; if it is translated into words, all its possible interpretations are reduced to a single one: the polysemy of the image is destroyed. But it is precisely in this polysemy that the richness of the language resides” (77).

In *The Rainbow of Desire*, Boal suggests that when working with a new group the facilitator should begin with the prospective technique called: “The image of the images.” There are four stages to this exercise. Here is a brief description of each stage:

1. Stage one: The individual images – groups of four or five people are formed. Each member of the group, in a short space of time, makes an image of an actual oppression (one that is still going on at the time, or that could happen again). The protagonist uses the other members of his group to sculpt the image, placing himself in the role as the oppressed. He is not allowed to speak during the construction of the image, but can have the group mirror his gestures and facial expressions. He can also manipulate the actor with his hands, like a sculptor with a statue. (77)
2. Stage two: the parade of images – the large group assembles and each small group from the previous exercise, go up on stage: the aesthetic space – one group at a time – and remake each of the images in front of everyone. The director asks the watching group for objective

commentaries, preferably – definite interpretations – and to stay away from giving individual perceptions – feelings, memories, sensations evoked by the image (i.e. subjective commentaries). Focus more on what you see – things that anybody can see—and not what you feel. After all the images have been paraded in front of the whole group, everyone looks at the factors that were common to different images. If the group is more or less homogeneous, it is likely that many gestures, stances and physical relationships will be similar. (77-78)

3. Stage three: the image of the images – the director then proposes that the group form a single image out of all these images – one image which will contain the essential elements of all the others. The group can choose which image of the principal oppressed – the sculptor – is most representative of the group—this becomes the central image. One by one, other images are constructed, images which have a relationship to the central image and which will complete the tableau, featuring the important elements from the whole collection of individual images. (78)

In the workshop, we did a variation of stage three, which is worth mentioning here before moving to stage four. We divided the group in half. Group A took the stage and Group B turned away, so that they couldn't see the tableau that was being created. The director whispered to Group A to create a single image, utilizing all members of the group – a tableau – that represented the typical American Family. They were only given a few minutes to get into position and freeze. Group B then turned to look at the tableau

and were asked to guess what this single image represented. No one in Group B could guess what the image represented and what was ironic—in this image of a typical American Family, not one member of Group A was physically connected – each individual was in their own world – some created an image of watching TV, looking at their cell phone, working or playing a game on the computer. It would have been interesting to see what this image would have looked like before the introduction of technology.

After Group B had been told what the image was, the director told Group A to change the image into a more ideal tableau, which included relationships and connections to each other. This was done and the new image evoked quite a bit of emotions and realizations within the group regarding how many of us relate to or chose not to relate to one another.

4. Stage four: the dynamisation – To dynamise the images, the director must verify the degree of interrelation of actor and image: (1) Do all the participants *identify* with the images they are presenting, that is, the image that each one is playing? Those who reply in the affirmative stay in these images. Those who do not are replaced by actors who do identify. (2) If, in spite of this, there remain some images with which none of the participants identifies, the director asks them if they *recognise* these images or characters. The process is the same. (3) If, in the rarest case, one or more images have still not been recognized, the director asks – as always, first the actors in the image and then the rest – if they feel any resonance with these images or characters. (79)

Once these participant/image relationships have been verified, we move on to the three forms of dynamisation. In Boal's work, dynamisation is defined as the process of adding movements, sounds and words into a piece of Image Theatre. This process becomes extremely important when working with the physical manifestations of an individual's desires and cops in the head, which we will see later in this chapter. Here is a brief description of the three forms of dynamisation:

1. First dynamisation: interior monologue – For a minimum of three minutes, all the actors who go to make up the image must utter, without self-interruption, the thoughts their characters—not the actors—are thinking at that particular moment within the situation they are animating – no movement. (79-80)
2. Second dynamisation: dialogue – For a further period of three minutes, the actors, still immobile can engage in dialogue. As they cannot move, if an actor wants to talk to another actor he can't see, or wants to plan an action with him, he has to find a way of doing so without movement, using speech alone. (80)
3. Third dynamisation: desire in action – very slowly, in slow motion, and this time without uttering a word, without making a sound, the actors move around, trying to show their characters' desires. (80)

We can apply the four stages and three forms of dynamisation to oppressive images created by the different groups in a workshop of online gamers. The collective image that is decided upon as representative of the group can then be dynamised. As an

example, we can use the question selected earlier in this chapter from the list of diagnostic criteria as the basis to create a collective image—‘Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of your game playing?’ For example, the collective image could be of a gamer at his computer playing a game, while other actors around him portray the characters of his girlfriend, boss, teacher, guild leader, parents, etc.

As described in stage four, once the participant/image relationships have been verified, we can move onto the three forms of dynamisation: interior monologue, dialogue without movement, and slow motion movement without words or sounds. Dynamising the collective image, can not only reveal similar relationship issues that may exist in real life for the principal oppressed – the sculptor, but for all members of the group – those in the image as well as those witnessing the image – because the roles portrayed by fellow gamers are based on their own relationships in the primary and secondary worlds. This can be a very powerful exercise, especially considering the degree to which this community of online gamers can identify with and recognize, the scenario being portrayed in the image created by the community.

The Introspective Techniques

Additional Image Theatre exercises in the *Rainbow* book are beneficial and delve deeper into creating images based on individual stories of oppression, all of which can be dissected and dynamised, but due to the confines of this thesis, we will move on to the second Rainbow technique: the Introspective Technique, which “is applicable only to the study of a relationship between two people. If the situation the protagonist wishes to

analyse also involves other characters, in order to be able to study it in the light of this technique, all the interrelations must be concentrated on the principal conflict, protagonist versus antagonist” (118). Preceding this technique, the community of gamers would have gone through extensive Image Theatre work dealing with various images and stories of oppression with which they have identified and/or recognized. Now, we switch to dealing with a single protagonist, whose problem and situation is analyzed by the group. The first exercise is called: “The image of the antagonist” and the exercise is made up of eight stages, which are briefly described below:

- (1) picking a theme, such as “fear”, having a protagonist(s) create an image of a situation with an antagonist, of whom they are afraid;
- (2) if there are more than one protagonist making images, similar images move together to form image families;
- (3) the group chooses the best image from each image family, which represents the fears of the group;
- (4) protagonist(s) gives the image a repetitive movement and a phrase that can be dynamised and then asks the protagonist(s) to slowly metamorphose into the image of their oppressor—the antagonist—to whom they also give a repetitive movement and phrase that reflect a part of that antagonist’s thoughts at that moment;
- (5) actors from the group replace the antagonist they can identify with or that they recognize and the protagonist (s) returns to their original image of the oppressed;
- (6) protagonist and antagonist improvise a scene: adding the repetitive rhythm and phrase and then dialogue. Actors should be warned not to be distracted that the characters being portrayed in the improvisation are from two different internal

stories, so they may not coincide. For example, the protagonist may see the oppressor as their father, but the antagonist may be treating the protagonist as their employee; (7) other actors in the group replace the first group of antagonists and present new confrontations for the protagonist; and (8) the director leads the discussion, an exchange of opinions and impressions, a recap of everything the participants have felt. (118-23)

In the workshop, we did a shorter version of this exercise since it was only a three-day workshop. During the image theatre portion of the workshop, four scenes that included a protagonist involved in an oppressive situation and an antagonist playing the role of the oppressor were created and analyzed. Therefore, we started with stage four listed above and applied it to one of the four scenes. This introspective exercise would work well with the online gaming community. If there is a shortage of time, the director can begin with the image that was previously dynamised using the prospective techniques: *i.e.*, the gamer sitting at the computer with the images of all his oppressors gathered around him. For this exercise, the gamer sitting at the computer would be the protagonist in the image and then one character from the collective image of oppressors would start off as the antagonist. However, as illustrated in stage seven, the antagonist from the first improvisation, can be replaced multiple times by different antagonists, who can portray the different oppressive roles that gamers identify with or that they recognize.

The addition of a repetitive movement and phrase is very telling in this exercise, especially when the protagonist and antagonist improvise the scene together. The antagonist uses the repetitive movement and phrase that the protagonist created for her

oppressor, but performs the action utilizing his own images of oppression—he isn't aware of the significance that the repetitive movement and phrase has for the protagonist. In the workshop, each new antagonist who joined the improvisation created their own repetitive movement and phrase, which stemmed from the actor/antagonist's internal images of oppression. This added a new dimension to the group's collective experience of identity and recognition. This exercise becomes a preparation for the more complicated "cops in the head" techniques.

Cops in the Head Techniques

There is one "cops in the head" technique in *The Rainbow of Desire* book called: "The image of the "cops in the head" and their antibodies," that will be hypothetically applied to the online gaming scenario. This technique has nine stages, most of which were applied to a scene in the workshop. In lieu of going through each stage separately, the description below will be a combination: of the technique as described in *The Rainbow of Desire* book and of the scene as it was performed in the workshop. Boal explains that "this technique is most applicable to scenes in which the protagonist wants to do something, but, for reasons he may or may not understand, fails to do it. There are no concrete 'cops' present, stopping him doing it, but still he doesn't do it; so there may be "cops in the head" instead" (136).

When considering a number of the questions listed on the diagnostic criteria: *i.e.*, 'Do you have difficulty staying away from gaming for several days at a time?'; 'Do you tell yourself you can stop playing the game any time you want to, even though you keep playing when you don't mean to?'; 'Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to

control, cut back, or stop your game playing?', etc. – it might be more comprehensible how applying this technique to a specific scene where the protagonist isn't aware of his "cops in the head" might offer insight on what is preventing him from doing something.

The image of the "cops in the head" and their antibodies (136-41)

The protagonist improvises the original scene from the previous exercise—*i.e.*, the gamer sitting at a computer being confronted by his oppressors/antagonists. He can choose whichever actor or actors he wants in the scene. After the scene has been improvised, the director asks the protagonist to sculpt images of the "cops" which were present in his memory or in his imagination during this first improvisation, using the bodies of participants not involved in the improvisation. These images must represent concrete people, real known, familiar people—the girlfriend, the boss, the teacher, the father, the sister, the brother, the best friend, the guild leader, the therapist, and so on. These characters were not visible to us when the improvisation was taking place, but they were present in the head of the protagonist—those who inspire fear, desires, phobias, vexations, etc.

To illustrate this concept, here is an example of how this was applied in the workshop, which can be translated to the online gaming scenario. In the workshop, the protagonist began by creating an image of herself that represented one of the cops in her head. She said a phrase to go with the image and told the group who the cop represented. A participant in the group who could identify or recognize this cop came onstage and assumed the position of the protagonist and was asked to remember the phrase, which would be repeated in a later stage of the exercise. For the online gaming scenario, the

gamer/protagonist could get up from sitting in front of the computer and take a position behind the computer and create an image as if to take the computer away and say, ‘you’re grounded and this computer is going away. I’m doing this for your own good’ – the cop is his mom. A participant would come up from the group who could identify with or recognize the image and/or the phrase and take over the gamer/protagonist position. This same action is done for each of the cops in the protagonist’s head.

The director then asks the group if they spotted other “cops” in the protagonist’s head, or if the improvisation had awoken “cops” in their own heads—if they had, they went up on stage and made images of these cops. The protagonist then decides whether to accept or refuse these images, because the cops in the head need to represent concrete people that the protagonist knows. In the workshop, the protagonist, in addition to accepting or refusing an image, was allowed to modify the “cops” presented by the group in order to align them with her own images.

The director asks the protagonist to arrange the cop “statues” around him like a constellation, putting himself in the center of the constellation. It is very telling how the protagonist feels about each “statue” based on their positioning and distance. Before moving forward, the director calls the group’s attention to the positioning and relationship of the statues to one another and to the actors in the actual improvisation, who by the way remain on stage during this exercise. For example, in our game scenario, if the protagonist placed his “father statue” under a table with his back to him, it may indicate that the protagonist is trying to hide from this “cop” or he doesn’t want the father to see what he’s doing. Boal stresses that the group should not seek to resolve any contradictions, but instead throw light on them. The goal is to always see the images from

an objective point of view and to distinguish this objectivity from projections—‘the father is lying under the table with his back to the protagonist’ vs. ‘It seems to me that he hates his father’ – the ‘it is’ vs. ‘it seems to me.’ The group needs to be aware of this distinction and remain objective when possible.

At this point, the director asks the protagonist to approach each of the “statues” to tell them his memories, his emotions, his fears, his desires, his complaints—slowly, in a clear low voice—“You remember when...and that is why...” For example, our gamer might approach the “guild leader statue” and say, “Do you remember when you threatened to kick me out of the guild if I didn’t stay up all night to join the raid? That is why I realized that you are a selfish, lonely man.” The actor embodying the “guild leader statue” doesn’t react, but now knows how to *live* his character in the next stage of the exercise. After all of the invisible characters have been informed of their “cop” role, the scene is improvised again between the protagonist and the antagonist(s). After an interval, the “cops” also begin to improvise. In the workshop, the “cops” started with the phrase that the protagonist said when she created the image, but then they were allowed to expand on it as long as they did not interact with the other cops or the actors/antagonists. They focused their dialogue onto the protagonist. At this point in the exercise, the “cops” can speak, but not move. The protagonist is allowed to physically move the “cops” to another position in the room further away, but if the “cops” are motivated, they can return to their original position.

So, now there are two levels of play: one, realistic – the arena in which actors/antagonists and protagonist operates, another surrealistic – the arena of protagonist and “cop” images. The protagonist is the only person living in both of the levels; the

actors/antagonists and the “cop” images being incapable of dialogue with each other. In the workshop, the protagonist struggled with trying to get rid of the voices—the cops in her heads—every time she moved certain “cops” further away, they kept slowly returning back to their original position if they felt motivated to do so. At the same time, she was trying to deal with the actor/antagonist.

The scene continued in this fashion without any real resolution until the director stopped the scene and told the protagonist to take her original pose and speak to each “cop” one at a time. Based on these conversations, she decided which of the cops were the more supportive voices and moved those closer to her. She continued to move each of the cops into positions around her based on their level of support or oppression.

Through this process, it became clear to her that she couldn’t get rid of the cops in her head, but she could sculpt and physically move each “cop” into the position in which she wanted them to exist in her head – a symbolic representation that allowed her to amplify the power of the supportive voices and diminish the power of the oppressive voices. The awareness that these “cops in the head” exist is half the battle of dealing with the oppressions that prevent someone from living life to the fullest. The voices in the head are parasites and theatre allows us to project them out and deal with them. “When the external figures that affect a protagonist’s inner life are represented as speaking sculptures, the protagonist is able to gain perspective and strategize ways to oppose or incorporate these internalized influences” (Sullivan 2006).

CONCLUSION

This thesis has provided examples on how Augusto Boal's theatrical games, exercises and techniques can be utilized when working with a community of online gamers, who are struggling with problematic and excessive online game playing. Perhaps, in reading this thesis, Boal's aims: (a) to help the spect-actor transform himself into a protagonist of the dramatic action and rehearse alternatives for his situation, so that he may then be able (b) to extrapolate into his real life the actions he has rehearsed in the practice of theatre—will inform the reader of the value in utilizing theatre as a tool to not only help the online gaming community, but to aid all who struggle with maintaining the balance between life and technology.

As expressed by those in the behavioral therapy and mental health fields – who thus far have applied various terms to this condition – excessive and problematic use of technology in general—online gaming specifically, is a growing problem that will not go away, but continue to worsen as technology becomes more sophisticated and more omnipresent in our daily lives. There is no denying the positive aspects to having technology included in our lives, but the negative consequences that affect that faction of our society who have difficulty dealing with it, should not be ignored.

A final thought to consider that was mentioned in chapter two and is worth repeating in closing. That faction of gamers who become all consumed by the secondary world, lose their freedom, which can lead to the loss of life: the emotional life, the spiritual life, and in extreme cases, the physical life. The skills needed to function well in life: “being aware of yourself; being able to monitor yourself; and being able to change

what you're doing when things get off-kilter" (Clark 100) – begin to decline and the players lose clarity of what they are sacrificing in the primary world in order to maintain agency in the secondary world. Based on Augusto Boal's TO theories and concepts as presented, it is the goal of this author that this thesis will provide a foundation for future fieldwork, which utilizes theatre games, exercises, and theatrical techniques as a supplementary component to current online gaming addiction recovery programs.

WORKS CITED

- Anonymous. "Addicted? Really?" *The Economist* 398. 8724 (Mar 12, 2011): SS9-SS10.
- Associated Press. "New Mexico Mom Gets 25 years for Starving Daughter." *Yahoo News*. 3 June 2011.
- Axxel. "Twins Die Drowned in Bathtub While Father Plays on GBA." *Playfuls.com*. 25 November 2005. Web.
http://web.archive.org/web/20051127035008/http://www.playfuls.com/news_3987.html
- Babbage, Frances. "Augusto Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed." *Actor Training Second Edition*. Ed. Alison Hodge. London: Routledge, 2010. 305-323. Print.
- Barry, Ann Marie. "Perception and Visual Communication Theory." *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 22.1 (Spring 2002): 91-106. Print.
- Berghammer, Billy. "Nintendo Getting Sued over Wrongful Death." *Nintendo World Report*. (24 February 2002). Web. <http://www.nintendoworldreport.com/news/7043>
- Billieux, Joel, Martial Van der Linden, Sophia Achab, Yasser Khazaal, Laura Paraskevopoulos, Daniele Zullino, and Gabriel Thorens. "Why Do You Play *World of Warcraft*? An In-depth Exploration of Self-reported Motivations to Play Online and In-game Behaviours in the Virtual World of Azeroth." *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29 (2013): 103-109. Print.
- Blatner, Adam. "Morenian Methods & Theatre of the Oppressed." The comments in this article supplement a workshop titled: "Enhancing Practitioner Flexibility with Morenian Methods," given at the annual conference of the Pedagogy & the Theatre of the Oppressed organization (www.ptoweb.org) held at the University

of Texas in Austin, Texas, June 6, 2010. Web.

<http://www.blatner.com/adam/consctransf/oppressthtrsup.html>

Boal, Augusto. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. 2nd Ed. Trans. Adrian Jackson. New York: Routledge, 2002 Translation. Print.

---. "Legislative Theatre." *Popular Theatre: A Sourcebook*. Ed. Joel Schechter. London: Routledge, 2003. 266-267. Print.

---. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*. Trans. Adrian Jackson. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

---. "The Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses." Trans. Susana Epstein. *TDR*, 34.3 (Autumn 1990): 35-42. Print.

---. *Theater of the Oppressed*, Trans. Charles A. and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride. New York: Urzen Books, 1979. Print.

---. *The Rainbow of Desire: the Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*. Trans. Adrian Jackson. London and New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Cain, Geoffrey. "South Korea Cracks Down on Gaming Addiction." *Time World*. (Apr. 20, 2010). Web.

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1983234,00.html#ixzz2RAC9QikW>

Cherry, Kendra. "Introduction to Operant Conditioning." *About.com Psychology*. 2013.

Web. <http://psychology.about.com/od/behavioralpsychology/a/introopcond.htm>

"China Limits Teenage Internet Gaming". *3-RX Health Encyclopedia*. 17 July 2007.

Clark, Neils and P. Shavaun Scott. *Game Addiction: The Experience and the Effects*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. 2009. Print.

- Dixon, Steve. *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 2007. 599-621. Print.
- Du, Y. S., Jiang, W., & Vance, A. "Longer Term Effect of Randomized, Controlled Group Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Internet Addiction in Adolescent Students in Shanghai." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44.2 (2010): 129–134. Web. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3109/00048670903282725>
- Erdmann, Terry J. and Paula M. Block. *Star Trek 101: A Practical Guild to Who, What, Where, and Why*. New York: Pocket Books, (2008): 92. Print.
- Faiola, Anthony. "When Escape Seems Just a Mouse-Click Away -Stress-Driven Addiction to Online Games Spikes in S. Korea." *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 27 May 2006.
- Goodman, Aviel, M.D. "Addiction: Definition and Implications." *British Journal of Addiction*, 85 (1990): 1403-1408. Article.
- Griffiths, Mark D. "A "Components" Model of Addiction within a Biopsychosocial Framework." *Journal of Substance Use*, 10 (2005): 191–197. Article.
- . "Diagnosis and Management of Video Game Addiction." *Addiction Treatment and Prevention*, 12 (2008): 27–41. Article.
- Guttridge, Luke. "Chinese Suicide Shows Addiction Dangers," *Play.tm*. 2009. Web. <http://www.play.tm/news/5928/chinese-suicide-shows-addiction-dangers>
- Hagedorn, Bryce W. and Tabitha Young. "Identifying and Intervening with Students Exhibiting Signs of Gaming Addiction and other Addictive Behaviors: Implications for Professional School Counselors." *Professional School Counseling*, 14.4 (Apr., 2011): 1-20. Article.

- Han, D. H., Hwang, J. W., & Renshaw, P. F. "Bupropion Sustained Release Treatment Decreases Craving for Video Games and Cue-induced Brain Activity in Patients with Internet Video Game Addiction." *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 18.4 ((2010): 297–304. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0020023>
- Jayson, Sharon. "Study the Player, not the Video Game: Virtual Violence may have More Effect on Certain Personalities." *USA Today D3 Sec. Life* (Sept. 15, 2011). Print.
- Khan, M. K. "Emotional and Behavioral Effects, including Addictive Potential, of Video Games." Report of the Council on Science and Public Health, *CSAPH Report 12-A-07*. (2007). <http://www.ama-ssn.org.libproxy.csun.edu/amal/pub/upload/mm/467/csaphl>
- King, Daniel L., Paul H. Delfabbro, and Mark D. Griffiths. "The Role of Structural Characteristics in Problematic Video Game Play: An Empirical Study." *Int J Ment Health Addiction*, 9 (2011): 320–333. Print.
- LeClaire, Jennifer. "Warning Signs Appear Along Road to Video Game Addiction." *Tech News World*, 13 (September 2006). Print.
- Liu, Ming and Wei Peng. "Cognitive and Psychological Predictors of the Negative Outcomes Associated with Playing MMOGs (massively multiplayer online games)." *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25 (2009): 1306-1311. Print.
- Machinima.com. Interview. "Make Love, Not Warcraft" 2006-11-15. Show creators Frank Agnone, J.J. Franzen, and Eric Stough talk to machinima.com about integrating *World of Warcraft* into the animated show, *South Park*. Print.
- Noyes, Katherine. "Docs Retreat From 'Video Game Addiction' Diagnosis." *Tech News World*, 25 June 2007. Print.

Paterson, Doug. "A Brief Biography of Augusto Boal." *Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed, Inc.* 2012. Web. <http://ptoweb.org/>

Picher, Marie-Claire. "Democratic Process and the Theater of the Oppressed." *New Directions For Adult & Continuing Education*, 116 (2007): 79-88. Print.

Salmon, Andrew. "Jail for Couple Whose Baby Died While They Raised Online Child." *Prius Online*. Seoul: CNN. (28 May 2009). Print.

Sim, Timothy, Douglas A. Gentile, Francesco Bricolo, Giovanni Serpelloni, and Farah Gulamoydeen. "A Conceptual Review of Research on the Pathological Use of Computers, Video Games, and the Internet." *Int J Ment Health Addiction*, 10 (2012): 748-769. Print.

Stetina, Birgit, Oswald D. Kothgassner, Mario Lehenbauer, and Ilse Kryspin-Exner. "Beyond the Fascination of Online-games: Probing Addictive Behavior and Depression in the World of Online-gaming." *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27 (2011): 473-479. Print.

Sullivan, John. "Chapter 21: Theatre of the Oppressed." *Interactive and Improvisational Drama: Varieties of Applied Theatre Performance*. Eds. Adam Blatner with Daniel J. Wiener. Sept. 2006. Webpage Supplement: <http://www.interactiveimprov.com/suppmaterials.html>

Sullivan, John, Mecca Burns and Doug Paterson. "Chapter 21: Theatre of the Oppressed." *Interactive and Improvisational Drama: Varieties of Applied Theatre Performance*. Eds. Adam Blatner with Daniel J. Wiener. Lincoln: iUniverse, 2007. Print.

Wiemer-Hastings, Brian D. "Addiction to the Internet and Online Gaming."

CyberPsychology & Behavior, 8.2 (2005): 110-13. Print.

Wood, R. T. A., Gupta, R., Derevensky, J. L., & Griffiths, M. "Video Game Playing and Gambling in Adolescents: Common Risk Factors." *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 14 (2004) 77–100. Print.

Yahoo.com. "Baby Killed after Interrupting Mom's Facebook Time." *Yahoo News*. 28 October 2010. Print.

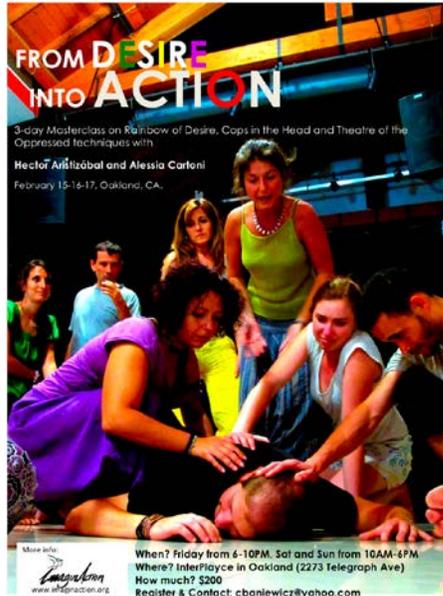
Young, Kimberly S. "Cognitive Behavior Therapy with Internet Addicts: Treatment Outcomes and Implications." *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 10.5 (2007): 671-79. Print.

Young, Kimberly S. "Understanding Online Gaming Addiction and Treatment Issues for Adolescents." *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 37 (2009): 355–372. Print.

APPENDIX A

From Desire into Action: Coming to Oakland February 2013!

Imagine if you could slow the voices in your mind enough to speak with them, honor them, learn their needs and mobilize them on your own behalf. Imagine doing this in a group, while laughing. Now imagine being led through this transformative experience by a pair of master artists committed to healing and social justice, with more than 30 years of combined theatre work in communities around the world. Imagine all of these things, and get excited, because Hector and Alessia are coming to Oakland!



In this 3-day workshop, Hector Aristizabal and Alessia Cartoni will introduce basic Rainbow of Desire and Cops-in-the-Head techniques in order to explore our desires and confront our internalized oppressions. They will use drumming, storytelling and Augusto Boal's methodology "to make visible the invisible" and engage in our most important human struggle: the struggle to become ourselves.

This workshop is ideal for practitioners working with marginalized groups, people interested in mental health and healing, as well as teachers, artists and activists.

WHEN?

February 15th, 6-10 PM

February 16th/17th: 10 AM – 6 PM

WHERE?

InterPlayce (2273 Telegraph Ave, Oakland)

COST?

\$200 if **pre-registered by 1/25**, \$250 after

This master class can only accommodate 30, so please RSVP with Christine at cbaniewicz@yahoo.com to make a deposit and reserve your space!

APPENDIX B

reSTART – Recovery Program

reSTART center, provides a recovery program for those who have problematic and compulsive use of digital technology. Their motto is: reSTART: a sustainable lifestyle – disconnect and find yourself.

<http://www.netaddictionrecovery.com/the-problem/gaming-addiction/467-is-your-internet-or-gaming-use-problematic.html>

Therapies Available

Our recovery program offers the following comprehensive services:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
- Psychoeducational Instruction
- Brief Solutions Focused Therapy
- Life Coaching
- Voice Dialogue Work
- Individual and Group Psychotherapy
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Skills Training (DBT)
- Nutrition and Fitness Consultations
- Interpersonal Skills Groups
- Life Skills Psychoeducation
- Sand Tray Therapy
- Pet Therapy
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MPSR)
- Meditation
- Guided Meditation Groups
- Yoga
- Massage Therapy
- Ashiatsu
- 12-Step Recovery Groups
- Relapse Prevention
- After Care Planning
- Family Workshops

On-site Recreational Activities include:

- Trail Running
- Outdoor Exercise Circuit Training
- Various Sports Activities (e.g., Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, Basketball)
- Challenge Course w/Zip Line

Off-site Recreational Activities include:

- Community Wellness in partnership with the YMCA
- Outdoor Hiking and Climbing
- Various Sports Activities (e.g., Basketball, Swimming, Tennis)
- Urban Explorations

APPENDIX C

OLGA and OLG-ANON – Recovery Program - <http://olganon.org/>

Mission Statement: On-Line Gamers Anonymous is a fellowship of people sharing their experience, strengths and hope to help each other recover and heal from the problems caused by excessive game playing.

OLGA/OLG-Anon provides a resource for open discussion, support, education and referrals. We advocate and provide a 12-Step Program of recovery. For those who are interested in a formalized meeting approach, we provide both a traditional 12-step program and a modified program for atheists and agnostics.

Twelve Traditions of OLGA

These twelve traditions are guidelines for the fellowship of Online Gamers Anonymous, a nonprofit organization. The twelve steps and principles were created so we don't kill ourselves. These traditions are here, so WE DON'T KILL EACH OTHER! Healing can be a very sensitive and volatile process. Please follow these traditions so we can stay united in our journey.

1. **Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OLGA / OLG-Anon unity.**
2. **For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as each one of us understands God, as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.**
3. **The only requirement for OLGA membership is a desire to stop playing video games. The only requirements for OLG-Anon membership is that there be a problem with playing video games in a relative or friend or loved one.**
4. **The group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OLGA / OLG-Anon as a whole.**
5. **The group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the video game addict who still suffers.**
6. **The OLGA / OLG-Anon group ought never endorse, finance or lend the OLGA / OLG-Anon name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**
7. **The OLGA / OLG-Anon group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**
8. **Online Gamers Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but we may employ special workers as needed.**
9. **OLGA / OLG-Anon., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**
10. **Online Gamers Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OLGA / OLG-Anon name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**
11. **Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity of other OLGA/OLG-Anon members.**
12. **Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

Note: The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous have been adapted for OLGA / OLG-Anon with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("A.A.W.S."). A.A. is not affiliated with OLGA / OLG-Anon as A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only.

APPENDIX D

Morningside Treatment program - <http://morningsiderecovery.com>

Mission Statement: Morningside Recovery is dedicated to providing exceptional care, treatment and services for men and women who are chemically dependent or suffering from mental health or co-occurring disorders. We believe every client can recover and learn how to manage mental and emotional stability.

Video Game Addiction Program Treatment Center

At Morningside, video game addicts not only get the necessary break from the compulsive behavior, but begin to receive treatment building the skills necessary for personal growth. For example, clients addicted to virtual reality games usually need to develop interpersonal communication skills. Dealing with people face to face in group therapy is a big part of recovery for clients who have spent all of their time interacting in a virtual world. This shyness or social awkwardness is a key feature of the disease.

An addiction to video games can be overcome in treatment through experiential therapies. Morningside's extensive selection of activities builds social confidence and helps gamers see how their addiction was an attempt to escape personal problems and the underlying mental-health conditions. Obsessive and compulsive gaming is often particularly appealing to socially maladjusted young-adult males, who "get high off" the control aspects of virtual reality. Unlike genuine social interactions that require give and take, gamers can "master" a particular environment by completing certain steps or levels. When compared to the ambiguous rules of, say, teen dating, it's easy to see why the virtual world is so appealing. Moreover, in most online worlds, there's no emotional commitment or risk when the other person is on the other side of the globe. Thus, the world-class therapy at Morningside Recovery provides direction for changing behaviors. This video game addiction treatment provides the needed social and communication skills for the path to healing and wholeness.

Abstinence from video games helps clients reconnect with their mind and body. One client shared: "I was playing so much that I didn't even bother to brush my teeth. I didn't care if I had bad breath because I was only facing my computer. Now I see my computer as just another machine in my life and I feel a lot more comfortable around real people. I'm still getting my MIS degree because tech is my passion, but I've learned that real happiness only comes when you learn to deal with people." Morningside's therapists help video-game addicts slowly reconnect to computers and the Internet as a part of their recovery. Trusted advisors monitor use and set clear boundaries. Like other addictions — process addictions, sexual addiction, and eating disorders — video game addicts need to learn healthy behaviors in order to use computers for work and in healthy ways.

Experiential Therapies

Experiential Therapies involve creating a covenant with clients to discover their positive resources. Research has demonstrated that Experiential Therapies are effective at treating depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, substance abuse disorders, and unhealthy nutritional behaviors. Experiential Therapy can be especially effective in dealing with body image issues. Experiential Therapy suggests the role play method as a way for the past and present to meet and heal, while dealing with feelings that are unfamiliar and often scary, replacing them with feelings of contentment, trust, and gratitude.

APPENDIX E

Inspirations for Youth: Teen Video Addiction - www.inspirationsyouth.com

Cove Center For Recovery: Adult Video Addiction - www.covecenterforrecovery.com

Inspirations is a unique boarding school for teenagers in that it was founded by not only a professional but also by a parent of three children, two of whom are teenagers.

THE PROBLEM – VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

Video game addiction is one of the fastest growing types of addiction. Playing your favorite games can seem like a harmless way to spend your free time, but this behavior can sometimes spiral into a serious video game addiction. Since the problem is a relatively new phenomenon, the exact cause of video game addiction is unknown. However, the treatment is the same as drug addiction and often requires a 28 day residential addiction treatment program. This addiction appears to be most common among younger male players. It is quickly becoming an addiction for younger females too. Adults are also included in the rising number reports of video game addiction.

DETOX – VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

As strange as it may seem, there is a Detox process for video game addiction. This behavior is a clinical impulse control disorder, identical to gambling addiction. The Detox process commonly occurs in a **residential addiction treatment center**. As in all addictions, the goal is to remove the source of the addiction. In **drug rehab**, when substance is the addiction, it is the alcohol or drug that is removed. When it is video game addiction, the video games and source of gaming is removed. As the removal of the source of addiction occurs, other psychological issues are examined in order that an individual treatment plan can be created and clinical therapeutic approaches can begin. Often, patients or clients are “self-medicating” or seeking a feel-good feeling in response to life stressors, anxiety, depression, trauma, or other catalysts for the need to feel good. The need to “feel good” increases and the source (video gaming) of the feeling becomes addictive, resulting in daily life responsibilities and relationships, suffering and eventually making daily life functions nearly impossible.

TREATMENT AND THERAPY – VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

People who are addicted to video games know that their behavior is causing strain on relationships, employment, and personal health, yet they feel powerless to change their behavior. Therapy is the most common course of treatment for video game addicts. It is also the course of treatment in the **residential addiction treatment program**. Although most clients in drug rehab are there for drug abuse or drug addiction, they often demonstrate other addictions and further, the addictive behaviors are identical to the traditional cycle of addiction. Since this addiction has only been in the spotlight for a short time, many **mental health professionals** are unaware of the extent of the problem. It is important to choose a treatment program that has integrated video game addiction and other addictions into the traditional **substance addiction treatment**, recognizing the association between the behaviors and addiction treatment.

The therapeutic approach is the same Psychotherapy with a solution oriented approach to working with the client to resolve life problems. Therapy includes individual therapy, group therapy, and family therapy. Therapies might also include solution focused therapy, trauma therapy, EMDR, music therapy, art therapy, and other therapeutic approaches. **Video game addiction treatment** also includes groups on addiction education, coping skills, decision making skills, anger management, stress reduction, meditation, and yoga.