Arguing for False Moral Dilemmas in Games

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ABSTRACT

How can single-player video games morally engage their audience? Role-playing games with moral systems have been especially criticized for neutralizing moral engagement, while now classics such as *Papers, Please* (Pope 2013), *Spec Ops: The Line* (Yäger 2013), and *The Walking Dead* (Telltale 2012) have received much praise for fostering it. This is because moral engagement has been mostly modelled on the characteristics of true moral dilemmas, which prevent the player from adopting an "instrumental perspective" (Staines *et al.* 2019). This paper problematizes the true moral dilemma model by revisiting morally engaging games *Papers, Please* and *The Walking Dead*. Thanks to a virtue ethics perspective, it defends the value of false, biased, and irresolvable dilemmas that exercise the player's ways of being in the face of difficult circumstances.

Keywords

Moral dilemmas; Moral engagement; Virtue ethics; Videogame cognitivism; The Walking Dead; Papers, Please

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the 2010s, with the precursor works of Schulzke (2009), Sicart (2009) and Zagal (2009), game studies began focusing on a question which could be summarized as follows: how can single-player video games morally engage their audience? This question has been pursued by many scholars, opening a fertile line of research. In the preface to a collective work, Schrier asked: "How do we better design and use games to foster ethical thinking and discourse?" (Schrier *et al.* 2010, xx). Seeking for an alternative to popular role-playing games, Heron *et al.* discussed "the way in which [*Papers, Please* (Pope 2013) and *Spec Ops: The Line* (Yäger 2013)] break out of the traditional conventions of video game moral decision making, and how they create opportunities for the player to reflect on the deeper meaning of their in-game actions" (Heron *et al.* 2014, 2). Ryan *et al.*, meanwhile, proposed a framework with which to think about "new avenues to engage and challenge player's moral self" (Ryan *et al.* 2016, 3). All of these writings take as their starting point the assumption that some games ignore or trivialize morality and, as a result, prevent moral engagement among players.

Video games such as *Fable* (Lionhead 2004) were especially criticized for neutralizing moral engagement despite creating moral systems for players to interact with (Sicart 2009, 207-212). Influenced by alignment charts in tabletop role-playing games,

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moral systems fail to create meaningful discourses about morality because of how they draw upon a Manichean view of the world and are mere means for in-game progression. In *Fable*, for example, the playable character turns into an angel or a demon when accumulating good or evil deeds, which are registered as positive and negative points in the moral system. These points are collected through actions made in quest scenarios (e.g. joining a bully or defending the victim), while exploring the world (exterminating birds or fighting bandits; making the Albion's inhabitants afraid or happy), or with contextual mechanics (sacrificing people at the Chapel of Skorm or donating gold coins at the Temple of Avo). By leaning towards caricature, *Fable* depicts morality in black-and-white, without shades of grey. Not only are the previous choices hyperbolic, if not downright trivial, but they encourage players to base them on rewards and other contents available when they reach one of the two ends of the game's moral scale. Clearly, *Fable* does not foster moral engagement. It is partly in response to such games that scholars in the field have begun to analyze other examples from the gaming industry, which have been called "ethically interesting games" (Sicart 2009), "ethically notable games" (Zagal 2009), or "morally engaging games" (Ryan *et al.* 2016). All these terms refer to games with sophisticated moral discourses that highlight the complexity and ambiguity of the moral life and challenge players on that level.

Although game studies have offered some interesting answers to the problem of moral engagement, the field has mostly limited its enquiry on the epistemic value of games, i.e. on the moral knowledge that players can gain from playing them. This is why, as developed below, the implementation of moral dilemmas as a device for moral engagement is unanimously accepted—it accomplishes what popular role-playing games such as *Fable* fail to do in an unquestionable fashion. However, moral engagement should not be reduced to a certain type of moral cognition and moral dilemmas should not be conceived as an all-in-one solution. This article first examines how moral engagement is understood in game studies and what moral benefit the field ascribes to its experience. Second, it explores how the field perceives the true moral dilemma model as an ideal device for moral engagement and views gameplay incentives that may affect the player's choices suspiciously. Finally, it questions that perspective by revisiting *Papers, Please* and *The Walking Dead* (Telltale 2012) which, strangely enough, are said to be morally engaging despite their implementation of false dilemmas. In order to navigate this contradiction, the article calls for turning away from the true moral dilemma model. In the context of gameplay, the purpose of any dilemma, true or false, biased or unbiased, resolvable or irresolvable, is to put the player in a set of difficult circumstances that test their virtues of character by mobilizing appropriate desires, emotions, and attitudes.

MORAL ENGAGEMENT ACCORDING TO GAME STUDIES

From the perspective of game studies, moral engagement can be seen as an active and critical participation with the potential moral discourse of a given video game. This is reflected in the following definition:

> A morally engaged player is one who considers the moral significance of their in-game choices, who does *not* approach gameplay from a purely instrumental perspective but attempts to understand the rules and assumptions that constitute a game's ethical framework and considers same in light of the real world ethical frameworks to which we are all, to some degree, subject (Staines *et al.* 2019, 273).

This is a two-part definition. Firstly, moral engagement is based on the perception of the moral dimension of games, i.e. the acknowledgment that moral meanings are embedded in a fictional world where the action is taken. If players tend to do "good" or "bad" deeds to merely score points on a moral gauge, then they are morally *dis*engaged. As they play, "morality" means something other than itself, referring to a system of rewards where powers and equipment are unlocked. Secondly, moral engagement requires a comparative basis. It is the act of contrasting the internal moral or ethical framework of a game with one that is external to it. Ignoring their instrumental perspective, moral systems may block this sort of exercise since they are taking the absolute responsibility for assessing moral actions: "By implementing moral choice as a gameplay token, players are less free to pursue the practical use of their moral reasoning, for it is the game that tells them what is good and what is bad" (Sicart 2009, 211). Taking notes of the moral system's feedback, players could find out what is valued by the game and adapt their play accordingly. They would "game the system" without having to mobilize any external ethical framework, either their own or one prescribes by society, hence showing a lack of moral engagement.

That being said, the previous definition does not fully capture what it is to be morally engaged in games given that it may be applied to any transgressive games. Referring to that definition, one could say that players are morally engaged in games such as *Carmageddon* (Stainless Software 1997) when they are experiencing pleasure from hitting pedestrians with their racing car since that kind of pleasure requires prior moral knowledge. Players are getting enjoyment from such actions because *they know* these are commonly reprehensible, hence comparing the positive internal valuation of the game with the negative external valuation they themselves endorse. It seems that transgressive pleasure (Mortensen *et al.* 2020) or carnivalesque pleasure (Annandale 2006) does not exist without a minimal degree of moral engagement. Although some have defended controversial video games that may elicit that sort of pleasure, including *Super Columbine Massacre RPG!* (Ledone 2005) and *Manhunt* (Rockstar, 2003) (Sicart 2009, 100-101; Zagal 2009, 5-6), such games do not tend to receive much praise from game studies especially compared to now classics *Papers, Please*, *Spec Ops: The Line*, and *The Walking Dead*, which are paradigmatic examples of morally engaging games, as Staines *et al.* have themselves observed (2019, 273). One reason for that is playing the latter games comes with more obvious benefits for moral cognition. Therefore, discourses on moral engagement can be understood in relation to what Declos calls "videogame cognitivism":

> In virtue of their ludic and/or fictional features, videogames stimulate a cognitive activity that may teach players about the world external to these games. As a result, videogames can be epistemically valuable: they can lead us to acquire fresh knowledge, refine our beliefs, or deepen our understanding (Declos 2021, 8).

While we may agree that players of *Carmageddon* do consider the moral significance of running over pedestrians in the light of an external ethical framework, for therein lies the very pleasure of transgression, no one would argue that this game is imbued with any epistemic value (this is at least my intuition). The criteria for moral engagement are thus demanding and this is where moral dilemmas appear as an interesting device to "teach players about the world external to […] games." As thought experiments, moral dilemmas invite players to reflect on issues of right and wrong, acquiring knowledge from this process. They are strong models for both video game cognitivism and morally engaging games.

MORAL DILEMMAS AS DEVICES FOR MORAL ENGAGEMENT

One advantage of moral dilemmas in video games is that the player is given decision-making power. Instead of merely witnessing dilemmas faced by characters, they are forced to decide for themselves. Making this point, Zagal defends the importance of moral dilemmas in what he calls "ethically notable games," i.e. games that include "opportunities for encouraging ethical reasoning and reflection" (Zagal 2009, 1). In other words, these are games that are morally engaging. Zagal bases his argument on the following definition: "A moral dilemma is a situation in which an agent morally ought to do A and morally ought to do B but cannot do both, either because B is just not-doing-A or because some contingent feature of the world prevents doing both" (Zagal 2009, 1). If games such as *Fable* present situations where the player has to choose between good and evil, moral dilemmas are of a sophisticated, ambiguous and thorny nature. Unsurprisingly, there is a tendency to support moral dilemmas which can be traced back to the earliest works on moral engagement (Schulzke 2009; Sicart 2009).

One great example of the implementation of moral dilemmas, to which the field has referred to (Ryan *et al.* 2016; Schuzlke 2009), is that of the secondary quest "Oasis" in the open-world role-playing game *Fallout 3* (Bethesda 2008). In a post-apocalyptic America, where nuclear wastelands are inhabited by mutants, there is an idyllic forest kept alive by Harold, a tree-man. Having enough of being rooted to the ground for decades, Harold begs the playable character to end his life. However, he is idolized by a human community since he makes the surrounding land fertile again, whereas nature is unable to resume its course in the rest of the area. The dilemma can be reduced to the following structure: either we respect the tree-man's will, giving him death at the risk of sending the surrounding human community into exile, or we ignore his request, leaving him stranded in misery. It is impossible to end Harold's suffering *and* spare the quality of life of the people who have taken refuge in the forest. To complete the quest, we have to make a decision. We are free to seek the advice of non-playable characters and explore alternative solutions, taking the necessary time to make an informed choice. The "Oasis" quest structure thus fosters moral engagement, raising questions about the justification of euthanasia and the value of creating or at least maintaining individual suffering in the name of the greater good (Schuzlke 2009).

The "Oasis" quest is praised for other reasons. One of these is that the game's moral system refrains from rewarding points (known as "Karma") to the player, ensuring that nothing instrumentalizes their moral reflection, contrary to the Little Sisters "dilemma" in *BioShock* (2K Games 2007), which has been frequently criticized (e.g. Sicart 2009, 158-163). The choices available in the case of *BioShock* are as follows: we can either extract an ability-enhancing substance from young half-mutant children, the Little Sisters, killing them in the process, or we can cure them of the brainwashing they have undergone, dismissing the possibility of gaining power in a selfish manner. As Schreiber *et al.* observed, this is not a true moral dilemma (in Schrier *et al.* 2011, 76). The player morally ought to do one thing: preserve the lives of innocent people. The difficulty of the situation arises from a conflict between a morally good choice and a morally bad choice that leads to an interesting tactical advantage. In other words, the decision is complicated only by the "selfish" possibility of progressing more easily in the game. Ryan *et al.* refers to this design as "moral temptations," which they define as "choices with a clear right/wrong division but with a greater material reward for choosing the immoral option" and criticize it for involving "little moral

judgment" (Ryan *et al.* 2016, 8). Comparing how *Fallout 3* and *BioShock* have been assessed by game studies, we can see that moral engagement depends on the structural integrity of moral dilemmas.

Of the three types of video game cognitivism outlined by Declos (2021, 9-12), propositionalism is one that corresponds well to the moral dilemma device, whose conveyed knowledge is represented by linguistic statements. The "Oasis" quest in *Fallout 3* is supposedly interesting because, as a thought experiment, it provides an opportunity to access particular moral propositions (such as: "It is wrong for Harold's suffering to serve the community of the Oasis."), generalize them ("It is wrong for individual suffering to serve the common good."), and assess their truth ("Is it true that it is wrong for individual suffering to serve the common good?"). On the subject of thought experiments in video games, Declos writes:

> By inviting their audience to imagine and explore counterfactual scenarios, some works would lead their audience to grasp truth or falsity of certain propositions about the world. Since thought experiments are ordinarily seen as *bona fide* sources of propositional knowledge in other contexts (e.g., in science or philosophy), the same ought to hold when they are embedded in artworks (Declos 2021, 11).

Scholars such as Schreiber *et al.* stress the importance of including "true" moral dilemmas in games precisely for preserving their epistemic value. This reinforces the idea that the player should be fully absorbed in contemplation of a game's moral question, without gameplay incentives affecting reasoning in a way that is detrimental to moral cognition. However, this common viewpoint that games must rely on true moral dilemmas to be morally engaging is mistaken. The following puts forward several challenges to this view by revisiting games that are understood as strong examples for promoting moral engagement.

IRRESOLVABLE DILEMMAS AND THE WALKING DEAD

Many games that have been praised for fostering moral engagement do not solely include true moral dilemmas. Instead, they occasionally present what Hursthouse calls "irresolvable dilemmas," that is: "a situation in which the agent's moral choice lies between *x* and *y* and there are no moral grounds for favouring doing *x* over doing *y*" (Hursthouse 2001, 63). *The Walking Dead* is especially guilty of this, although some have commended the game for its true moral dilemmas (Ryan *et al.* 2016; Sarian 2018). In one notable scene, at the end of the inaugural season's first episode, the survivors have found shelter in a drug store, but Lee (the player character) triggers a security system alarm as he enters into an office, attracting a mob of undead who ends up destroying barricades and breaking in the place. Zombies manage to grab two of Lee's allies, Doug and Carley, hence the following dilemma: Lee finds himself between the two and can only save one of them, who should be kept alive? Both are around the same age and decent people. Some would say that Carley is more resourceful, as she has a gun that may be used against hostile foes, but Doug is capable of hacking programs, which may be as practical as any weapon. In one previous sequence, he was able to easily distract a mob of zombies by safely opening a set of televisions located behind the display window of a store with a hacked remote controller. Considering this, no moral choice available seems better than the other. Doug and Carley's lives are equally valuable. Therefore, what is the cognitive benefit of having to take sides in this unfortunate set of circumstances? The game offers an

irresolvable dilemma, a false question that cannot lead to a positive conclusion. There is a contradiction between the claim for implementing true moral dilemmas in games and the value attributed to *The Walking Dead* as a morally engaging game despite including irresolvable dilemmas. The problem is that games such as *The Walking Dead* have been praised for the wrong reasons: their strengths do not lie in the structural integrity of their moral dilemmas.

According to Hursthouse (2001, 47), the ethical traditions that give importance to moral dilemmas, namely deontology and consequentialism, focus on the evaluation of actions taken in isolation, ignoring the possibility that irresolvable moral dilemmas exist. Even then, from Hursthouse's perspective of virtue ethics, moral dilemmas, in general, do not contain any choice we could assess as good or constitutive of a person's flourishing. Indeed, how the previous situation from *The Walking Dead* is supposed to make the player a better person and help them developing virtues? Or consider the "Oasis" quest again: either Harold remains stuck in the tree for an indefinite amount of time, or a human community is expelled from their home. The dilemma presents two bad choices, not a good one and a bad one. This is a problem that game studies have not paid much attention to. Hursthouse points out that, in such a situation, the virtuous person hesitates, considers any further alternatives, regretfully makes a choice and commits to finding a way to right the wrongs done (2001, 48). Moral dilemmas, then, may be interesting because they encourage ways of being (hesitating, regretting, etc.) rather than a pursuit of the "right" answer.

The same goes with *The Walking Dead* in which Clementine, a compassionate young girl who is under the responsibility of Lee, plays the role of a "moral barometer" for the player (Stang 2017, 176). This metaphor refers to the child's reactions to the (mostly inevitable) bad choices we make, which cause her distress, whether in the form of verbalized worries or inconsolable tears. As a witness to all our doings, Clementine compels us to experience sorrow for circumstances beyond our control, if not guilt over our own mediocre responses to matters of life and death. From a virtue ethics standpoint, what is interesting about *The Walking Dead* is not that it communicates propositional knowledge or truths about morality, but that it may train virtues of character, train the player to respond with emotions, attitudes, and other ways of beings that are appropriate to difficult situations, whether these are true dilemmas or irresolvable ones. As such, true moral dilemmas are less appealing if we accept that ethics is not merely about making the right decisions.

THE GAMEPLAY CONDITION AND PAPERS, PLEASE

The importance given to true moral dilemmas reveals an omission regarding the "gameplay condition," which refers to how video games evaluate the player's performance where "the continuation of the activity is what is at stake" (Leino 2011, 133). What appears as freedom of choice in computer games is delimited by the possibility of failure: the player must make tactical or strategic decisions to ensure that they can keep the game going. This is dictated by criteria inscribed in the game's materiality (read: code). True moral dilemmas digress from the gameplay condition since, according to its advocates, a choice between *x* and *y* should not be made for instrumental reasons, such as getting experience points to level up. Yet, it seems unfair to demand that video games create moral dilemmas that are devoid of instrumentality, since completing goals and surmounting challenges are essential parts of the gameplay condition. It is necessary for "the continuation of the activity" that matters of success and failure weigh in the balance of all the player's choices and

reasonings. A true moral dilemma, which takes away any motivation to avoid failure, is merely an interlude or what Astay (2016b) calls a "moral playlet" (*saynète morale*) within the video game experience in which it appears. Ironically enough, scholars arguing against perceiving games as "amoral" or, in other words, as separate from morality, argue in the same vein for the implementation of true moral dilemmas in games, in turn dividing morality and gameplay in a mutually exclusive way—as the player should somehow suspend their consideration related to the gameplay condition for improving their moral cognition. There is a need in game studies to more seriously examine the compatibility between morality and gameplay as well as their interrelation, if it exists.

Let's turn to the example of *Papers, Please*, a classic game for moral engagement, to explore the previous point. The game puts the player in the role of a customs officer who has to control travellers and migrants in the context of a totalitarian regime. The player accepts the entry of passers-by if their documents comply with the rules established by various ministries and declines it they do not. They also have to proceed quickly and obediently as they are paid five credits for each request processed successfully during the office hours. At the end of the working day, the player has to take care of family expenses, such as housing, food, heating, and medicine for the custom officer's wife, son, mother-in-law, and uncle, who are all living under the same roof. Central to the gameplay condition, one constant problem is not having enough money to meet all the family members' primary needs, which can be detrimental to their health and even lead to death. As one of several failure conditions, the family's death causes instrumentality in the player's decision-making, who does not simply make "pure" moral choices.

Take for example Katya, an NPC claiming that her life is in danger. When she asks for crossing the border despite not having the required documents to get cleared, the player faces a difficult decision. They may allow entry to Katya because that's the "right" choice to make, but they would be risking disciplinary actions. Now, because of the gameplay condition, the player is not merely wondering what it would be like to be a custom officer in such circumstances and absorbing the situation as a true moral dilemma: they risk meeting a failure condition as the playable character might get caught and end up in jail. Hence the threat of a game over screen resides at the core of each of the player's thoughts. Considering this, how should we understand the praise for *Papers, Please* from game scholars (Heron *et al.* 2014; Formosa *et al.* 2016) when the Little Sisters dilemma in *BioShock* has been criticized despite being not much different from the previous example concerning Katya? In both cases, it is about assessing correctly what one can do under the gameplay condition, not discerning the "right" from the "wrong," which is simply obvious. In order to be consistent with oneself, a proponent of true moral dilemmas would have to reject both situations as morally engaging on the grounds that it biases contemplation. However, suggestions in the field of game studies about what makes a morally engaging or disengaging game contain contradictions we have to tackle.

To understand moral engagement in games such as *Papers, Please* while making place for the gameplay condition, we have to embrace instrumentality. This is possible if we stop looking for true moral dilemmas and start looking for difficult circumstances that test the player's character. The virtue ethicist Hursthouse (2001, 97-98) asserts that difficult circumstances in everyday life call for much virtue: when poverty stands in the way of honesty, when phobia interferes with courage, when grief desensitized compassion, and so on. If a person's life circumstances are comfortable, doing the

right thing should not be considered as commendable as it is for someone facing external or uncontrollable challenges (such as poverty, phobia, grief, etc.). This is also true for video games. Offering a gift to an NPC in *Animal Crossing: New Horizon* (Nintendo 2020) is mostly banal because the resources are easily available and no threat of failure deters the action. From a virtue ethics perspective, it is safe to assume that the player's character is not tested in any way and that moral engagement is thus very weakly enforced. This is why *Papers, Please* is especially interesting: the right action regarding Katya's situation requires something more from the player because of the threat of failure—maybe they cannot forfeit a penalty of 5 credits given that they have to buy medication and food for some terribly sick and starving family members. Elsewhere (Deslongchamps-Gagnon 2022), I have argued in the same vein that the single-player game *Vampyr* (DONTNOD 2018) enables the practice of courage by making the game more difficult if the player spends resources for healing NPCs from sickness. Situations related to the gameplay condition are always about the player, who has to make personal choices in regard to their own predicament.

EMOTIONS AND VIDEO GAME COGNITIVISM

Perron (2016) has connected this idea of personal involvement with that of emotion, which is relevant to the purpose of adopting a more critical stance towards the true moral dilemma model and action-based ethics. The author observes that, in the experience of video games, players tend to develop concerns for themselves (from their effort to progress in the game) as well as for others (from spending hours with sympathetic or antipathetic characters). According to Perron, these concerns are *sine qua non* conditions for emotional occurrences: without caring about their own success and the fate of characters, players will not react to in-game events. With this in mind, we can understand how *Papers, Please* "dilemmas" affect the player. They are interested in completing the game, but not at any cost. They desire to protect innocent characters like Katya, but without compromising their in-game progression. This means that they are not merely dealing with hypothetical scenarios detached from personal concerns, similar to how we explore moral dilemmas in the classroom, where nothing is truly at stake. Think about how the "Oasis" quest has almost no incidence on the player: whatever they choose, there is no reward and no penalty. On the contrary, difficult circumstances connect with the player's concerns and make them likely to experience emotions that a true moral dilemma would not instill.

If morally engaging games are supported by video game cognitivism, meaning that they are vehicles of knowledge about the external world thanks to devices such as true moral dilemmas, why should games tap into the player's concerns and involves their emotions? One answer that has already been provided, using the case of irresolvable dilemmas in *The Walking Dead*, relates to the ways of being we should adopt when dealing with difficult circumstances. Similarly, the player of *Papers, Please* may express their virtues of character by hesitating rather than making a hasty choice about Katya's fate, by regretting not being able to help her or by hoping to continue the game despite the credits lost from letting her crossing the borders. Whether they got the "right" or "wrong" answer does not matter as long as they are exercising their emotional dispositions thanks to the difficult circumstances they face. Contrary to strictly rational processes, emotions have closer epistemic proximity to properties of the world and generate a first-hand experience of them, according to cognitive theories of emotions (Roberts 2013, 40). For instance, no one is fully aware of their own fault or the dangerousness of a situation without experiencing guilt or fear respectively. Emotions "record" values (e.g. dangerousness, faultiness) and leave

imprints on oneself through their vividness and intimacy. Only then can one be fully just, conscientious, humble, courageous, cautious, etc. This is why emotions are relevant for both video game cognitivism and the development of virtues.

Likewise, Carroll proposes that the epistemic value of narrative art is to "clarify" prior knowledge and emotions, "to deepen our understanding of what we know and what we feel" (1998, 142). In *Papers, Please*, the player surely knows that protecting Katya from danger is the right moral choice. But from playing out the situation, they do not simply come to know a moral truth about generosity, courage, or justice. They learn to handle their own contradictory concerns and emotions, to deal with the "moral temptation" that might cloud their judgment, and to attach importance to the situation at play. Clarification, in that case, is not getting to know new virtues, but bringing already known virtues into play to deepen one's familiarity with them: recognizing new situations that call for virtue, having the desire to play well, feeling the appropriate emotions under such-and-such circumstances, learning how to act on these emotions, etc. This is possible because virtues are already in people, even if they are not fully developed or simply what Aristotle has called "natural virtues," that is unformed tendencies of character (Annas 2011, 10). Therefore, we can see how making situations about the player, about what they know and what they are concerned about, is valuable for moral engagement in video games.

CONCLUSION

Revisiting morally engaging games which have received a lot of attention in the field, I have called into question the true moral dilemma model, which is incompatible with the gameplay condition as the player's contemplation should not be biased by considerations regarding ludic success and failure. But surely the relevance of moral engagement in games such as *Fallout 3* lies not only in the few moral playlets they offer. If we consider how video games can take advantage of difficult circumstances to test the player's character, we can envision the full potential of moral engagement beyond impersonal reflection and choice. Schulzke has encouraged scholars to see video games with ethical dilemmas as a "training ground in which players can practice thinking about morality" (2009, para. 3). The author refers to a particular form of thinking, that is phronesis, defined as "the ability to reason correctly about practical matters" (Hursthouse 2001, 12). Following the previous argumentation, we shall adopt a more encompassing interpretation of the training ground metaphor: what the player feels when playing games is as important for the development of their character as what they think. This is why difficult circumstances in games are interesting because, as emotionally loaded situations, they mobilize concerns for self to challenge the player's ethical fibre. It is then all the more relevant to implement false moral dilemmas into games.

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