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Research article

A Philosophical Analysis of Moral Choices in the Game *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*

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Abstract

Initially, video games that emphasized morality either had a simple measure for the level of good and evil with an unambiguous interpretation provided by the developers, or else morality was built into the plot of the game where a morally “right” or “wrong” choice led to the corresponding ending. Some more recent games, however, present a more complex and ambiguous system of moral choices. This paper conducts a philosophical analysis of moral choices in the game *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* based on a study of 100 variants of story progression. The method adopted is to analyze the content of the choices presented to the player along the course of the main plot and the side quests. The paper will then attempt to isolate recurring elements and the variety of decisions possible in the game world. The analysis revealed that 25% of the quests offer a choice between salvation and destruction, with 15% of the quests having a strong impact on the main plot of the game. Family relationships matter in 32 % of the quests, influencing the decision-making. 40% of quests involve an ethical choice between personal good and the good of others. There is no simple logic that allows the player to predict the consequences of a particular choice. The main goal of this study is to highlight the diversity of ethical concepts reflected in game scenarios, which facilitates the discussion of moral issues and ethical dilemmas in both virtual and real worlds.

Keywords: Philosophy; Moral choice; The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt; Ethics in video games

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Научная статья

Философский анализ моральных выборов в игре “Ведьмак 3: Дикая Охота”

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Аннотация

Изначально видеоигры, в которых подчеркивалась мораль, либо имели простую систему измерения уровня добра и зла с однозначной трактовкой, предоставленной разработчиками, либо мораль была встроена в сюжет игры, где морально “правильный” или “неправильный” выбор приводит к соответствующему финалу. Однако некоторые более поздние игры представляют собой более сложную и неоднозначную систему морального выбора. В данной статье проводится философский анализ морального выбора в игре “Ведьмак 3: Дикая Охота” на основе исследования 100 вариантов развития сюжета. Принятый метод заключается в анализе содержания выбора, представленного игроку в ходе основного сюжета и побочных квестов. Затем в статье будет предпринята попытка выделить повторяющиеся элементы и разнообразие решений, возможных в игровом мире. Анализ показал, что 25% квестов предлагают выбор между спасением и разрушением, при этом 15% квестов оказывают сильное влияние на основной сюжет игры. Семейные отношения имеют значение в 32 % запросов, влияя на принятие решений. 40% квестов предполагают этический выбор между личным благом и благом других. Не существует простой логики, позволяющей игроку предсказать последствия того или иного выбора. Основная цель данного исследования – подчеркнуть разнообразие этических концепций, отраженных в игровых сценариях, что облегчает обсуждение моральных вопросов и этических дилемм как в виртуальном, так и в реальном мире.

Ключевые слова: Философия; Моральный выбор; Ведьмак 3: Дикая Охота; Этика в видеоиграх.

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INTRODUCTION

Video games, which were previously seen purely as entertainment, are now being created to be increasingly complex and deep, giving the players the opportunity to make moral decisions that affect the future plot of the game. This allows game developers to create worlds where players can make decisions that affect the characters and environment. Such games are called role-playing games, or RPG.

Role-playing games, as the name suggests, are built around the player taking on a role in the game world that allows for meaningful interaction and choices within the game world. These games leave the limits of what a character could do entirely in the hands of the player, provided that the actions taken are allowed in the game.

Game developers often use morality and ethics to control the situation and set limits. However, they are rather complex philosophical concepts. Generally, morality refers to “universal truths, societal rules or principles” or general guidelines on how to live and behave (Schrier, 2017). Wines (2008) defines morality as a code or set of principles that activate an individual's behavior, decisions, or actions. Tierney (1994) explains that ethics is “an individual's reaction to public morality in terms of reflexive involvement, evaluation and choice” (p. ix). Ethics may be considered as “the science that deals with the question of right and wrong in human behavior” (Meng et al., p. 134). Morality touches all areas of human life, and as such, all of them are potential fields for the study of morality and knowledge in games.

To examine the application of the above terms, we have taken as a case-study *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, developed by CD Projekt Red studio. It is a popular fantasy role-playing game from 2015, in which the characters and setting are directly taken from the work of Polish writer Andrzej Sapkowski. In every *Witcher* game, the player takes control of an already formed character. This comes with certain limitations in terms of what actions are available to the player. The limits of what Geralt of Rivia, the game's protagonist, is willing to do are determined by his established sense of morality. Geralt is a witcher, a mutated monster slayer trained from childhood, traveling the world killing monsters in exchange for payment. He is unwilling to be unnecessarily cruel to innocents or betray those close to him, but he can be quite self-serving – or willing to allow injustice to happen so as not to get involved in conflict. Thus, the player is often given the decision – explicitly or implicitly – to simply stay out of it, even in situations where leaving would surely cost someone's life. While this is possible, the player can also take a more active role in events and intervene. This creates a sense of cooperation between Geralt and the player in terms of moral decision-making, as Geralt sets boundaries and the player moves within them. The narrative is told on behalf of Geralt, who is trying to find his adopted daughter Ciri and to unravel the mystery of the Wild Hunt. The game features a deep and morally complex story in which players will have to make difficult choices and face consequences that affect the world and its characters. *The Witcher 3* boasts a rich cast of memorable characters, each with their own unique story and



motivation. This role-playing game is not only known for its visuals and engaging story, but also provides players with many difficult moral choices that force players to ponder philosophical questions of ethics and justice. It thus reflects Shafer's (2012) finding of a strong relationship between morally activated reasoning of players and moral choice.

In the following, we will take a brief look at the general theoretical underpinnings of moral choices in video games, and give examples from different games, before coming back to *The Witcher*.

MORAL CHOICES IN ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

We should begin with what a moral choice is. Such a choice is the act of overcoming internal conflict. If there is no conflict, it is not a moral choice, but a decision. Choice always requires that there be at least two options to choose from. It is important to realize that choices are different from actions, reactions, and calculations. For example, breathing and blinking are actions, not choices or reactions. Quickly jerking our hand away when we touch something hot or catch a falling phone would be a reaction, while a calculation is a decision made based on reason and logic.

Videogames can create a large number of variants of story progression, depending on players' choices, and sometimes these choices can have more than just consequences in the storyline. Virtual worlds of computer games differ significantly from the real world. Even physical laws and social norms can be violated there (Bylieva, 2023). Ethically unacceptable actions such as murder, theft, etc. are frequently among game strategies. At the same time, in some cases, the logic of the game takes into account the moral choice of the heroes.

Moral choices that are made in a game activate the same areas of the brain as in everyday life. Vaal and a number of other evolutionary ethicists have argued that morality is an innate property of humans. Evidently, video games cannot negatively affect these facts. Thus, the design of moral dilemma situations and choices in video games is predicted to improve. This means that games will be able to build on existing moral qualities, and possibly improve them. At the moment we have only a few such video games, but this is one future format of computer games (Piskunova & Krutko, 2017).

Moral models in video games tend to be rather shallow. The most common method is a simple axiom by which “good” actions promote and “evil” actions diminish the player's moral rating. This game mechanism first appeared in *Ultima IV* (publisher: Origin Systems, 1985) which “attempts to make the player feel personally invested or responsible for the decisions they make” (Zagal, 2009, p. 4). It was widely adopted, e.g., in *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* (BioWare, 2003), *Fallout 3* (Bethesda, 2007), the *inFamous* series (Sucker Punch, 2009-2014), *Fallout: New Vegas* (Obsidian, 2010), and the *Mass Effect* series (BioWare, 2007-2012)). It is a simple binary model, but nonetheless problematic. Such a reduced approach (called ‘morality meters’) does not allow for the creation of a realistic scenario and system since in reality there is no single



“correct” moral system that can be used to make decisions. Thus, players may have different assessments of the morality of actions, and in general consider the linear calculation untenable, as Melenson (2011) remarks, objecting to an ‘omniscient axis [and] transparent proxy for developer opinions’ (p. 67). Another question arises regarding the comparability of the morality of different actions on the same scale, for example in *Fallout 3* one can “compensate for mass murder by heaping water bottles on beggars” (Formosa et al., 2016, p. 220). Sicart (2013) remarks that such “ethical cognitive friction introduces tension between procedural and semiotic levels and potentially generates moral reflection” (p. 94). Researchers think that the consequences of such an unbalanced moral system include the moral disengagement of the players when they feel limited by the choices available to them or when they see no consequences of their in-game choices (Formosa et al. 2022; Iten et al., 2018).

The narrative level of the game presupposes the immediate consequences of choosing a certain action or course of action, and the systemic level involves earning points at a certain interface. The second option is evaluative, with the role of the game designer as a “divine judge.” The first narrative option is deterministic, has cause-and-effect relationships and leads to certain consequences. And yet, seemingly non-deterministic narrative-based decision trees in games are often articulated according to a binary good/evil moral system (Sicart, 2010). In later games, the line between “evil” and “good” choices started to be presented as more and more blurred, confronting players with much more complex ethical problems for which there is no unambiguous “positive” answer. The resulting ambiguity in assessing a player's choice is compensated in a number of games by the ability to see the statistics of the choices of other players (creating something like a statistical ethical system). Thus, games provide good material for research. Much data-driven empirical research is based on surveys of some players’ opinions and the gaming choices they made (e.g., Formosa et al., 2022; Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010; Holl et al., 2020; Klimmt et al., 2006; Weaver & Lewis, 2012).

It is often quite difficult to integrate in a natural manner the moral system and the plot of a game, however, there are a variety of original concepts. Moral choices can influence the appearance of an avatar. Thus, in the game *Black & White* (Lionhead Studios, 2001), the skin of an animal incarnation will lighten if it helps local residents. The character's appearance changes most radically depending on the events of life in the *Fable* series (Lionhead Studios, 2004-2010). In this game, “karma” became more than just a number in stats or a modifier in dialogue. One can see it with one’s own eyes once the heroes receive a halo and begin to emit light, and the villains grow small horns. The choice can also affect the ending of the game. For example, decisions made to kill or not kill monsters affect the conclusion of the game *Undertale* (Toby Fox, 2015) in an unexpected way - considering that usually in games the killing of monsters is definitely morally positive. In contrast, in the role of an ordinary customs officer players face increasingly complex moral choices, and there is no reward or punishment for them in *Papers, Please* (Lucas Pope, 2013). All 20 existing endings happen as the consequences



of too dangerous actions (failed to defuse a bomb – died, touched poison – died, did not break the rules on the orders of the boss – imprisoned, took a bribe – imprisoned, helped the opposition – died or imprisoned, etc.). Formosa et al. (2016) employ the *Four component model* of moral expertise (moral motivation, moral sensitivity, moral judgment, and moral action) for analyzing *Papers, Please*.

In the world of video games there is a unique opportunity to explore philosophical aspects of human nature and morality, and one of the most obvious and interesting illustrations of this phenomenon is the game we will consider in depth, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. Of particular interest in the organization of the game is the moral system: both because it is executed very thoroughly (the creators paid a lot of attention to it), and because the choices in the game are very numerous, do not fit into a simple system, and require special research.

MORAL MECHANICS IN THE WITCHER 3

A key feature of the moral mechanics in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* is a significant emphasis on the consequences of a hero's choices. These consequences extend to ordinary NPCs (minor characters), to the main characters, and to the configuration of the entire world of the game. Accordingly, choices can have an impact within the story of a single, self-contained quest, but also on other quests, and on the outcome (epilogue) of the game's main plotline. Already in the first two entries in the series (2007 and 2011), three features (rarely seen in other games) of this type clearly stood out. First, the player can be presented with a decision-making scenario in a situation of incomplete knowledge. Secondly, the outcome of a choice is not obvious or immediate – even going as far as an actual deception or the subversion of expectations in a number of cases. And, thirdly, the game features acute dilemmas, including those affecting gameplay possibilities (within the game world, these are often “life and death” choices, not to mention the fact that their themes deal with violence, abuse of power, various forms of discrimination, etc.). In addition, following one of the main lines of Sapkowski's saga, the authors of the game invariably show both the protagonist's desire to avoid choosing sides and Geralt's inability to remain on the sidelines due to decency and honor, due to friendship and love bonds.

Time after time, the creators emphasize the absence of models of fixed justice, thus depriving the player and his hero of claims to the image of a knight in shining armor. Grey morality or the need to choose between two evils – this is the paradigm of the game's challenges that appeal to morality. In general, *The Witcher 3* is perhaps the best example of how moral issues in the game are built not on the usual models (such as “blind following,” “fixed justice,” and “accumulation of deeds”), but on a complex combination of the player's freedom of decision and the need to play a role. The witcher cannot become anyone, so the gamer is forced to play out (albeit in his own way) a given role in two senses: both by virtue of the boundaries already set by Geralt's character, and by virtue of plot constraints (unlike most modern RPGs, there are here no 2 or 3 ways to complete the



same quest). All this allows us to refer the moral gameplay of *The Witcher 3* to a model with an emergent moral system.

In *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* players are given the unique opportunity to face a variety of moral dilemmas that bring a deep element of philosophical analysis to gameplay. A few specific examples of such moral choices should be considered.

The quest “Saving Souls” is a great example of the moral choices that characterize the game series. In this quest, Geralt finds a group of witches who have placed a curse on themselves. This curse can be broken, but it requires sacrifice. Geralt must decide whether to save these souls, by sacrificing something important, or to seek something to gain by betraying them. Choosing to save souls involves prioritizing ethics and compassion over personal gain. Geralt shows mercy by helping the witches rid themselves of the curse, even if it doesn't directly benefit him. Indeed, betraying the witches may give Geralt some benefit, such as financial reward or the chance to avoid certain risks. However, this decision calls into question his morals and integrity. The game may offer options that allow you to balance between these two extremes. For example, Geralt can try to find a way to minimize his losses without completely betraying the witches, or he can try to negotiate a compromise.

The “Bloody Baron and family drama” quest presents another one of the most memorable and morally challenging dilemmas in the game. It revolves around Philip Stranger, known as the Bloody Baron, and his family problems. In this quest, Geralt first learns the history of the Baron and his family, which includes the disappearance of the Baron's wife and daughter. As Geralt investigates, he learns about the family's tragic secrets, including the Baron's alcoholism, his penchant for domestic violence, and the effects of his actions on the family. So, the moral scenario for Geralt to operate in now includes:

1. The fate of the Baron's family. Geralt must decide whether to help the Bloody Baron reunite with his family. This choice presents Geralt with a dilemma: on the one hand, the desire to help the man reform and restore his family, on the other hand, the realization that the Baron was a rapist, and his family may no longer wish to associate with him.

2. Attitudes toward the Baron. How to treat the Baron – with sympathy, understanding his complex personal history, or with contempt, condemning his past actions? This decision affects not only the Baron's fate, but also Geralt's own moral image. The game offers different options for the development of events depending on Geralt's choices. He can actively help the Baron in his search for his family, be more passive or even hostile. Each choice has its own consequences and reflects Geralt's moral principles.

There may be moments in the quest when Geralt discusses with the Baron or other characters the moral aspects of the situation. For example, Geralt may give his opinion on the Baron's past, his actions, and the possibility of redemption.

As the story progresses, the player will also have to make decisions about the fate of the witch Keira Metz, decisions that can have profound moral implications. These



examples illustrate how *The Witcher 3* provides players with many complex moral dilemmas that actively influence gameplay and force players to consider philosophical questions of ethics, justice, and the consequences of their actions in the game's virtual world. It is now time to turn to the consideration of some specific storytelling and gameplay elements that characterize the game's moral choices.

1. *Dialog choices*. In an analysis of the quests in the game, it was found that in approximately 35% of cases the player's dialog choices affect the plot of the game. This indicates a significant influence of the player's decisions on the development of the final events.

Here is an example of dialogs from the quest “Bloody Baron and family drama”:

- Geralt: “You can try to improve, but it won't change the past.”

- Baron: “I know. But I want to save my family, I want my daughter to know I'm not just a monster.”

Geralt's selection:

a. To help the Baron find his family.

b. Refuse help, believing that his past actions do not deserve forgiveness.

2. *Impact on the world*. The analysis shows that about 24% of the quests have no direct impact on the world of the game, which emphasizes the diversity of game scenarios and the player's ability to choose less meaningful quests.

3. *Family relationships*. The analysis notes that family relationships are an important element in about 32% of the quests. This demonstrates the depth of the plot and relationships between characters. Family relationships are a factor that may have a destructive effect on any moral system, making the result of choices uncertain.

We can see that, f. e., in the quest “In Ciri's Footsteps,” where we have an internal monologue of Geralt:

- Geralt (thinking): “Ciri as a daughter... We need to find her before the Wild Hunt does.”

This dialog emphasizes Geralt's emotional connection to Ciri, influencing his decisions and motivation in the game.

4. *Impact on other quests*. About 32% of quests have an impact on other quests, emphasizing the complexity and interconnectedness of the storylines in the game.

Quest: Blood Ties.

Example Dialogue:

- Geralt: “Your actions in Novigrad could lead to war.”

- Werner: “It's a big game, Geralt. Some sacrifices are inevitable.”

This choice can influence subsequent political events and story quests in the game.

5. *Political decisions*. The analysis showed that political decisions mattered in 26% of the quests, indicating the complexity of the moral and political dilemmas faced by the player.

Quest: “Imperial Audience.” Example Dialogue:

- Anna-Henrietta: “You must choose sides in this war, Geralt.”



- Geralt: “Witchers try to remain neutral. But sometimes the choice is unavoidable.”

This dialog underscores the complexity of the political decisions Geralt faces.

In *The Witcher 3* each quest is a unique journey into a world of moral dilemmas and emotional decisions. For example, in the quest “Twisted Firestarter,” where about 60% of players choose to help an arsonist, we see the emotional toll and moral choices that affect the characters' fate and relationships. This is one of many quests where players have to choose between good and evil, sometimes without a clear understanding of the consequences of their decisions. Let's break this quest down in more detail. In this fictional quest, Geralt arrives in a small town where the locals accuse a certain alchemist of using forbidden magic, leading to a series of fires. The alchemist, in turn, claims that his research can help fight the local drought, and that the fires are the work of someone else.

Moral Choice:

a. Justify the alchemist. Geralt may decide that the alchemist is innocent, and his research can be of benefit. This choice involves defending science and progress, even if society doesn't understand them.

b. Condemn the alchemist. Geralt may believe that the alchemist's experiments are too dangerous and should be stopped, even if he is innocent of arson. This choice reflects the side of caution and protecting society from potential threats.

Depending on Geralt's decision, the quest can develop differently. If he protects the alchemist, he must find the real arsonist, which may lead to unexpected discoveries. If Geralt decides to stop the alchemist, this could lead to the loss of potentially important scientific knowledge.

Example Dialogue:

- Alchemist: “My research can help everyone! These fires are not my fault!”

- Geralt: “Even if you're not guilty of arson, your experiments could be dangerous. Or are you sure you can control the forces you experiment with?”

In the “Missing Person” quest, where the player decides the fate of a missing person, about 40% face a difficult ethical choice between personal good and the good of others.

Geralt meets a man named Duncan, who asks him to find his brother, Bram, who disappeared during the Griffin raid on the village. Bram was taken prisoner during the attack and was last seen in the forest surrounded by wolves.

Geralt follows the tracks that lead him to the place where Bram is hiding from the wolves. He must either kill the wolves to save Bram or use his skills to distract them and save the man without spilling blood.

Moral Choice:

a. Saving Bram. Geralt must decide how to save Bram. He can choose a more aggressive approach, killing the wolves, or a more peaceful approach, trying to save Bram without violence. This choice reflects Geralt's attitude toward violence and its effect on the world.



b. Further Decision. After rescuing Bram, Geralt is faced with another choice. Bram wishes to return to the village, but fears he will not be welcomed there because he might be accused of cowardice and leaving his fellow villagers in distress. Geralt can advise Bram to return and try to rebuild his reputation or stay in the refuge to avoid potential problems.

Example Dialogue:

- Bram: “I'm afraid to go back. They'll say I'm a coward and left them to their fate.”

- Geralt:

(If advised to return): “You saved your life, and now you can help others. Go back and prove that you are not a coward.”

(If advised to stay): “The world is harsh. Sometimes it's better to stay in the shadows than face injustice.”

At the same time, many quests, such as “On Death's Bed,” have a significant emotional impact, touching on themes of loyalty and betrayal. In this quest, about 70% of players are faced with a decision that can dramatically alter relationships with key characters and affect the course of the main plot. Moral dilemmas, affecting about 50% of quests, often involve choices between lesser and greater evil, good and evil, and between Geralt's personal interests and the good of other characters. These difficult moral decisions heighten the emotional impact of the game and make each player choice memorable. The quest “On Death's Bed” is one of the quests available in the White Garden, the game's starting location. This quest involves a moral choice that presents the player with a dilemma between personal gain and an act of mercy. The protagonist meets a woman named Lena who is seriously injured by a poisoned monster. The only medicine that can save her is the Potion of the Winding Meadow, a rare herb that is not easy to find. Geralt must find this herb, which requires exploring the surrounding area. He can use his skills as a pathfinder to find and gather the rare herb.

Moral Choice:

a. Save Lena. Geralt can choose to use the potion he found to save Lena. This demonstrates compassion and mercy as he forgoes personal gain to save another's life.

b. Sell or Keep the Potion. Geralt may instead decide to sell the potion or keep it for himself. This decision is based on practicality and personal gain, but it calls into question his moral principles.

- Tamia, the local herbalist: “Only the Potion of the Winding Meadow can save her. But it's a rare herb, Geralt.”

- Geralt:(If decides to help): “I'll find the potion. Every life is precious.”

- (If decides to sell/save): “The potion could be of use to me. There is no mercy in these lands.”

These examples emphasize how *The Witcher 3* challenges players to make difficult moral choices that affect their perception of the game world and the development of the story. Each decision made in these quests not only shapes the experience of the game, but also evokes deep emotional reactions, making each player's choice memorable.

Let's break down the key quests that affect the player's moral choices.



“Missing in Action”: In this quest, the player is faced with a moral choice that can seriously affect the course of the story. About 40% of the players are faced with a difficult ethical dilemma, choosing between their own interests and the good of society. For example, a player will have to decide whether to help save the life of a missing person, risking their own safety, or leave them to fend for themselves. This choice can lead to different consequences in the game and demonstrates the complexity of moral dilemmas in the game world.

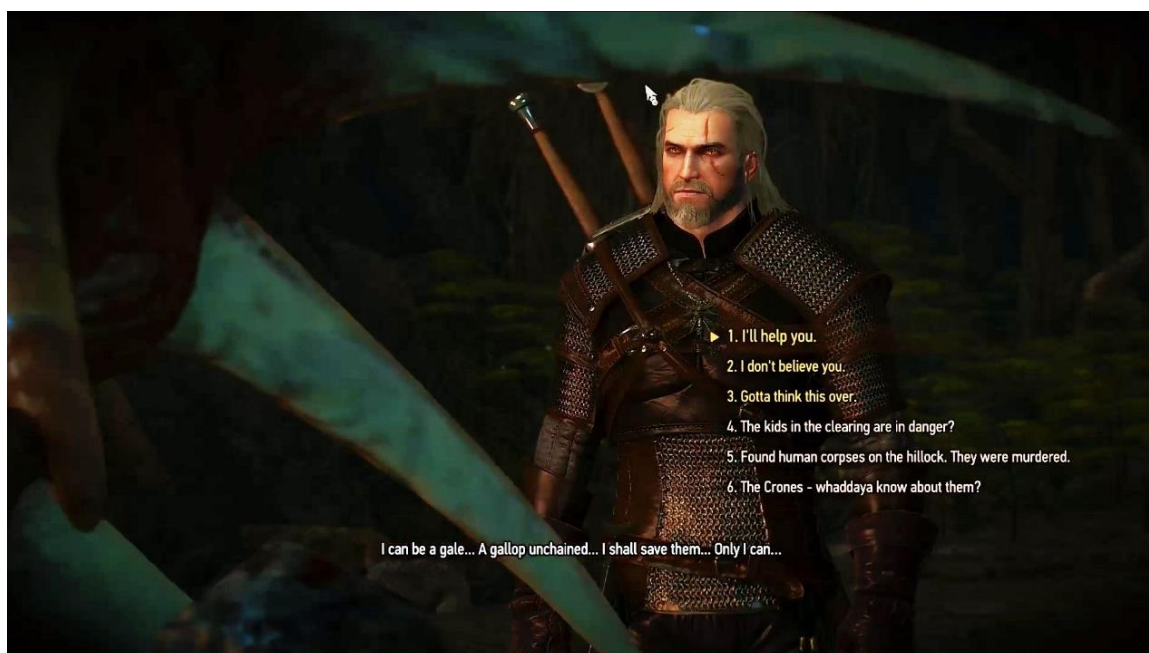


Figure 1. Moral choices in the *Ladies of the Wood* quest

“Return to Crookback Bog”: This quest revolves around helping the Bloody Baron get his wife back from Kron. It is an optional quest, the outcome of which depends on the choices made in the “Whispering Hill” quest. The Baron and Geralt encounter some monsters and a beast in the swamp. The outcome varies depending on the decision to free or kill the spirit of the forest, which affects the fate of Anna, the Baron’s wife, the Baron's reaction and the direction of the game's plot. Salvation is the key element here, which is typical of about 25% of quests. The quest has no impact on the world and is not tied to political decisions, allowing the focus to be exclusively on the player's personal choices.

“Wild at Heart”: In this quest the players meet Niellen, a hunter from Blackbough, who is looking for his missing wife Hanna. Geralt decides to help Niellen and begins to investigate. During the investigation, Geralt discovers that Niellen is actually a werewolf, and his wife disappeared after finding out about it. The player is faced with a moral choice: hide the truth about his wife's fate from Niellen, or reveal everything to him, leading to his transformation into a werewolf and a possible fight with him. This quest illustrates a recurring theme of moral dilemmas in *The Witcher 3*, where the player's



decisions often carry serious consequences and affect the game's plot. Salvation plays a key role here, which is seen in 15% of the quests. The strong impact on the world and the lack of importance of family relationships indicate the complexity of the moral decisions faced by the player.

“A Towerful of Mice”: In the Mice Tower quest, Geralt is tasked with helping Keira Metz break the curse on Fyke Isle and its tower. While investigating, Geralt discovers the history of the tragedy that occurred on the island. A curse was placed on the tower after a local lord killed his subjects, fearing they had contracted the plague. Among those killed was his daughter Anabelle, who fell in love with a local alchemist. She became a ghost, cursing the tower.

Geralt is faced with a moral choice: help Anabelle's spirit leave the tower by carrying her bones to her lover, or leave her there. Depending on Geralt's decision, the outcome of the quest will vary. If Geralt decides to help Anabelle, she is reunited with her lover, but ends up killing him, after which the curse is lifted from the island. If Geralt decides not to help her, the curse remains. Here the player is encouraged to save (20% of quests), with dialog choices affecting the story. Family relationships are important, but world impact is not applicable. This quest exemplifies moral dilemmas in the game, where the player's choices can have significant consequences for the story and characters.

“Ghosts of the Past”: During this quest, Geralt meets Letho from the School of the Serpent, a former witcher who played an important role in the previous game. This quest is only available if the player chose to let Leto live in *The Witcher 2* or indicated that he was alive during a visit to the Nilfgaardian Palace. In this quest, Geralt helps Leto deal with the dangers that threaten him. The player will have to make an important choice regarding Letho's fate: help him or betray him. This quest exemplifies the theme of the consequences of choices, where decisions made by the player affect the plot and relationships with characters. This quest has a neutral impact on the world (15% of quests) and no impact on other quests, which is unique to the 10% of quests.

“Blood Ties”: with a focus on salvation has an impact on other quests 10% of the time, although family relationships and moral dilemmas are not key aspects. In this quest Geralt helps a Nilfgaardian woman find her son who has gone missing in the war. He investigates the clues using his witcher senses and discovers that the son tried to desert and was killed. Geralt can tell the woman the truth about his son's death or lie. Regardless of his choice, she thanks him and rewards him with a small reward. This quest emphasizes the theme of moral dilemmas in the game involving war and family relationships.

“Last Wish”: This quest presents the choice of salvation which will affect the plot. While having a strong impact on the world, it will not have an important impact on other quests (occurs 15% of the time). Geralt helps Yennefer in her quest to find a genie in order to break the magical bond between them. Yennefer wants to make sure that their feelings for each other come from their own hearts and not because of a magical source. Geralt and Yennefer travel to the island of Skellige, where they search for the genie. In the course of the quest, Geralt is faced with a moral choice: support Yennefer in her quest



to sort out their relationship or refuse to do so. The quest is important to the romantic storyline between Geralt and Yennefer, as it determines whether or not their romantic connection will continue. It is one of the key moments in the game, emphasizing the importance of the choice and its impact on character and plot development.

“Pyres of Novigrad”: This one presents a choice of destruction that affects the plot and has a strong impact on the world (found 15% of the time). “Pyres of Novigrad” is the key quest in Novigrad, where Geralt is searching for Ciri. During the quest, Geralt is confronted with the horrifying reality of the persecution of mages and other magical beings by the Church of Eternal Fire and the Witch Hunters. Geralt seeks help from Triss Merigold, who is also hiding from the Witch Hunters. During the quest, Geralt helps Triss rescue some of the mages, which emphasizes the theme of choice and consequences in the game, especially in regards to relationships with key characters and the political aspects of The Witcher's world.

“A Matter of Life and Death”: It is a quest with a neutral impact, affecting other quests and having a weak impact on the world (occurs 8% of the time). In this quest Geralt assists Triss Merigold in rescuing mages from Novigrad who are being pursued by the Witch Hunters. The quest begins in Novigrad and is important to the development of the romantic storyline with Triss. Geralt must infiltrate the Masquerade Ball to help Triss find and rescue Albert, a young mage who is being pursued by the Witch Hunters. The quest provides the player with a number of moral choices, such as deciding whether to assist Triss in the mage rescue, which may involve deception and confrontation with the Witch Hunters. Also, depending on the player's actions and interactions with Triss, the quest may affect Geralt's romantic relationship. This quest exemplifies the themes of choice and consequence that characterize *The Witcher 3*, where the player's decisions affect the fate of the characters and the course of the story.

“A Deadly Plot”: This presents a salvation choice that does not affect the plot or family relationships, having little impact on the world (occurs 7% of the time). In this quest Geralt conspires with Dijkstra and Vernon Roche to assassinate King Radovid. The quest begins after completing the quests “Count Reuven's Treasure” and “Now or Never.” During the quest, Geralt meets with the conspirators to discuss the plan and then follows the trail to find a missing spy, who turns out to be Thaler. The quest has a significant impact on the game's ending and allows the player to decide on their involvement in the political events of the game. After completing the “A Deadly Plot” quest, the next significant quest is “Reason of State.” In this quest, Dijkstra offers Geralt to participate in an assassination attempt on King Radovid. An important point in this quest is Dijkstra's suggestion to kill Vernon Roche and his allies in order to seize power in the Northern Kingdoms himself. The player will have to make a difficult moral choice: support Dijkstra and betray Roche, or protect Roche, which will result in Dijkstra's death. This choice affects the political balance of power in the Northern Kingdoms and the outcome of the game. This moment emphasizes a recurring theme of *The Witcher 3*, where the player's decisions have long-term consequences for the game's world and its characters.



Thus, we can conclude that there are many moral choices in the game, from those that are fairly easily resolved to those that cause serious internal conflict. In some cases a player has to choose between a lesser and a greater evil. Popular conflicts are between self-interest and helping others, as well as between duty and family/friendship ties. At the same time, there is no simple logic that allows the player to predict the consequences of a particular choice. So, the consequences of some actions are insignificant, others affect the plot, and others affect the entire game world.

CONCLUSION

In the context of an article exploring the philosophical aspects of moral choices in a game, it is important to note how these choices reflect basic ethical concepts. For example, various quests may provide the player with opportunities to balance the consequences of their actions with principles such as justice, compassion, or selfishness. In addition, the importance of family relationships and their influence on the player's decisions emphasize the importance of ethical dimensions in moral choices.

The analysis of quests in the game reveals the variety of ethical dilemmas that the player faces, emphasizing the importance of aspects such as the consequences of actions, values that can be contrasted, and the influence of personal relationships on decisions. All of this helps the player to explore and understand the ethical dimensions of their actions and their impact on the virtual world of the game, and can provoke discussion of morality and ethics in the real world.

These and other examples of moral choices in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* illustrate how games can become a platform for philosophical reflection. They force players to not only make decisions, but also to weigh the consequences and reflect on important moral principles, ethics, and justice. As a result, this game not only offers entertainment, but also encourages players to think about complex philosophical questions, making it a unique work in the world of video games.

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