

Removing The Ring Of Gyges From Video Games

Imagine a world where all your thoughts and actions are recorded, then at a much later time your actions are weighed and you are rewarded or punished where you may or may not have the possibility of mercy if you repent. Most would attribute such a system to theology but it can now be reality in a system created by the modern world.

There has been a move to use video games as a large scale experiment on morality and choice. Most games today offer situational decision making within scenarios that are morally complex, these decisions and other actions in the virtual realms are now being recorded en masse creating statistical data sets [1]. These data sets are typically used by developers for future developments or updates, but have also been used for research studies [2]. Monitoring player actions offers an interesting view into human morality, but I worry that this experiment has the potential for malicious use in the future just like past interactions on social media are being used today.

The premise is not limited to video games but can extend to all forms of media but such choices in an era when 90% of children (in the U.S.) play video games [3] warrants a question for 4 separate groups:

To the religious I ask: Where is the line of demarcation that defines when a virtual action is a sin?

To the Philosopher I ask: Are video games a true test of one's character (Ring of Gyges)?

To the Governor I ask: Should these data be used as a screening of persons for employment (similar to how situational judgment tests are currently used)

To the developers I ask: Once your patrons know you are watching will they continue to purchase your games?

Respectfully
Concerned Philosopher

Bibliography

- 1: Patrick Shanley , Morality in Games: Are Players Prone to Good Or Evil Choices?, February 22, 2019
- 2: Travis Taylor, Daniel Shafer, The Impact of Moral Decision-Making on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Appreciation in Video Games, 2019
- 3: Rachel Barclay, Do Video Games Make Kids Saints or Psychopaths (and Why Is It So Hard to Find Out)?, October 20, 2018