

**MASTER THESIS**

# **Ludonarrative Dilemmas: How Ludonarrative Dilemmas Shape the Player Experience Based on Player Traits and Motivation**

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## Zusammenfassung

Videospiele sprechen eine Vielzahl unterschiedlicher Motivationen an – einige Spielende interessieren sich besonders für die Erzählung, andere für Herausforderungen, Erkundung oder Ästhetik. Diese Masterarbeit untersucht, wie solche unterschiedlichen Interessen die Entscheidungen von Spielenden beeinflussen, insbesondere dann, wenn narrative und spielmechanische Motivationen in Konflikt geraten. Anstatt den Fokus auf *ludonarrative Dissonanz* zu legen, wird das Konzept des **ludonarrativen Dilemmas** eingeführt: Momente, in denen narrative Interessen (die moralisch motiviert sein können, aber nicht müssen) im Widerspruch zu spielmechanischen Vorlieben stehen – was zu Spannungen führen kann, die das Spielerlebnis entweder vertiefen oder beeinträchtigen. Die Arbeit ist in der Ludonarratologie und der Theorie spielerischer Motivation verankert und analysiert *Dishonored* und *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* anhand von Literaturrecherche, einem neu entwickelten Analysemodell sowie Interviews mit Spielenden, die beide Titel erneut gespielt haben. Ziel ist es, besser zu verstehen, wie narrative und spielerische Präferenzen Entscheidungsprozesse beeinflussen – und eine differenzierte Begrifflichkeit anzubieten, um solche Spannungsmomente im Spiel zu beschreiben.

## Abstract

Video games appeal to a wide range of player motivations—some are drawn to narrative, others to challenge, exploration, or aesthetics. This thesis explores how these differing interests influence player decisions when narrative and gameplay motivations come into conflict. Rather than focusing on *ludonarrative dissonance*, it introduces the concept of the **ludonarrative dilemma**: moments where a player's narrative interests (which may or may not be morally driven) are at odds with their gameplay preferences, creating tension that can either deepen or disrupt the experience. Grounded in ludonarratology and player motivation theory, the study analyzes *Dishonored* and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* through literature review, a new analytical framework, and interviews with players who revisited both games. The goal is to better understand how narrative and gameplay preferences interact in decision-making moments and to offer a more nuanced vocabulary for describing these tensions in play.

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## Abbreviations

DX:HR	Deus Ex: Human Revolution <sup>1</sup>
DX:HR (2010)	<i>Deus Ex: Human Revolution</i> (2010)
DX:HR (2013)	<i>Deus Ex: Human Revolution – Director’s Cut</i> (2013)
FR:RD	<i>Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn</i> (2005)
IDN	Interactive Digital Narrative
LN	Ludonarrative <sup>2</sup>
NPC	Non-Player-Character
OP	Original Poster: The user of a forum who initiated a post or discussion
PC	Player-Character
UI	User Interface

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<sup>1</sup> This paper mostly considers the *Deus Ex: Human Revolution – Director’s Cut* (2013) when referring to *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* or the game in general. When the two versions are mentioned in comparison the distinction is made. Otherwise, the publishing year is used to indicate which version is meant.

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviation LN is only used in sections with frequent references to different ludonarrative relations, to avoid overly long and repetitive phrasing and maintain readability. As the key term of the thesis “Ludonarrative Dilemma” is generally written in full, except in codes or tables.

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# 1 Introduction

The relationship between narrative and gameplay in video games has been a central focus of both narratology and game studies. The narrative qualities of game design elements and the role of narrative in game development are of interest to researchers, players, critics and people working on games—such as game or narrative designers and others in creative roles. This interdisciplinary research, which tends to merge ludological and narratological theory, can be referred to as *ludonarratology*<sup>3</sup>(Toh, 2018)—a term that represents the research focus on the relationship between narrative and gameplay.

Some of the earliest contributions occurred through the so-called ludologist vs narratologist debate through examination of the narrative properties of video games or video game elements, just as interactive media in general<sup>4</sup>. As Aarseth (2012, p. 2) argued, clarifying such relations “will probably end up addressing both” theoretical and design-oriented issues. Further research considered tensions between gameplay and narrative that could negatively impact the player experience. Noteworthy examples include Aylett and Louchart's (2004) narrative paradox and Hocking's (2007) ludonarrative Dissonance. The narrative paradox describes tensions between authored control and player agency, while ludonarrative dissonance refers to a perceived mismatch between gameplay and narrative elements. In response to these challenges, scholar proposed theories to understand or solve these tensions; and reach or identify ludonarrative harmony (Brice, 2011; Despain & Ash, 2016; Roth et al., 2018; Toh, 2015, 2018). This idea resonates with Hocking's (2007) original call for a successful marriage between ludic and narrative themes.

*Dishonored* (2012) is of particular interest because, the *Chaos System* has been interpreted as both: punishing a specific playstyle (Cassidy, 2021; Taylor, 2021); and an example of that addresses and fixes ludonarrative dissonance by adjusting the story to the players actions (Howard, 2022). It often even sparks discussion on whether it is punishment or reward when the game adapts to the lethal way of playing (Cassidy, 2021; Tarason, 2021; Taylor, 2021). Considering Tancred et al. (2018) the chaos system is of specific interest surrounding choices, narrative outcomes and dilemmas within moral gameplay taxonomy. Making it case of dilemma including playstyle and narrative interests. This discussions about *Dishonored* (2012) suggests a subjective experience within a coherent system, shaped through different ludonarrative interpretations. It also shows potential tensions caused by situations, in which narrative and gameplay preferences are pitted against each other by forcing players to choose between mutually exclusive ludic and narrative experiences. A related researched concept is the effect

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<sup>3</sup> While not a universally adopted term, I use the term *ludonarratology* to refer to theory that examines the interplay between narrative and gameplay—much like Toh (2018) did. Koenitz (2023) refers to this as a part of *Interactive Digital Narrative* (IDN) research, while Ryan (2006, p.203) has proposed the term *functional ludonarrativism*. The term ludonarrative is commonly used to describe the intersections of gameplay and storytelling, drawing on the word's etymological roots: ludo and narrative.

<sup>4</sup> For readers unfamiliar with this debate, Koenitz (2023, Chapter 2) provides a detailed and accessible overview of its development and influence on interactive digital narrative research.

of gameplay consequences on moral dilemmas in video games and how they affect ethical reflection (Domsch 2013, p. 158; Ryan et al. 2016; Sicart 2009, p. 160; Zagal 2017). One easily designed form of this is the *moral temptation*—a choice with a clear right or wrong division, but a promised reward for the immoral action (Ryan et al. 2016 p. 8). Such tensions don't fit the already deluded moniker of ludonarrative dissonance and should rather be referred to as *ludonarrative dilemmas*, which should be analyzed based on their characteristics and effects on players. To do this one would need a ludonarrative framework like ludonarrative hermeneutics (Roth et al. 2018), Toh's (2015, 2018) ludonarrative model or a model that compliments these two, while considering player specific factors like Player Traits (Tondello et al. 2019) and Motivation (Yee 2015, 2019). Additionally, Tancred et al. (2018) pointed out that little is written on how we design and test games with moral dilemmas. Analyzing the player experience based on ludonarrative dilemmas could further add to this research

## **1.1 Motivation**

I don't want to perpetuate claim that narrative and gameplay are inherently dichotomic, but I think there are moments where these two can either support or oppose each other based on ludonarrative design. Understanding how these potential conflicts occur and how they may arise from individual preferences could help to design better ludonarrative experiences. In doing so, one may find the balance between meaningful tension and a tension that ruins the experience. This could help designers to create an optimal ludonarrative experience tailored to players based on their interests.

Ludonarrative dilemma as a term to express when players face decisions that causes them to choose between their narrative and gameplay interests. Previous studies have examined how gameplay elements may interfere with moral dilemmas and how players reflect on their decisions. Ludonarrative dilemma may be a term that fits for such scenarios but also when personal dilemmas occur within a player's own Experience. In this paper I want to see how such dilemmas shape the players experience and how their traits or personal motivations influence it.

The terminology proposed may also help to shed light on how to improve ludonarrative terminology so players, critics, researchers and game developers can talk about the relationship between gameplay and narrative with more precision and without misunderstandings.

## 1.2 Research Question

This thesis investigates how ludonarrative dilemmas influence the player experience in narrative games, focusing on how individual player traits and motivations affect the interpretation and resolution of such dilemmas. Therefore, the primary research question is:

1. How do ludonarrative Dilemmas shape the players experience based on player traits, motivation and rewards?

To answer this question this thesis follows five sub-questions:

- SQ 1. What are ludonarrative dilemmas?
- SQ 2. How can they be identified?
- SQ 3. How are they perceived by players?

SQ1 Has to be answered to prevent ambiguity on what I consider a ludonarrative dilemma and in what dimensions it can occur. SQ2 Will be one purpose of my framework and help other scholar understand my process. SQ3 Adds the subjective player experience that can be analyzed using the methods discussed in this work (3 & 4).

## 1.3 Research Approach

This thesis starts with an analytic literature and media review in chapter 2 to examine existing concepts and research relating to ludonarratology, the player experience, dilemmas, just as player traits and motivation. 2.1 explains what ludonarratology is and how it started to transition towards 2.1.1 which explains core concepts including immersion, agency and shortly explains the core tensions like the narrative paradox and ludonarrative dissonance—including the related terms and some issues surrounding how it is applied. 2.1.2 describes an important aspect of narrative in games by explaining different ludonarrative models and ways stories are conveyed in video games through narrative design, semiotics and multimodality, which is rooted in Marie-Laure Ryan's insights into narratology and the concept of mental images. 2.1.3 further explains ludonarrative models that focus on how narrative and ludic layer's entwining. 2.2. moves on to ludonarrative dilemmas, agency and decision making which shows previous insights on how the player experience is shaped around decisions, dilemmas and a hermeneutic sensemaking process. 2.2.1 explains the ludonarrative hermeneutic based on the insights from 2.1.1 bridging ludonarrative theory and model to the decision-making process. 2.2.2 explains the role of the designers who use feedback, game design, and narrative design to intrinsically and extrinsically motivate and guide players. 2.2.3 examines previous research into dilemmas in video games. This research predominantly considered ethical and moral reflections of decision-making, while looking how these are influenced by gameplay, narrative and framing in general. 2.2.4 examines the relationship between player and PC and tensions between theme that may cause either ludonarrative dilemmas or dissonance—maybe both in some instances. 2.3. generally, looks into player traits, rewards and motivation from a ludonarrative perspective. This segment explains previous attempts to link these

factors to differing player experiences and explain these differences. 2.3.1 explains how current research switched from type taxonomies to trait theory and what that means when following a similar reasoning as previous studies, while 2.3.2 explains the different motivations that have to be considered relating to narrative and gameplay interests that may align with player traits or give insights into potential ludonarrative dilemma. 2.4 gives a short recap on the insights relating to ludonarrative dilemmas and what is missing in the discourse.

Building on these foundations, chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework for identifying and analyzing dilemmas in games based on how they affect the player experience. 3.1 explains how one can track and position the different preferences, motivations and interests explained in 2.3; 3.2 synthesizes the ludonarrative models that were discussed in the literature review 2; and 3.3. introduces the ludonarrative decision making model and how the play experience would look like through that perspective if a player's thought process would be depicted as a decision tree. Chapter 4 starts by outlining the methodology, combining expert interviews, case study analysis, and the evaluation of online discourse in 4.1, followed by presenting the interview partners in 4.2. In 4.3 moments of interests from *Dishonored* are evaluated while 4.4 evaluates decision moments from *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*. After that the ludonarrative dilemma categories and their effects on the player experience are described in 4.5 based on the interviews. The results are discussed in 4.6. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis with a summary, reflecting on the weaknesses and limitations, just an outlook for future research directions and the position of this study within existing research.

## 2 Literature and Media Review

### 2.1 Ludonarratology – Models, Research & Perspectives

Ludonarratology is not an independent discipline narratology or ludology, but rather a cross-disciplinary lens used to examine interplay between gameplay and narrative in media where both converge. This research lens is inherently multi-disciplinary just as game studies in general (Mäyrä, 2009). Some of the earliest contributions are the publications of the so-called ludologist vs narratologist debate<sup>5</sup>, as a defining moment in game studies history (Mäyrä, 2008, p. 8, Koenitz, 2023, p. 35). The involved researchers offered complementary perspectives that work together to “convey the overall experience” involving gameplay narrative and the player (Toh, 2018, p 5).

Narratology-inclined scholars emphasized how game systems and player interaction can produce narrative experiences—pre-authored or emergent (Jenkins, 2004; Murray, 1997; Ryan, 2009). In contrast, ludologists focused on how gameplay functions independently (Eskelinen, 2001; Juul, 2001; Aarseth, 2004), while also considering how narrative elements can support or enrich gameplay (Frasca, 2003; Juul, 2001, 2005; Aarseth, 2012)—especially through what Jenkins (2004) called world-building and spatial storytelling. Ultimately, neither group aimed to reduce games to their focus (Frasca, 2003a; Mäyrä, 2008; Ryan, 2023).

One central argument was that traditional narrative theory was ill-suited to address interactive media—just as it had to adapt for visual media (Ryan, 2001, 2023). To address this, Ryan (2001, 2006 p. 98) proposed an expanded narratology that considers multiple sensory and semiotic channels. Drawing on Bordwell’s (1989, pp. 23–25) model of mental representation, she argues that players construct narrative meaning cognitively—through interpretation of structural, semantic, and contextual cues—even without a narratorial agent as they do in everyday life (Ryan, 2006, p. 11; 2023).

Games can function like simulations that allow exploration of scenarios in fictional worlds (Frasca, 2003b; Aarseth, 2004) or may use narrative framing to contextualizes gameplay (Juul, 2001). Dansky (2021) sees the role of narrative in games within: Immersion, reward and identification. It frames actions, motivates players through reward and immersion; and gives meaning by establishing the world, characters, and context to understand and identify game objects, while driving the story forward or justifying gameplay (pp. 5–6).

Ludonarratology explores two complementary questions: how games tell stories, and how narrative elements interact with gameplay. These questions reflect the historical roots of the field while guiding recent research, such as Toh’s (2018) multimodal approach and Roth et al.’s (2018) ludonarrative hermeneutics—based on the Koenitz’s (2010) SPP model which he extended again (2023, pp 79–86).

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<sup>5</sup> The researchers counted as Narratologists included Henry Jenkins, Murray and Marie-Laure Ryan and the researchers counted as ludologists included Espen Aarseth, Eskelinen, Jesper Juul and Frasca. (Frasca, 2003a; Koenitz, 2023; Ryan, 2023)

Other approaches explore specific intersections, be it transmodality (Dena, 2010), connections between gameplay and narrative through rules (Ang, 2006), narrative game mechanics (Dubbelman, 2016; Larsen & Schoenau-Fog, 2016), narrative and gameplay goals (Cardona-Rivera et al, 2020, 2023, Mitchell & McGee, 2009); while taxonomies like the Elemental Tetrad (Schell, 2008), split games into interrelated analytic categories or layers.

Such theories provide a basis to understand the ludonarrative player experience and identify ludonarrative phenomena, including ludonarrative dilemmas.

### 2.1.1 Core Concepts: Immersion, Agency and Ludonarrative Tensions

#### Immersion

The concept of Immersion has been tied to *flow* and *suspension of disbelief* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Coleridge, 1817, as cited in Dansky, 2021, p. 6)<sup>6</sup>. While flow typically relates to gameplay—where challenge and skill are balanced, allowing the player to perform between boredom and anxiety (Dillon, 2020b)—Dansky (2021) highlights how narrative can create a believable consistent fictional world that supports both and enables players to become fully absorbed in their experience and not break the suspension of disbelief. Therefore, Dansky (2021, p. 17) says immersion is the “ultimate goal” of videogames and the narrative should not break it or pull attention to itself. Which shows a tension between what Ryan (2009) calls: ludic and narrative immersion. And is highlighted by Toh’s (2018) consideration of narrative and gameplay focus or Aarseth’s (2012) ludic and narrative poles.

#### Agency

Murray (1997) described agency as the satisfying power to take meaningful action and witness the consequences of one’s decisions and choices. This includes the player’s desire to overcome adversity, master complexity, and shape their environment intentionally into something coherent. However, she emphasized that this agency is constrained by writing and programming—interactors act only within predefined system boundaries. Stang (2019) referred to this as the illusion of agency, showing that despite perceived choice, the range of possible actions remains fixed. Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum (2009) defined agency more broadly, as expressing intent and receiving a satisfying response—even if purely cognitive—rather than a matter of choosing from options. Stang (2019) further suggested considering an alternative kind of agency, that lies in the players’ interpretation of game texts and engagement with fan communities and developers. This study, however, leans toward the concept of perceived meaningful or consequential decisions that affect outcomes—such as dilemmas—while emphasizing the interpretative agency involved in meaning-making within it (see 2.2).

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<sup>6</sup> *Suspension of disbelief* was coined by (Coleridge, 1817), while Csikszentmihalyi (1990) named the concept of *flow* (as cited by Dansky, 2021). Both terms are commonly used across sources and within daily life but may differ or have changed in how they are applied in different fields and studies. Which is why I use secondary sources and focus on how the terms are used in narratology and ludology.

## **The narrative Paradox**

The *narrative paradox*—as coined by Aylett (2000)—describes the inherent tension between the author’s control over the narrative to provide a satisfying structure and the player’s demand for agency to act and react without constraint (Aylett & Louchart, 2004). This is rooted in the interactive and reactive nature of digital environments, where the system adjusts to “voluntary and involuntary user input” and the designer selects specific sensory and semiotic channels (Ryan, 2006, p. 98). Ryan (2009) described a related issue as the interactive paradox—the challenge of integrating unpredictable, bottom-up player input into a pre-structured, top-down narrative. She also notes that such freedom may undermine suspense, a key element of temporal immersion, which depends on uncertainty and long-range narrative planning. As Domsch (2013, p. 5) stated, games must constantly negotiate between agency and the narrative need for closure.

## **Ludonarrative Dissonance**

Another term commonly used to describe tensions between gameplay and narrative is ludonarrative dissonance—a term coined by game designer and scriptwriter Clint Hocking (2007) in his critique of *BioShock* (2007) which he builds upon complex arguments which he only partly understands himself. Among other arguments, like a conflict between ludic and narrative contracts, Hocking (2007) argued that the game throws the narrative and ludic elements into opposition<sup>7</sup>. Roht et al. (2018) criticized the unstable ontological premise of the term. Haely (2018) further pointed out the term has been misused since its inception. These two factors caused the term to even appear in reference to any inconsistency between the gameplay and the story or basic continuity errors, despite being intended to point at ludic interactions conflicting with the narrative theme (Haely, 2018).

Franklin (2015) argued ludonarrative dissonance is a term that perpetuates a false divide between games as systems and narratives by linking it to the misunderstood opposition between ludologist and narratologist. He (2015) and Oslon (2017) both shared the opinion that we should not focus on systems and narrative on opposing sides but rather treat and analyze games as a whole text. However, Oslon (2017) defends the term as a descriptive criticism tool to explain why a game may fail when gameplay and narrative convey conflicting themes or messages, even if its parts are technical proficient.

When used by critics this term often becomes a buzzword and prevents analysis of complex ludonarrative relationships—discouraging engagement with “crucial narrative devices” (Pennabella, 2016) such as ludonarrative mechanics (Pynenburg, 2013) which are quickly labeled as ludonarrative dissonance (Toh, 2018, p. 59-66). This weakens the analytic clarity of the term, even though some view it not only as negative, but also as potentially positive, neutral, or a useful tool (Toh, 2018, pp. 6, 236; Off Site Project, 2023). Showing a clear lack of consistency on what this commonly used term entails.

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<sup>7</sup> This barely gives Hocking’s original complex retelling of his personal experience the justice it deserves just like many other quotations of the term he coined.

Despite this uncertainty, people investigated how gameplay and narrative could harmonize, like Pynenburg (2013) or Brice (2011). Despain & Ash (2016) looked into such different definitions and how to design towards harmony. They considered (a) ludonarrative cohesion as a thematic tie between mechanics and their narrative use; (b) ludonarrative harmony as a synchronized interaction that creates a unified story and (c) ludonarrative resonance as a player reaction based on a mutual impact between gameplay and narrative (Despain & Ash, 2016). Watsman (2012) even added ludonarrative alienation as a third terminology to describe when the link between gameplay and narrative is weak or doesn't exist. Toh (2018) considered LN dissonance and resonance to be on a continuum with (ir)relevance between them as adaptation of ludonarrative alienation. But the model may perpetuate analytic vagueness surrounding LN dissonance while also blurring the line between structural and perceived cases<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, Toh (2015; 2018) introduced subcategories that could support analytic precision when treated as descriptive terminology detached from the dissonance–resonance continuum—which will be considered in (2.2).

Further analysis of ludonarrative relationships or agency and how they connect to dilemmas (2.2) requires a clear understanding of the player's sensemaking process and the interplay between gameplay and narrative—explored next through noteworthy ludonarrative concepts and models.

### **2.1.2 Mental Images: How Games Tell Stories**

Narratives in games can take different structural forms, which determine how player actions influence the story. Ryan (2006, pp. 100-107) outlined a range of textual narrative architectures for interactive narratology. DeMarle (2021) focuses on common game writing practices that handle player agencies using linear and branching options of embedded stories:

- Linear narratives, which follow fixed sequence of events
- Linear Narratives, with nonlinear challenges, where the story path is set, but gameplay sequences vary
- Branching narratives, in which player choices create diverging paths
- Branching narratives with recombining paths, which allow stories to converge again after diverging

These structures frame how consequences and choices are presented—especially relevant when analyzing decision-making or dilemmas. However, DeMarle emphasizes that branches must be significantly different to make choices meaningful. While Cardona-Rivera et al. (2014) argue that the outcomes of choices only need to be perceived as leading to foreseeable meaningful different states.

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<sup>8</sup> Toh's (2018) ludonarrative dissonance (pp. 53, 224, 236), resonance (pp. 75, 224–225, 236) and (ir)relevance (pp. 99, 227, 236) each have three different definitions that describe the term. This doesn't include quoted definitions nor the definitions for the subcategories, which could exist outside of their main categories.

While these structures define how story paths unfold, Jenkins (2004) expanded the perspective by emphasizing how narrative meaning also emerges from spatial design and player interaction. He proposed that game storytelling functions as *narrative architecture*, in which players make sense of the story through exploration, spatial cues, and environmental context. Jenkins (2004) explained through four ways how space and design convey a narrative experience:

- Evocative Spaces – drawing on transmedia references and familiar fictional worlds to evoke associations and fill narrative gaps
- Enacted Stories – structured scenarios (e.g., missions, quests) in which players perform narrative roles
- Embedded Narratives – environmental storytelling through spatial clues, logs, and fragmented narrative artifacts that players discover and assemble
- Emergent Narratives – unscripted stories that arise from systemic interaction and player agency

Notably, this concept of *embedded narrative* formalized what is now often referred to as *environmental storytelling*. To analyze and understand potential player experiences resulting from such interactive narrative forms—rooted in a mental image or “cognitive representation” based on interpreting encoded signs (2006, p. 7)—Koenitz (2010) developed the SPP (system, process, product) model. This perspective frames games as Interactive Digital Narrative (IDN) artifacts<sup>9</sup> capable of instantiating narratives through player input, shaped by the elements, boundaries and possibilities within the system.

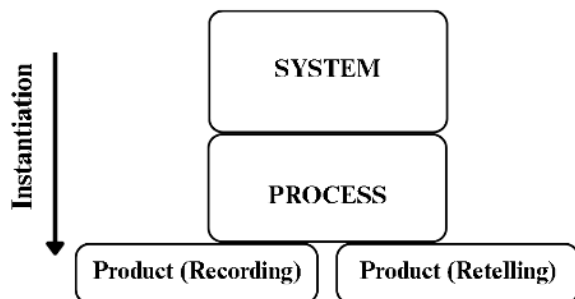


Figure 1 High-level view of IDN with retelling category (Koenitz, 2023, p. 76)

Note: Own 1:1 recreation

Koenitz (2023, p. 74) explained the instantiation process within the high-level view of the IDN experience (see Figure 1), in which the system includes or protostory that defines the potential narratives and enables a process—best understood as an experience involving choices, evaluations, planning and execution—from which a personal concrete product is created. This product could be a recording of the experience and shown to others or simply be retold as a second order narrative which includes the process, the interpreted story and other contextual factors. The retold product in this sense would be closest to what a player will tell when interviewed about the game or talks to friends.

<sup>9</sup> Koenitz considers games as one of many forms IDNs can take and is critical towards the use of transmedial narratives.

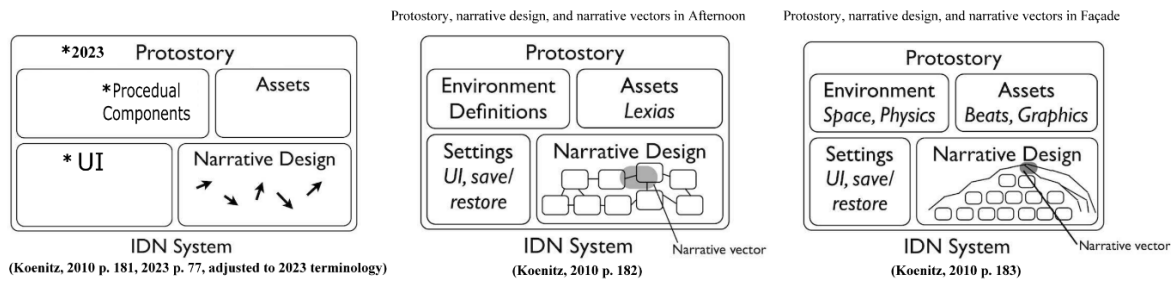


Figure 2 Protostory, narrative design and narrative vectors - Different Versions with different narrative vectors (Koenitz, 2010 pp. 181-183, 2023, p. 77)

Note: The first depiction is adjusted to the terminology from Koenitz 2023 iteration. The 2nd shows how Koenitz (2010) depicted the narrative vectors in *Afternoon* (p. 182) and the 3rd the narrative vectors in *Façade* (p. 183) as shown in the original using the discarded labeling.

The core of Koenitz (2023)<sup>10</sup> SPP model is the protostory of the IDN System, which he organizes in the four elements as shown in Figure 2: Assets, Procedural Components, user interface (UI) and the narrative design. The concept of environmental definitions and settings were updated to procedural components and UI respectively. Assets consist of static elements like images, texts, different kinds of audio, videos and 3D models ranging from characters to environmental objects (Koenitz, 2023 pp. 76-79)—which are either modes, modules or actualized elements in the sense of multimodal semiotics (Kress, 2010; Toh, 2018). The procedural components are the code, rules and underlying technology, while the UI includes the available modes of interactions and how the player would see the game. All these components slightly differ based on the IDN as seen in Figure 2, but the most adaptable is the narrative design and its narrative vectors that are tailored to the narrative possibilities as Koenitz (2010, 2023, pp. 85–90) showed with the examples of *Façade* and *Afternoon*. The way Koenitz (2023) describes the narrative design, it can be understood as agency given to the player, just as the arrangement of the other components within the IDN. The narrative vectors can be understood as the methods employed by the storywriters to communicate the narrative to the player, that helps to motivate them, move the story forward and provides the authored control (Koenitz, 2023, pp 78-79). These align with some narrative elements Boon (2021) describes like cutscenes, scripted events, progress structure; and most importantly narrative triggers, which adjust to the players actions. But a narrative trigger or vector could also happen through inactions and failures, if we consider Koenitz (2023) example, in which “additional murders occur” or “witnesses disappear”, if the player doesn’t move the plot forwards. In that sense a narrative vector can be seen as specific events or information the narrative designer signifies to the player; or as individual elements are supposed to convey about the story.

<sup>10</sup> This paper mainly uses Koenitz (2023, pp. 74–82) most recent explanation of the SPP model but refers to the 2010 version if needed to show the development or older depictions that Koenitz provided via research gate.



Figure 3 The double hermeneutic of the IDN Experience as an extension of the SPP model  
 Source: Own Depiction combining Roth et al.'s (2018, p. 6) figure and Koenitz (2023, p. 80) newest figure.

While this personal instantiation process is already valuable to understand the player experience, Roth et al.'s (2018) extension makes it also an important tool to examine the player's decision-making process (addressed further in 2.2.1). In doing so, the model considers that the player engages in two combined hermeneutic circles. In one the current instantiation resulting from interaction is evaluated based on feedback and interpretation; in the other the player makes sense of the system and evaluates the possibilities for interaction (see Figure 3). This pictures a constant reoccurring decision-making process and the evaluation of the gathered information to understand the decision.

### Multimodality

Koenitz (2023) outlined "some IDN's will focus on screen-based text, while others will be multimodal and/or location based". This process of interpreting fragmented narrative elements within a system aligns with Ryan's (2001) expanded definition of narrative as "a sign with a signifier" based on many different semiotic manifestations and "a signified" through semantic representation, mental image or story. Following this expansion of narratology (Ryan, 2001, 2006), Toh build his multimodal model to video games and the player experience on multimodal semiotic theory as influenced by Kress, van Leeuwen, just as Dena's (2010) transmodiological approach—which was influenced by Ryan (2006) and Jenkins (2004).

Toh (2018) views multimodal discourse analysis as an approach where meaning is communicated not only through multiple modes but also the relationships between these modes, which then influences how the player experience is shaped. His definition for *mode* is based on Kress (2010, p.79), who describes modes as "socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resources for making meaning," such as images, writing, music, gesture or movement, speech, and 3D objects. These modes align with Schell's (2008) description of the most visible piece from the Elemental Tetrad: aesthetics, which defines how the game looks, sounds and feels like which gives it the most direct relationship to the player's experience. These aesthetics or modes are primarily interpreted through meaning-making process that relies on socially shared and interpretable rules called social semiotics (van Leeuwen, 2005). This shapes the mental

image or current instantiated narrative of individual players, while also providing the information needed to interpret the possibilities for interaction (Roth et al., 2018).

Kress (2010, p. 147) introduces the term *module* as a catch-all term for semiotic constructs. Toh (2018, p. 22) referred to this concept and defines it as a higher-level concept than mode, referring to semiotic entities shaped by the interests of the text maker to fulfil the purpose in a specific context. In his model, a module can be a combination of elements, actualized elements, modes, and sub-modes within the video game as a text. Toh (2018) decided to use the terms *gameplay* and *narrative module* to address van Leeuwen's (Andersen et al., 2015, p. 160) claim that narrative could be considered a mode despite being composed of various types and combinations of modes itself. While this aimed to improve conceptual clarity in multimodal research (Toh, 2018), Toh's framework doesn't clarify why some concepts are considered *actualized elements* and not *modules* themselves. Certain elements within games—such as cutscenes or UI—combine multiple modes, include different actualized elements and serve distinct communicative purposes and could therefore be described as *modules* too. Based on Toh's own definition of modules as higher-level semiotic entities composed of modes and elements, multiple components within a game should be modules or submodules of either gameplay or narrative module, maybe even belonging to both. Following Dena (2009, p. 205) a Character would be a transmodal element, that can be conveyed in different forms through different semiotic channels but always actualizing the same semiotic element in different multimodal representation e.g. the character “Darth Vader”. Considering two of Dena's works (2009 pp. 142, 205, 2010, p.195), a character as a transmedial element should be the concept of a character, since characters exist in each medium. And a transmodal principles are abstract structural concepts that can be extrapolated in different modes (or modules) like “cause” which can be present in gameplay as a quest and in the narrative as plot (Dena, 2010, pp. 196–197). While referencing Dena (2010), Toh (2018) e.g. calls “cause” a transmodal element, while Dena (2010) called this a transmodal principle. To avoid further confusion<sup>11</sup>, this thesis considers modules as a combination of semiotic channels that exist across videogames—such as cutscenes, UI or specific forms of gameplay—and the depicted objects are called actualized elements or are specifically named—like characters. Additional distinctions are explained in the Resulting Theoretical Framework (3).

Conceptual clarity is even more important in interdisciplinary research where people may use mode not as a semiotic resource but in one of its common uses like “a particular form or variety of something” (Merriam-Webster, n.d m). Toh's (2018) introduction of the narrative module alongside a gameplay module, mirrors Dena's (2010) use of gameplay and narrative modes. However, it is not clear if Dena consistently adopted the semiotic sense of mode, since the terms *narrative* and *game modes* could also fit Mäyrä's (2009, p.1) explanation of *modes* in games. Here mode doesn't refer to semiotic channels but to distinct operational dimensions within games as “multiple-layered systems and processes of

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<sup>11</sup> Clearing up multimodal discourse terminology in a thesis about ludonarrative dilemma, decision-making and player preference would divert too much attention from the main questions.

signification”—mixing and including representational, performative, rule-based, and improvisational modes of engagement. To avoid ambiguity between these conflicting uses of *mode*, I will refer to such dimensions in Mäyrä’s (2009) sense as forms of engagement relating to layers—for example, *gameplay layer*, *narrative layer*, or *rules-based layer*—to distinguish them from the semiotic *modes* of multimodal discourse. Layers that can be constructed following categories from different models, like Schell’s (2008) elemental tetrads, Aarseth (2012) ludic and narrative poles or Ang’s (2006) abstract and narrative layers.

### 2.1.3 Narrative and ludic layer entwining

Different approaches have been proposed to conceptualize the interplay between gameplay and narrative layers in games. Juuls (2001, p. 38) explained the narrative framing is not necessary to play a game, but it provides an explanation of what the player should do and can add meaning without changing the game. However, such framing has a major impact on how narrative and gameplay layers are interpreted.

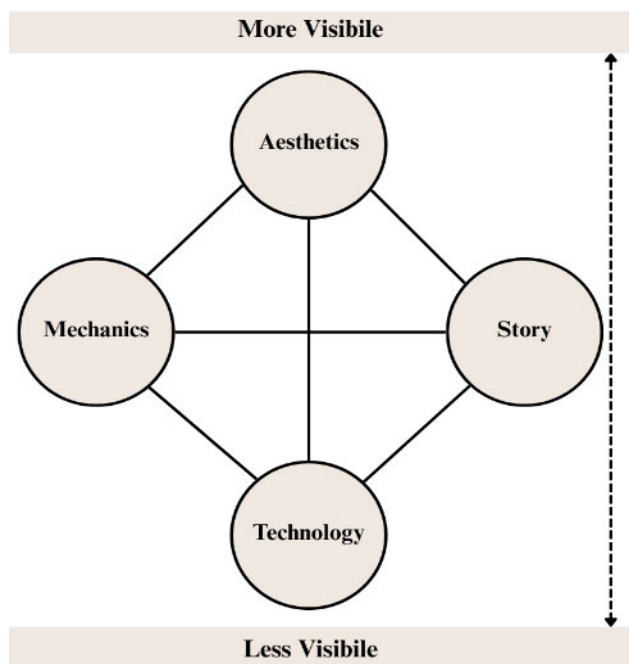


Figure 4 The Elemental Tetrad (Schell, 2008)

Game could be divided into layers mirroring Schell’s (2008) lens of *Elemental Tetrad* (Figure 4), which consists of four interdependent elements: Aesthetics, Mechanics, Story, and Technology. These components exist in distinct but interconnected dimensions, and their layering is based not on importance, but on their visibility to the player. Technology, for example, underpins the system and can be aligned with Koenitz’s (2023) SPP model, in which the system is a base—including hardware and code—that contains all other components. Schell (2008, p. 42) defines technology as “the medium in which the aesthetics take place, in which the mechanics will occur, and through which the story will be told.” Mechanics, in this model, would then refer to the rules and procedures that define gameplay goals and constraints.

In terms of sense-making, aesthetics and narrative play a crucial role in helping players interpret these mechanics through context. This suggests that narrative should be viewed as more tangible than mechanics, as it supports players in understanding gameplay. Aesthetics function as a communicative layer, translating the less visible elements (mechanics and technology) into meaningful experiences through multimodal semiotic resources. This aligns with Koenitz's (2023) protostory, where various assets (visual, auditory, textual) contribute to narrative construction. In that sense, narrative design can use multiple modes to communicate actualized elements, for example, by combining different assets to construct a character through various semiotic channels within different modules.

Ryan (2009) argued that different forms of play produce different kinds of stories. Playable stories, as a form of *paidia* play, involve emergent narratives shaped by the player's spontaneous mimetic activity, without fixed goals. This type of storytelling is often supported by what Dubbelman (2016) terms *narrative game mechanics*—mechanics that not only govern interaction but also convey narrative meaning. These can define every action available to agents—both PCs and NPCs—inviting them “to perform actions that support the construction of engaging stories and fictional worlds in the players mind” (Dubbelman, 2016, pp. 42–43). Dubbelman (2016, p. 46) highlights how identical mechanics can convey different meanings when re-contextualized, emphasizing the role of the aesthetic layer in shaping player perception. A mechanic's visual or narrative framing may render it appealing or off-putting, regardless of player preference. Additionally, some narrative game mechanics act as procedural systems guiding narrative experience like Koenitz (2023) narrative vectors. For example, *Left 4 Dead 2* (2009) uses enemy and environmental mechanics to evoke scenarios typical of zombie films. These mechanics, through randomization, can even trigger overlapping events, that could create randomized dilemmas (Dubbelman, 2016, pp 44–46).

Ryan (2009) notes that narrative games are grounded in ludus play using narrativized rules to catch the players' interest and enhance the game but a limited in how many narratives can be experienced. Cardona-Rivera et al. (2023) expand on this by positioning goals as a crucial link between gameplay and narrative. In narrative games, each gameplay goal is tied to a narrative goal, and these connections are essential for player sensemaking. While games typically aim toward winning, narrative games require players to engage with both gameplay and narrative outcomes—especially in branching narratives where players may reject certain endings due to their narrative implications. According to Cardona-Rivera et al. (2023), goals are crafted by the narrative designer, communicated through feedback, and must be interpreted by the player via the game's aesthetic layer. A ludological goal is defined by the actions players must take to achieve it. The narrative goals are conveyed by the story or can be interpreted using ludological goals in context to symbols and semantic. This interpretation is vital for a complete understanding of the game's meaning. The connections between Dubbelman's (2016) narrative game mechanics, Cardona-Rivera et al. (2020) goals as a nexus between gameplay and narrative, and Ryan's (2009) concept of playable stories and narrative games can all be positioned within Ang's (2006) “Rules, gameplay and narratives in video games” model.

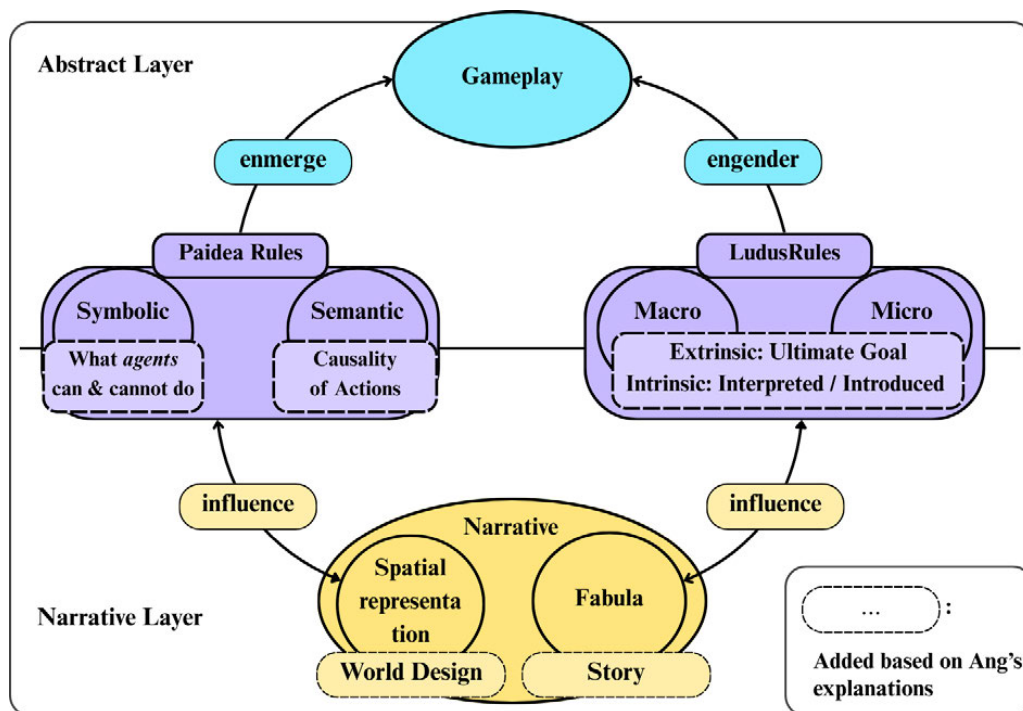


Figure 5 Color coded descriptive version of Ang's (2006, p. 14) gameplay, rules and narrative model. Source: Color-coded recreation of Ang's (2006) "Gameplay Rules and Narratives" (p. 14). Note: Additional explanations added as described but not visualized by the author to align with the quotes.

Ang's (2006) model shows how a game's abstract layer of gameplay, and the narrative layer intersect within a game's rules (see. Figure 5) presenting rules as a bridge between gameplay and narrative. Some rules are just on the abstract layer and use the interface to convey information (Ang, 2006, p. 6). The narrative layer provides explanations to rules that make the world more believable and rationalizes when and why rules are changed during a game (Ang, 2006, p. 16). As Figure 5 shows, gameplay emerges from both ludus and paidia rules<sup>12</sup>, while the rules influence and get influenced by the fabula and spatial representation.

Ang (2006) differentiates between extrinsic and intrinsic ludus rules, just as symbolic and semantic paidea rules. Semantic paidia rules show causality of actions or consequences, while the symbolic paidea rules represent what the player can and cannot do in the virtual world (p. 7)—which also translates to available actions of agents in general, be it the PC or NPC. This locates narrative game mechanics (Dubbelman, 2016) primary within the link between paidia rules and the world design. Extrinsic ludus rules are explicitly stated as the ultimate goal to reach the winning condition (Ang, 2006)—which the player needs to interpret through the narrative (Cardona-Rivera et al., 2020, 2023). Intrinsic ludus rules are those constructed by the player themselves or those introduced during gameplay to move towards the winning condition (Ang, 2006)—but they can also be seen as "imperative goals" (Cardona-Rivera et al., 2020), which are objectives players must complete to reach the ultimate goal.

<sup>12</sup> Ang (2006) uses the terms ludus and paidea rules (Caillois 1962, cited in Ang, 2006) just as Ryan (2009) who writes about ludus and paidia play (Caillois 1958/2001, cited in Ryan, 2009), and both sources are titled "Man, Play and Games" my interpretation is that they refer to the same source and the term should be "paidia" which is why I adopted this for instances in which Ang (2006) wrote paidea.

Ang (2006, pp. 13–16) explains the mutual influence between rules and narrative—shown in Figure 5—as follows. Ludus rules are influenced by the fabula, which includes the story and the events that unfold. A narrative event therefore can change the ludus rules while a change in ludus rules also implies a narrative event that causes it, be it on the macro scale or within a micro-world—which is explained as a rules-shift across different areas. Such influences or shifts in the narrative may also affect paidia rules in which different areas may allow different available actions or different available actions represented through the world design can appear for the player or enemies.

Ang (2006) model shows how gameplay emerges from paidia rules and is engendered through ludus rules sometimes both in the same game, with the rules placed at the center of the player experience and the sensemaking process. Through the distinction between paidia and ludus, Ang (2006) provides a lens for Ryan's (2009) narrative typology. Paidia rules give rise to emergent gameplay, a process through which emergent stories also arise. Ludus rules engender structured gameplay, which corresponds to authored stories—narratives that unfold according to predesigned paths and designer-imposed goals. This shows a rules-based link rooted in the system that connects the ludic and the narrative layers, communicated through shared semiotic resources to shape the player experience and define the system described by Koenitz (2023) from which the narrative is instantiated.

Within game systems, inconsistencies can emerge not just thematically, as in Hocking's (2007) concept of ludonarrative dissonance, but structurally in the system. Bycer (2013) introduces two rules related issues that highlight disjunctions between gameplay and the fictional world. The pacing predicament refers to a temporal disjunction—where different game systems or modules operate on conflicting timelines. For example, NPCs may urge the player to act urgently, but the game allows for hours of unrelated activity with no consequences (Bycer, 2013). The other addresses when gameplay and narrative operating on incompatible rule sets, creating contradictions in the player's mental model which he calls a narrative dissonance in games (Bycer, 2013). However, this could also be understood as a ludonarrative rules misalignment or disjunction. Such cases may occur when the ludic and narrative layers are not grounded in shared logic or systemic coherence as described by Ang (2006) or if the player interprets rules based on the semiotic resources or narrative design, that shape their expectations, which may be at odds with how the experience unfolds. This could also explain what occurred for Hocking's (2007) interpreted a ludic and a narrative contract that were at odds with each other, while Roth et al. (2018) argued that the interpretations were both narrative contracts—one build from interpreting paidia rules and narrative game mechanics the other from interpreting the narrative and ludic properties of goals and ludus rules. But this also helps to understand the players' decisions and how the evaluation of those connections affects them.

## 2.2 Ludonarrative Dilemmas, Agency and Decision-Making

Agency should be at the heart of every dilemma; without agency there are no choices and without a choice players can't end up in a dilemma in the game. A dilemma (Merriam-Webster. n.d.d). can be defined as “an undesirable or unpleasant choice” or “a problem involving a difficult choice”. Zagal (2009) explains that a moral dilemma is a situation with two mutually exclusive options in which someone ought to do both but can only do one because some feature of the world prevents them from doing both. Ryan et al. (2016) argue that genuine moral dilemmas present multiple alternatives that can be argued to be right. They further explain that moral dilemmas can be between one or multiple ethical frameworks and even within the same (Ryan et al., 2016). This implies dilemmas in general could also be between different frameworks of personal interests or preferences—whether they are related to gameplay, narrative or another category.

A dilemma can only occur if the game affords agency to the player and only within the available options. These agencies can take different shapes and forms. Brazie (n.d.) identifies four key components of agency at its most abstract level: challenging situations, sufficient communication, meaningful decisions, and significant consequences. He argues that agency can manifest across multiple dimensions—gameplay, narrative, world, and identity:

- Gameplay: Mechanics and tools the player uses to engage with the world.
- Narrative: The journey, whether through embedded or emergent storytelling.
- World: Encompasses the game environment's responsiveness to actions.
- Identity: Involves the player's sense of self and expression within the game space.

When all these dimensions work together, we get what Staines (2023) describes as ludonarrative agency, which is a multi-channel agency commonly used in immersive sims – where stories impact systems, and systems impact stories.

Following Tancred et al.'s (2018) “moral gameplay taxonomy” a decision may or may not cause “branching”; and the decisions are either related to “scripted choices” that have a clear assigned outcome and “systemic choices” which are accumulated via the system, adjust the experience and are less visible—like a reputation scale. Such reputations scales could be the chaos system of *Dishonored* (2012)—classifying decisions as chaos inducing or reducing—or a moral binary (Nguyen, 2016) that positions actions in categories like good, bad and sometimes neutral. Roth & Vermeulen (2012) consider those moments of agency that create a delayed meaningful impact on how the story unfolds cases of global agency; and pointed out that this impact is challenging to communicate to players. Regarding non-branching choices, Roth & Vermeulen (2012) explained the concept of local agency, through which no lasting consequences occur but immediate feedback shapes the moment or the action of the character, which can be seen as a characterization through narrative game mechanics (Dubbelman, 2016). The concept of gameplay actions framing and characterizing the PC is also considered by Toh (2018) and

by Nay & Zagal (2017), since the actions of the character depict how they act in the unfolding story. Nay & Zagal (2017) argued that this causes actions to have meaning even without consequences.

Meaningful decisions increase the perceived relevance of choice for players. And meaning may arise from various sources of agency, e.g. consequences, characterization, gameplay or narrative layers; or the player's ability to self-express and affect the environment. But what is considered meaningful may ultimately depend on the individual. A dilemma may occur if a decision includes multiple forms of agency, and preferred outcomes are distributed across the available choices. If these discussed forms of agency lead a player to choose between gameplay and narrative preferences, the result could be classified as a ludonarrative dilemma. The next section (2.2.1) introduces the ludonarrative hermeneutic process (Roth et al. 2018) as a bridge between the players sensemaking-process and decision-making, in relation to other research. This framework explains how players interpret choices within system constraints and through links examined within ludonarratology (2.1). The chapter further discusses how designers guide agency (2.2.2) and how different types of dilemmas have been approached (2.2.3–2.2.5). As noted by Tancred et al. (2018), moral dilemmas are a staple of game narratives, and the narrative side of ludonarrative dilemmas may often include questions of morality—an aspect explored by other researchers (Deslongchamps-Gagnon, 2024; Ryan et al., 2016; Sicart, 2009, 2010, 2013; Staines, 2023), who considered the effect of gameplay on moral decisions.

### **2.2.1 Ludonarrative Hermeneutic**

The ludonarrative hermeneutics (Roth et al., 2018) specifically look at the players' hermeneutic process by extending Koenitz's (2010) SPP model through a double hermeneutic strip. This model (see Figure 3) helps to understand how players engage in decision-making processes that shape narrative, as each interactive moment requires interpretation, speculation, and reevaluation. Designers establish the limits of the system to guide players along intended experiences. These boundaries of agency are conveyed both directly and indirectly through the system, allowing players to engage with the fictional world and its simulated rules. But players affect the narrative experience through their performance within the system. They actively interpret the system, speculate about its affordances, and plan their actions accordingly to shape events and narrative towards their preferred outcome based (Roth et al. 2018). Following Heaton (2006), the system must give feedback on the state of the game, allow the player to affect the game to create new game states and then communicate the new state to the player and prompt further action again, while also creating new game states without the player's interaction. These two forms of engagement occur simultaneously, one as the cognitive process the other as the actions taken. Both should follow basic decision-making processes like the seven steps of decision making. As described by Laoyan (2025), as well as on the websites of Lucid Software Inc (n.d.) and the UMass Dartmouth (2022), these seven steps consist of: identifying the decision, gathering relevant information, looking for and identifying alternatives; evaluating the options and expected results based on gathered information; choosing the preferred decision; take the actions related to the choice; and review the

decision and the actual consequences that relate to it. The decisions and alternatives in this sense are all the options a player identified within the granted agency and the information related to the decisions may already be present through the hermeneutic process. Which means these steps can occur rather quickly and be shortened into Koenitz (2023) description of: Interpretation of possibilities for interaction as the identification and evaluation of decisions; and interpretation of instantiated narrative as the reflection on the decision. The step of taking the action occurs between them and causes one hermeneutic evaluation to transition into the other.

This process often brings players into conflict with the narrative itself. A tension can arise between the embedded narrative (DeMarle, 2021) and the emergent narratives that arise from play (Louchart & Aylett, 2004), based on the available paidia rules and their link to the fictional world (Ang, 2006), which shapes the narrative framing based on the character action and narrative game mechanics (Dubbelman, 2016). Within this space, players interpret both ludic and narrative goals (Cardona-Rivera, 2020), even if these goals are only implied, self-imposed or interpreted. Following Ang (2006) players could even consider what actions paidia rules allow to plan strategies that help them achieve the ultimate goal. But predetermined events or events triggered by these strategies, choices and actions can affect the narrative and trigger a hermeneutic reevaluation. Through this, players can evaluate which available actions and expected consequences clash with their own preferences or align with them. And after a consequence is presented, the player interprets the instantiated narrative and evaluates the consequences and their assumptions about the game (Roth et al., 2018). Toh (2018) links this as a causal relationship between action, consequences and feedback and this cause can exist on both narrative and gameplay layer—or in his term’s modules—in which a player’s choices always affect gameplay, narrative or both through consequences.

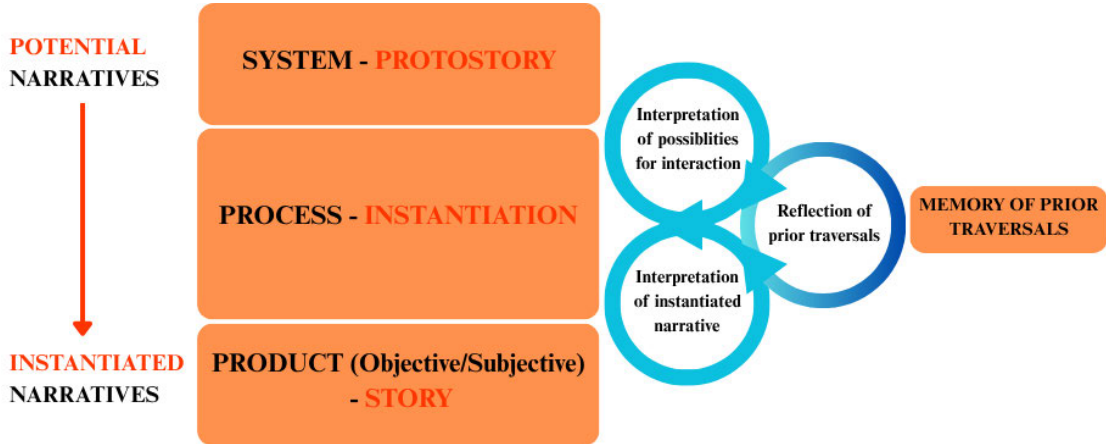


Figure 6 The triple hermeneutic of the IDN experience

Koenitz (2023) added a third hermeneutic circle to the IDN experience to implement the memory players got in prior traversals like previous playthroughs (Figure 6). This changes the process of interpreting possibilities for interaction and the reevaluation of the instantiated narrative in later playthroughs. This allows players to compare outcomes and understand the consequences of actions through accumulated knowledge relating to alternative actions and decisions.

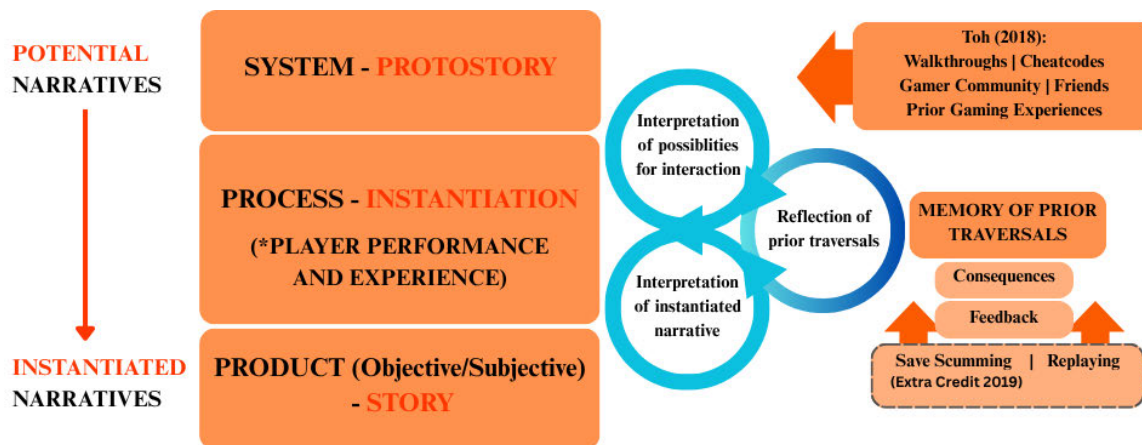


Figure 7 Koenitz (2023, p. 81) Triple hermeneutic of the IDN experience – Adding additional influences on the players perception and memory using Toh (2018) and Extra Credit (2019)

But there are further considerations that should be evaluated for this third hermeneutic circle or how it could even form before the first traversal has concluded as show in Figure 7. Koenitz (2023) concept of prior traversals doesn't include information that can be gathered before completing a traversal but have the same effect as the third hermeneutic circle, including the traversals a player terminated and those of other people. By considering the concept of “save scumming” (Extra Credit, 2019) players may use save files to gather information and feedback about decisions and their outcomes to avert unpleasant consequences and traversals. Toh (2018) further mentions contextual factors like walkthroughs, friends discussing strategies or the influence of gamer communities as another influence on the player experience<sup>13</sup>. Additionally, the prior gaming experience (Toh, 2018, p. 109) adds expectations and a form of games literacy based on previously played games. These factors especially impact decision-making, as players may attempt to bypass dilemmas by reloading until no true dilemma remains or gather information in other ways.

This concept of outside influence is also present in Sicart's (2009; pp. 116–123) “ludic hermeneutic circle” in which virtues players reflect on their actions by critically and ethically reflecting on actions and moral implications, not only in the game but also in the sense of gaming communities and cultural ethical context. Sicart (2009, pp. 17, 145) calls this: the player as a moral agent. But Sicart (2013, p. 13) also argued that “players think strategically, not morally”, which means a player not necessary engages in the ludic hermeneutic circle. And sometimes this may be rooted in players focusing on gameplay more than narrative or vice versa, as Toh (2018), described.

Following Walk & Barret's (2018) concept of the ethical avatar the narrative rules the players examine also include the ethical and moral rules of the game world, by moving the spatial representation into the territory of realism, as an ethical experience simulator. Which are then also considered in relation to the paidia and ludus rules (Ang, 2006). These “in-game ethics may have no connection to the real-world

<sup>13</sup> Toh (2018, p. 179) includes these as rules but mainly describes how participants exchanged knowledge and discussed the games. He also considers outside influences affecting the interpretation—like walkthroughs and cheat codes as rules instead of information factors occurring outside of gameplay.

ethics” and need to be evaluated based on the world design (Walk & Barret, 2018), but with the positioning of the ethical avatar as the “player subject”, this allows ethical inclined players to evaluate the experience in Sicart’s (2009) “ludic hermeneutic circle”. Based on Walk & Barret (2018), we can see games are justified in either implementing an ethical avatar or not. But we may also consider whether players perceive this design method, impose it on a game that doesn’t have it or ignore the ethical implications. This positions both, Sicart’s (2009) ludic hermeneutic circle and the players’ perceptions and interaction with what Walk & Barret’s (2018) call the ethical avatar, within this ludonarrative hermeneutic process.

With his subcategories of dissonance, resonance and (ir)relevance, Toh (2018) provided some insights on how players interpret the ludonarrative relationships within such a hermeneutic process, but as discussed earlier they may be better used as the players reading of the aesthetic layer—neither dissonant nor resonant. But this doesn’t mean they are unrelated to perceived tensions between gameplay and narrative. E.g. Toh (2018) explains the concept of ludonarrative prominence, through which players could see an existing link between narrative and gameplay, which gives rise to semantic expansion. Although Toh (2018) also argued that this information can be perceived as irrelevant by the player or that a player may misinterpret the ludonarrative connection which gives rise to semantic expansion that isn’t actually present in the game. Such a scenario can occur if the player gets new information about the games spatial representation and deduces the existence of *paidea* rules but misinterprets which agent has access to that action. Just like that a player may also misinterpret consequences or metaphors that link gameplay and narrative (Toh, 2018). Another concept in the interpretation process is ludonarrative negotiation in which new information causes a “re-contextualisation” or “re-semiotisation” of the current interpretation—adjusting ones understanding of the experience, prompting a negotiation of the true meaning or a rationalization of potential gaps or illogical elements (Toh, 2018). Such reevaluations can also be designed through Pynenburg’s (2013) ludonarrative mechanic called *Anagnorisis*: a scenario in which information is withheld to shift the context upon its introduction. Within this hermeneutic process players constantly update their understanding of the story, the world design and all the rules within the fictional world and those that are relevant within the context of the gameplay, causing a reevaluation of their mental model—that includes the instantiated narrative, spatial representation and *fabula*—and a mental rules book—that including both gameplay rules and narrative rules, laws and norms. Toh (2018) even argued that the player also remembers the games rules within the mental model.

### **2.2.2 Narrative & Gameplay Guidance**

A player’s sense of agency increases when they can foresee that their choices lead to meaningfully different outcomes, as this mental effort reinforces their perception of narrative impact (Cardona-Rivera et al., 2014). Dansky (2021) considers visible and believable consequences, reward or punishment to the player’s action as an important part of immersion and make the player feel important. But Nay and Zagal (2017) suggest that consequences may even restrict player freedom, pushing them to the path of

least punishment rather than express their character authentically, by maximizing towards the best outcome. Both game designers and narrative designers can use information to guide the players and provide sufficient information. Domsch (2013, p. 124–125) explained the so-called semanticization of rules, which guide players when they make decisions by including the narrative directly into the gameplay. In his example the narrative added a riddle on top of a multiple-choice action turning a randomized choice into an informed decision that makes narrative clues necessary to find the right answer. This connects to the concept of viewing gameplay and narrative linked by rules (Ang, 2006) or even more into narrative game mechanics (Dubbelman, 2016). But it may even go beyond the concept of cross layer representation since it specifically affects how the abstract choices function by adding rules that in theory only exist within the narrative.

Dansky (2021) and Meier (2012) argued that it is important to give players enough information to make them comfortable during the decision-making process or at least sufficient information (Brazie, n.d.). Meier (2012) further suggested one should even consider leaning towards providing too much information to make the player feel comfortable about their decisions, especially when a choice has persistent consequences that affect the experience for a long time. Following Meier's (2012) advice, designers could make informed decisions interesting if they invite players to express their personality or gaming style through customization or convey that each choice involves a tradeoff, whether it is about picking between options or if they just decide to take specific actions like buying an item by spending resources. Which already adds potential for dilemmas to occur in interesting decisions based on tradeoffs or even through narrative game mechanics when a decision to express a personality is at odds with a play style.

### **Feedback and Decisions**

Another key-factor Meier (2012) describes is to give feedback that shows the consequences of decisions or even imply what another choice would've caused. As Roht & Vermeulen (2014) observed, cases of immediate feedback help players to feel a direct connection between input and system response, enhances flow and perceived agency especially surrounding moments of local agency. Related to this Toh (2018) considered that a player's choice leads to a chain of events between "actions", "consequences" and "feedback". The system response to the player's action and contributes to different consequences, these consequences can be communicated through different semiotic channels or resources as feedback (Toh, 2018). Which means the player must understand the feedback to perceive the consequences. To categorize feedback, Toh (2018) suggested Oxland's (2004) feedback taxonomy but also included cases in which no feedback is provided or perceived. Oxland's taxonomy (Table 1) considers:

- The role feedback can take, like emotional, fulfillment or informative.
- The way semiotic channels are received, like visual and audio.
- And the ways it is delivered, like through action, NPCs or accumulative.

These feedback types can be differentiated as explicit, which means it occurs as a reaction from the system based on an attributable action (Oxland, 2004, p. 14) like a narrative trigger (Boon, 2021); or implicit, which is informatively presented without direct actions triggering it, like information gathered from the environment (Oxland, 2004, p.14). As Oxland (2004) described, each type of feedback is often depicted through the semiotic channel either Audio or Visual, sometimes both and sometimes in the form of an actualized element like an NPC.

Table 1 Oxland's (2004) modified taxonomy of feedback types by Toh (2015), modified to add delayed feedback. Source: Own table following Toh (2018, p. 209) and Oxland (2004, p. 15) with a further extension considering feedback surrounding local and global agency (Roth & Vermeulen, 2012).

Feedback Type	Feedback Description	Explicit	Implicit
<b>Oxland (2004):</b>			
Visual	This is what the player sees on the screen both directly and indirectly.	✓	✓
Audio	What the player hears both directly and indirectly.	✓	✓
Action	A reaction from the player's actions. This could be a combination of visual and audio and is explicit feedback.	✓	
NPC	Feedback from non-controlled characters that populate the game world.	✓	✓
Accumulative	As the player progresses through the game s/he is going to require progression or accumulative feedback.		✓
Emotional	This feedback provokes an emotion in the player.	✓	✓
Fulfilment	This feedback stimulates a sense of fulfilment, and it is important for games to recognise the need for fulfilment.	✓	✓
Informative	This feedback provides information to the player via a context-sensitive control mechanism.	✓	✓
<b>Toh (2018):</b>			
Absence	There is no feedback in the game world to guide the players how to progress the game.		
<b>Own Addition:</b>			
Instant	Immediate feedback reinforcing <i>local agency</i> by providing timely interactive cues. It helps to feel direct connections between input and system response (Roth & Vermeulen, 2012)	✓	✓
Delayed	Feedback representing long-term consequences, reinforcing <i>global agency</i> and narrative influence, but difficult to perceive, without instant feedback hinting at it (Roth & Vermeulen, 2012)		✓

Oxland (2014, p.16) argued that each action has a reaction or consequence, which is conveyed through feedback based on cause and effect. Which aligns with Heaton's (2006) circular model of gameplay. Oxland (2014) explained that feedback can simply be informative in the sense that it provides needed information about the game, but it can also be used in an attempt to trigger emotions or give the player a sense of fulfilment or achievement when they succeed. Accumulative feedback in contrast to action

feedback is always implicit since it is not a reaction to an action but often tracks multiple actions across the playtime. This accumulation could be seen in relation to Tancred et al.'s (2018) systemic choices.

Toh (2015) extended Oxland's model through "Absence" of feedback to account for inputs that don't provide responses from the system (see Table 1). One can further extend these feedback types based on Roth and Vermeulen's (2014) research about local and global agency, by adding "instant" and "delayed" feedback. Roth and Vermeulen (2014) specifically indicated delayed consequences to participants through immediate sound feedback to make effects of global agency tangible and avoid an absence of feedback. Based on this delayed feedback is akin to implicit accumulative feedback, which is sometimes related to systemic choices. However, it is linked to one or multiple connected actions, but the link is not explicit. Based on Roth & Vermeulen (2014, p. 428) research, we need to distinguish between instant and delayed feedback to account for the challenge of informing players about global agency consequences. Especially when there is no immediate feedback relating to the action and classifying the feedback that conveys the fact that a delayed consequence relates to a prior decision. Immediate feedback could be seen similarly to action feedback but accounts for subtle feedback that players may miss or from the changes in game states that occur without the player's input or action, as described by Heaton (2006) in the circular model of gameplay.

Such feedback can be used to guide players, motivate them, demotivate them or even protect them from bad decisions. Koenitz (2010; 2023) SPP model (see 2.1.2) described the System as being able to guide players through narrative design and authored control through narrative vectors. These vectors can consist of feedback, just as the consequences and rules that the feedback explicitly or implicitly convey. Brown (2017) described how to lead players along intended behavior or protect them from themselves following a suggestion Meier (2010) made in his GDC talk. In doing so he gave examples on how designers can encourage actions that lead to a satisfying experience and prevent players from optimizing the fun out of a game. Brown (2017) argued that the moment-to-moment gameplay can be designed to reward actions that are both enjoyable and aligned with the designer's intent. As he exemplified with *Doom* (2016), the game encourages close-range combat—despite being a shooter—by offering benefits, such as faster progression linked to aesthetic quick takedowns, as well as saved resources and additional items. He further gave examples that used score systems or tried to discourage actions by limiting the available strategies. Browns (2017) concept of designers guiding players mirrors Koenitz' (2023) concept of narrative vectors onto the ludic layer. Which means, just like IDN designers use narrative vectors, game designers can employ what could be referred to as ludic vectors. These keep the players on track, motivate them into the intended experience, set boundaries and prevent them from getting lost. The game designer and narrative designer need to work together to adequately inform players using narrative vectors and ludic vectors to lead them along the intended paths both in sense of narrative and gameplay.

Both kinds of designers aim to equip players with needed knowledge for informed choices, drawing on the same semiotic system that shapes how players interpret narrative and gameplay layers and understand the available actions and consequences. The shared resources help players identify ludic and narrative outcomes and which choices they prefer. When narrative and ludic vectors indicate conflicting preferences across different paths or options—such as one offering desirable gameplay but an undesired story, and the other the reverse—the player faces a ludonarrative dilemma. It is possible that players are more likely to recognize such a conflict of interest when these vectors clearly convey the implications of available actions.

### **Intrinsic & Extrinsic – Motivation & Demotivation**

Guiding the players by using feedback and consequences across different gameplay layers implies the use of extrinsic motivation to undermine behavior rooted in intrinsic motivation. Especially in the sense of protecting players from themselves (Brown, 2017) it supposed to prevent unwanted intrinsic motivated actions through extrinsic means. Ryan and Deci (2000, pp. 54, 56, 66) explain motivation as someone being moved to do something, categorizing it as intrinsic motivation if the action done “for its inherent satisfaction” rather than some consequence; and in contrast seeing it as extrinsic motivation if the action is taken to attain a separable outcome with instrumental value. Especially rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation while extrinsic motivation may even turn into amotivation, if the results are of no value or no desired outcome is perceived (Ryan and Deci, 2000 p. 61). Which means being in a dilemma could cause amotivation if either outcome impairs intrinsic motivation too much. Beyond that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation exist on a continuum or at least some degree of internal motivation may still be involved when following extrinsic motivations. While intrinsic motivation is strictly the enjoyment of the actions itself and amotivation is the absence of reasons to take actions, Ryan and Deci (2000) describe four subcategories of extrinsic regulation that relate to extrinsic motivation:

- *External regulation* is completely external, where someone engages with an activity only to obtain rewards or avoid punishments, leaving the behavior dependent on outside forces.
- *Introjected regulation* is somewhat external, as it involves acting under internal pressure, such as to avoid guilt or to boost pride, which makes the behavior feel partially controlled.
- *Identification* is somewhat internal, meaning an activity is pursued because its value or usefulness is personally recognized and aligned with one’s own goals.
- *Integration* is still as internal as intrinsic motivation. It describes doing an activity because it has been fully absorbed into one’s values and identity; the behavior feels self-endorsed, even though it remains tied to outcomes beyond the activity itself.

Vriend (2017) explained that designers should keep these kinds of motivations in mind when designing games, since relying on extrinsic motivation too much can kill creativity and problem solving. She links extrinsic motivation specifically to goals and winning, while intrinsic motivation is linked to “just play”

without scores, winning or losing (Vriend, 2017). This connects paidia play and choices between available actions to intrinsic motivation and ludus play, goals and the consequences linked to actions to extrinsic motivation. In that sense intrinsic motivation is an action done based on the fun or entertainment derived from the action itself, while extrinsic motivations have some degree of external influence like rewards and punishments that affect the behavior.

Rigby and Ryan (2011) highlighted that games capture players by providing three intrinsic needs:

- *Competence* – the feeling of skill growth and overcoming challenges.
- *Autonomy* – the sense of choice and control over one's actions.
- *Relatedness* – the feeling of connection and meaningful impact on others.

Authored control would oppose the feeling of *autonomy* if players realized the provided agency is only illusionary. In contrast, offering a meaningful number of genuine decisions could support this intrinsic need. Similarly, dilemmas that force players into uncomfortable choices may conflict with the desire to feel *competent* by creating a sense of failure or inadequacy. Additionally, choices that result in negative feedback—like from NPCs—may diminish a player's sense of *relatedness*. However, the need to feel competent may be linked to extrinsic evaluation since it connects closer to the concept of winning.

Sometimes designers may even need a form of extrinsic restriction through reward and punishment that forces players into interesting decisions through tradeoffs (Meier, 2010; Brown, 2017). However, rewarding those who do well or do what they should, may be more accepted by players, since some players will always react negatively to punishment (Brown, 2017)—or what they see as such. In this sense feeling punished through a dilemma may dampen a player's enjoyment of a game. One of Brown's (2017) examples showed how rewards help to counter unwanted intrinsic behavior and how the kind of feedback affected the players' perception. He compared two attempts to prevent excessive playtime in MMOs: one reduced gained experience after extended play, the other increased it after time away. Both led to similar behavior, but the latter was perceived as a reward, the former as a punishment—highlighting how framing alone shaped player experience. But Brown (2017) specifically warned about not making the encouraged way to play the only way to play, when trying to control player behavior through game design, rewards and punishment. Because of such issues Verid (2017) stated it “might not be a good idea to include too many rewards or punishments” in a game. Nay and Zagal (2017) even argued that such designer-imposed consequences prevent players from acting out the character as they want to in fear of getting bad endings or cause them to strictly follow the paths that leads to a specific outcome. This could be seen as demotivating the player from taking specific actions whether they are narrative related to avoid or get a specific narrative outcome or gameplay related like getting rewards or following playstyles. This often positions dilemmas as a conflict between the players intrinsically motivated behavior and the extrinsically designed consequences linked to preferred actions.

In a similar vein, Toh (2018) considered motivation and demotivation across gameplay and narrative engagement. He considered ludonarrative demotivation as the narrative demotivating the player from

achieving the gameplay goals, choosing specific gameplay choices, or performing specific gameplay actions and vice versa (p. 225). A ludonarrative motivation, by contrast, occurs when the narrative motivates the player to achieve gameplay goals and vice versa (p. 226)<sup>14</sup>. However, classifying elements as either ludic or narrative can be difficult, as goals are a nexus of gameplay and narrative (Cardona-Rivera et al., 2020). Therefore, a player being demotivated and stopping progressing inherently stops them from reaching both. In that sense, identifying whether demotivation arises within the same layer or across layers requires considering whether the player emphasizes gameplay or narrative. One must also distinguish whether players want to win in narrative terms and win the game (Mitchell & McGee, 2009, p. 3)—an important challenge to understand ludonarrative dilemmas. The same applies to ludonarrative (de)motivations, which are difficult to identify or differentiate from straight up (de)motivation relating to gameplay or narrative alone, unless there is convincing evidence or a player is explicitly asked or categorized as focused on one form of engagement alone.

### **The Homo Ludens Oeconomicus & Dilemma**

Domsch (2013) argued that from a game design perspective or with full information all decisions either have one preferable choice, or it doesn't matter which decision one takes because they are all equally good or bad, since games are designed with a *homo ludens oeconomicus* in mind. This reduces the choices to their function within game progression and reaching the best outcome (Domsch, 2013). In that sense based on the *homo ludens oeconomicus* alone a gameplay-related dilemma should not exist, since such decisions “should theoretically be engaged by applying [...] gameplay rationality” (Domsch, 2013, p. 124). Bocska (2001) provided examples of temptations and consequences in video games and showed two dilemmas that arise primarily due to the game options. One example is completely ludic in which players must evaluate if they want to stay within their defensive strategy and play safe in *Space Invaders* (1978) or focus on a randomly appearing “UFO” that gives additional points if destroy. Another ludic dilemma Bocska (2001) mentions is the concept of a player having to evaluate between: (a) spending their resources to prepare for a known upcoming challenge or (b) spending the resource on their preferred playstyle. This is normally no ludonarrative dilemma but if the known challenge has an unpleasant narrative consequence the player could see their narrative and gameplay preferences pitted against each other. Domsch (2013) explained how designers obscure the full information contained within the game design. He argued designers often make the best choice “difficult to achieve”, keeping choices ambiguous by not providing “full information” and/or providing “additional gameworld information” (p. 124). Through these methods the complete information hidden within the system is obscured and temptations and dilemmas become part of the experience—planned or unplanned. Therefore, Bosca's (2001) *Space Invaders* (1978) example exists as a complete ludic dilemma by making the “UFO” temptation difficult, while the other example gives players narrative hints that creates

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<sup>14</sup> Relating to ludonarrative (de)motivation it is important to mention that Toh (2018) himself considered demotivation as a subcategory of dissonance and motivation as a subcategory of resonance.

a dilemma between their preferred playstyle and the inferred optimal strategy based on game world information. These ludic dilemma elements tend to revolve around preferred playstyle or difficulty. However, including additional gameworld information may not only obscure the preferable gameplay choice, but it could also cause a player to favor one of several equally good decisions based on narrative context, or even create a ludonarrative dilemma.

Domsch (2013) explained how too much open information may make decisions uninteresting and encourage decisions based on gameplay rationality. In that sense one must point out that Meier (2012) never advocated for providing full information only enough to communicate the consequences of actions. Domsch (2013) mostly argued to obscure clarity to make decisions more interesting by hiding information behind semiotic resources or adding narrative differences to decisions. A concept that truly opposes the design advice to accommodate players decision-making with enough information (Meier, 2010; Dansky, 2021), is the wicked problem as suggested by Sicart (2013). Sicart (2013) argued wicked problems can tease players into ethical reflection and gameplay by providing ill-defined problems with unclear consequences and even block decision reversals to prevent save scumming. This emphasizes how easily dilemmas can be avoided in games through save-features and that players may even optimize towards the best moral choices. However, wicked problems make it difficult for players to understand the relationship between narrative and gameplay stakes. Based on this, wicked problems cause recognizable moral dilemmas through a lack of guidance, but their ambiguity may limit their usefulness in researching ludonarrative dilemmas, since players and researchers lack the clarity to assess which decision aligns with a player's preferences. However, cases in which ludonarrative and moral dilemma converge may still be observable, and even a wicked problem could be involved if it affects gameplay decisions based on unpredictable narrative or moral outcomes.

### **2.2.3 Moral and Ethical Choices in Video Game Dilemma**

Sicart (2009, p. 199) argues the actions a player takes when encountering moral choices or dilemma, determine who that player is “in the game and how that being is related to the being outside the game” (Sicart 2009, 199). He refers to persons with such reflective engagement with the game as ethical agents (2010) or moral agents (Sicart, 2009). Such agents become virtuous players (Sicart, 2009, p. 92) if they show moral expertise by evaluating decisions based on an ethical perspective—such as virtue ethics, which Sicart (2009) suggested—and “make the most ethically informed choice.” Which means moral agents would have to evaluate what narrative outcomes they want to see or consider acceptable and what gameplay they want to have; but most importantly if these two are in conflict, but also how their behavior is viewed by others. Referring to this concept, Domsch (2013) proclaimed that the mode of *homo ludens oeconomicus* does not work for the player as a moral agent since all consequences are purely fictional; and through this view there is a clear preferable choice, or the decisions are equally good or bad. This means two things; narrative or moral implications can prevent the player from solely considering the game from the *homo ludens oeconomicus* view or that a player focusing too much on playing optimal

ignores the moral implications a moral agent would consider. Sicart (2010, p. 5) refers to this gameplay focus as “the mechanical player or reactive agent”.

Domsch (2013, pp. 157–158) praises *BioShock* for obscuring that the “Little Sisters”-decision has no real gameplay consequences or even obscure that rescuing may be the optimal reward focused choice. With that he hints at the player as a moral agent or narrative implications can deactivate the homo ludens oeconomicus or obscure whether decisions are preferable or irrelevant. It may even trick those who try to find optimal solutions to be misguided based on their interpretation. In contrast to Domsch (2013), Sicart (2009) critiques *BioShock* for offering moral choices without recognizing it through gameplay or showing meaningful in-world consequences, thus trivializing the player's role as a moral agent (pp. 160–161)—which Domsch (2013, p. 158) understood as a call for implementing a reputation system. At the same time, Sicart (2009, p. 212) warns against reputation systems that evaluate actions as “good” or “bad”, because it risks reducing moral reflection to a feedback loop and discouraging authentic self-evaluation. Sicart (2009) calling for embedded, systemic morality—where consequences emerge from the game world rather than external judgment—suggests a demanding and complex design challenge: distinguishing between genuine moral engagement and consequences and imposed morality, while avoiding what Nguyen (2016) calls the moral binary in which players lean towards the morally right decision. These perspectives make it hard to evaluate when the placement of consequences and feedback impose overt moral judgments and when it adds a systemic impact within the game world that allows ethical reflection instead. It is not clear when dilemmas enhance moral or narrative engagement through gameplay, when gameplay interferes with that engagement, or when these forms of engagement disrupt the gameplay experience. This may ultimately depend on the perspective of the scholar, critic or player and how individual evaluations are shaped by interpretive frameworks or preferences relating to gameplay and narrative and moral judgment applied to the fictional content.

Nguyen (2016) argued one problem about moral decisions in games is that designers often present choices in a moral binary, which typically encompasses two to three options—good, bad, and sometimes neutral. Nguyen (2016) further claimed that players are generally good-natured and tend toward what is understood to be right—if they are morally informed—rather than focusing on morality itself—and that decisions can be influenced through narrative moral framing. Which then leads players into pursuing the narrative goal that they see as the least punishing, as criticized by Nay and Zagal (2017). Based on the criticism of these sources towards reputation systems, one can see players leaning towards a preferred good narrative outcome and adjust their behavior to reach the preferred narrative goal alongside winning. Aligning specific game experiences with such paths could cause a dilemma if preferred narrative outcomes don't align with the preferred gameplay experience, either through some are all implications.

## **Temptations and False Moral Dilemma**

Ryan et al. (2016) describe an easily designed moral choice called: *moral temptations*. In contrast to true moral dilemmas which have “more than one arguably ‘good’ action” (p. 12), a moral temptation is a choice with a clear right/wrong division but with a greater reward for choosing the immoral option (p. 8). In that sense such dilemmas place morality in conflict with personal gain (Ryan et al., 2016). In game related scenarios the reward should be some kind of gameplay benefit. This means many if not all ludonarrative dilemma may be moral temptations or at least function similarly. Ryan et al. (2016) consider such cases problematic since they link “morality meter” to ludic rewards—such as experience points, treasure, or new abilities—and therefore make players consider and follow the moral judgement of the designers to maximize ludic outcomes. Such temptations could turn into ludonarrative dilemmas for some players, if the gameplay provides an incentive that leads to undesirable morally framed narrative outcomes. Further, Ryan et al. (2016) explained how a moral temptation may also occur between a) pleasing a liked character through an action perceives as morally wrong; and b) an action that is perceived as right but revolves around a disliked character. Cases like this put a narrative incentive and moral evaluations in opposition, displaying a moral temptation that exists solely on the narrative layer. These two examples imply the hypothetical third scenario in which players have to choose between the preferred ludic incentives and preferred outcomes relating to liked and disliked NPCs, showing the potential for a ludonarrative dilemma without moral temptations or considerations.

The Little Sister decision from *BioShock* (2007) could also be seen as a moral temptation in which the decision to rescue is presented as morally right while the option to harvest promises an immediate reward. Nay & Zagal (2017) consider this Little Sister choice in *BioShock* (2007) a straightforward risk/reward calculation rather than a true ethical dilemma. In contrast, three of Toh’s (2018, p. 235) participants did not evaluate their choice in terms of risk and reward. Instead, they were guided by their real-life personalities and narrative framing, such as Tenenbaum’s emotional plea (Toh, 2018). This aligns with the idea of a player persisting through a moral temptation, where narrative and ethical considerations override mechanical gain through moral judgement (Ryan et al. 2016, p. 12) or Domsch (2013) view on moral agents. In contrast players may still adopt an “objectivist approach” like Hocking (2007) did in opposition to real-life personality based on the narrative curiosity of experiencing the trap of rational self-interest through the game’s mechanics. The different perspectives show a tension between gameplay, ethics and narrative as three factors to consider when evaluating video game decisions.

Based on Deslongchamps-Gagnon (2024), moral temptations can be seen as what some may call false moral dilemmas, which get criticized for influencing moral decisions through gameplay feedback or rewards, which could cause players to adopt an instrumental perspective. Deslongchamps-Gagnon (2024) defends such dilemmas by showing how games use them for emotionally loaded situations to engage the player's self-interest and challenge their ethical fiber, as he shows in his evaluation of *Papers*,

*Please* (2013). A common critique is that depending on the design a player may react to moral dilemma with “player logic” (Sicart, 2009), by prioritizing gameplay incentives and goals over moral considerations. Zagal (2009) even argues that a danger arises when dilemmas are presented as moral but aren’t recognized as such by players, often because the moral perspective may become subverted by gameplay or playstyle decisions. However, considering the defense of false moral dilemmas, meaningful choices may still arise regardless of how the player engages—whether through moral reasoning, gameplay incentives, or narrative preferences. The value of such dilemmas may even lie in how one form of engagement can tempt or influence players to choose it over another one and how players evaluate their decisions.

### The four moral lenses

Ryan et al. (2016) introduced the four moral lenses as a perspective for designing morally engaging games. Staines (2023) continued his contribution by applying their work in a case study of *Deus Ex* (2000), reframing the lenses as practical design perspectives and questions to evaluate moral dilemmas in video games. These design considerations are listed in Table 2 and not only help to evaluate moral dilemmas but also understand the narrative moral implications within ludonarrative dilemmas.

Table 2 The four lenses for designing morally engaging games (Ryan et al. 2016; Staines, 2023)  
Source: Own paraphrased definitions following Staines (2023) and Ryan et al. (2016).

Lens	Design Considerations (Rephrased)
<b>Moral Focus</b>	How and where does the game emphasize moral concerns? Is morality positioned as a priority in the experience? (Ryan et al. 2016; Staines, 2023)
<b>Moral Sensitivity</b>	Does the game help players recognize moral stakes, empathize with NPCs, and perceive the impact of their actions? How does the player perceive and respond to the moral implications? (Ryan et al. 2016; Staines, 2023)
<b>Moral Judgement</b>	How are moral dilemmas framed? What ethical principles, codes, or worldviews are players invited to reason with? Can the player reason about the moral issue? (Ryan et al. 2016; Staines, 2023)
<b>Moral Action</b>	Does the game require players to follow through on moral choices through action and persistence, beyond just selection as in dialogues? Does the player follow through even through temptations? (Ryan et al. 2016; Staines, 2023)

These four lenses, however, are meant for case studies to evaluate decisions in games—as done by Staines (2023)—or are questions to consider when designing dilemma with moral implications. By applying the lens of moral action to *Deus Ex* Staines (2023) showed how immersive sims can create complex moral choices and that NPCs can be “walking moral dilemma”, namely an “ethical problem with multiple viable solution”. This makes every interaction with any NPC a potential ludonarrative

dilemma especially if the player needs to balance what ludic actions they want to take and whether they can accept the narrative implications and vice versa.

Staines (2023) argues that the immersive sims design philosophy interconnects systems and narrative through multichannel agency and let players exercise moral expertise and see consequences of actions that may cause reflecting players to feel complicit when evaluating their actions. But he also points out that not every immersive sim follows this philosophy by naming *Deathloop* (2021) which de-emphasizes “morality in favour of promoting a more reactive, purely ludic playstyle” (Staines, 2023). This explains the specific experience of Taylor (2021), who preferred *Deathloop* (2021) over *Dishonored* (2011) and made the claim that *Dishonored* punishes players for their chosen playstyle or use of specific game mechanics. Players that share the view Taylor (2021) may simply prefer to avoid these ludonarrative dilemmas, experiencing realistic ludonarrative agency (Staines, 2023) not as empowering, but as punitive. This shows there are players that don’t like it when the four moral lenses apply to video game decisions because it evokes a sense of complicity for them when reflecting on the actions the PC takes in the fictional world.

### **Reflective Players**

Staines (2023) introduces the concept of the reflective player—an ethically committed player who feels complicit when interacting in a game world that treats ethical scenarios realistically and not as opportunities to get the best ludic result. He derived this from what Sicart (2010, p. 5) called a reflective agent—one who interprets the semantic content of a game through individual, social, and cultural perspectives. Staines (2023) illustrates this concept through *Thief: Deadly Shadow* (2004), where players can rob a poor household, but upon returning they find a journal that reframes their action by showing the harm caused, delivering a form of delayed feedback. This example shows three ludonarrative concepts in one, Sicart’s (2010) ethical cognitive dissonance (**Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**), the emotional ethical engagement of reflective players (Staines, 2023) and even one of Pynenburg’s (2013) ludonarrative mechanics: Anagnorisis—the discovery or recognition that leads to a peripety. Such a player experience may not be a ludonarrative dilemma but reshaping the mental image could cause one later when the consequence is evaluated in the hermeneutic process. Dansky (2021, p. 24) even questions to what degree narrative designers should consider moral framing when motivating players—such as how and when to justify violence or killing—highlighting the tension between player agency, the concept of framing or justifying actions. Which is a concern for game writers that becomes even more relevant when considering reflective players.

The reflective player can recognize some dilemmas only retroactively after the action and consequences are revealed, which mainly affects future playthroughs or instances of save scumming. But this is not the only scenario for reflective players. Zagal (2009) examined moral dilemma in ethical notable games and by analyzing the example of *Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn* (2005), Zagal (2009) showed a case where the player reflected on the implications of decision before taking them which made the player

realize a complex multilayered dilemma. This dilemma occurs because the game lets the player take the position of a strategist who controls and bonds with characters from two different armies—one led by Ike the other by Micaiah—by playing with both in turn based combat; but then causes the armies to clash, forcing the player to face Micaiah’s army as Ike together with two allied armies full of unnamed NPCs. This third section of the game can call into question gameplay rational, just as the expected gameplay experience and cause players to reflect on moral implications of different approaches, which wouldn’t even be considered options if it wasn’t for the players personal connection to the characters—as it did for Totilo (2008 as cited by Zagal, 2009). From my own experience with FE: RD (2005), I can confirm the sentiment that this segment causes players to root for characters of the opposing army and consider sacrificing unnamed characters from the allied armies. Such scenarios in which moral dilemmas are rooted in the gameplay decisions or get enhanced by them are what define ethical notable games for Zagal (2009), but they also highlight the reflective players or potential ludonarrative dilemmas.

The third section of FE: RD (2005) can be viewed as a moral dilemma following Zagal (2009), but also as two moral temptations or a multilayered ludonarrative dilemma that engages reflective players through different angles. Players may just want to play a Fire Emblem game, but their narrative attachment to characters clashes with the gameplay and how the narrative explains what should be done. This ludonarrative dilemma stands without moral reflection but when reflecting on the narrative meaning of one’s actions a player sees the characters as a moral temptation; or even feel a legit moral dilemma; or a ludonarrative conflict between the gameplay demands and what the story asks of them.

### **Ethical Cognitive Dissonance and Gameplay Dilemma**

Sicart (2010) proposed the term ethical cognitive dissonance for a game design method that encourages ethical gameplay and moral reflection based on a conscious clash between different models of agency. This clash between models of agency can be seen as an early concept referring to methodically designed ludonarrative dilemmas. Although, the practice—as Sicart (2010) describes it—can but doesn’t have to involve choices, it can also occur when an action to advance in the game is at odds with a player’s ethical beliefs. Sicart (2013) argues that moments of cognitive ethical friction cause players to pause, reflect and question the meaning behind their choices within the game environment. This supposedly turns the narrative into a felt player experience or even a moral experience created through a contradiction between what the gameplay demands and the narrative implication for the gameworld and even a larger cultural setting (Sicart, 2013). If this is done through decisions that bring these perspectives into conflict with each other, a player may experience a type of ludonarrative dilemma.

Nguyen (2016) argues video games can create *cognitive dissonance* when a player's actions during a decision conflict with their moral beliefs, causing emotional discomfort—which aligns with Sicart’s (2013) concept of ethical cognitive dissonance. This implies that Moral dilemmas in games often expose this internal conflict, revealing that a person may hold two opposing beliefs at once or cause moral reflection. Based on that players can react to their own or the PC’s actions within games in the same

manner as people react to cognitive dissonance when they encounter a dilemma or moral choices—as described by Nguyen (2016). It may also mean that a potential ludonarrative cognitive dissonance exists that relates to the beliefs a person holds about the narrative and gameplay or how they are connected.

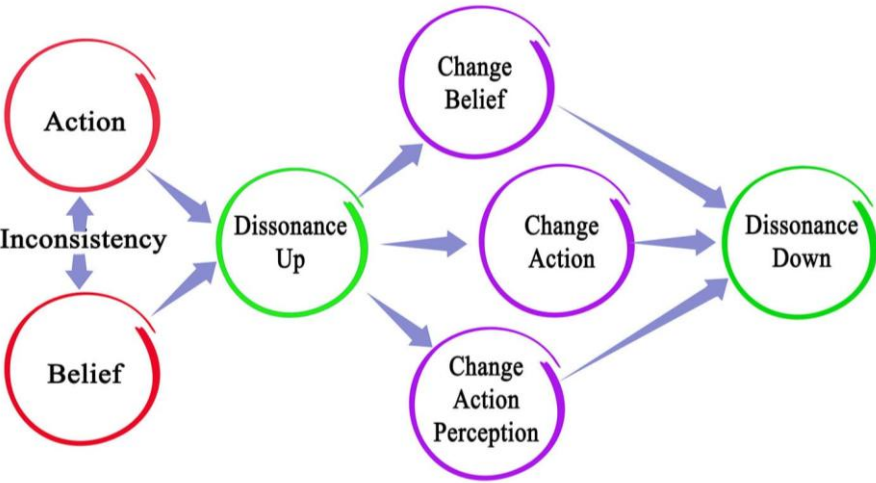


Figure 8 Leon Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Resolution Model, with three possible Actions (in purple) to reduce cognitive dissonance.  
Source: McLeod (2025)

Cognitive dissonance (see Figure 8) is concept first studied and coined by Festinger (1957 as cited by McLeod, 2025) in which someone experiences an inner dissonance based on an inconsistency between their actions and beliefs. This feeling can be reduced by changing one’s belief, action or perception of the action or through rationalization (McLeod, 2025; Nguyen, 2016). But dissonance may also occur if someone gains new information that challenge deeply held beliefs; or by realizing an inconsistency between two contradictory beliefs (Jefferson, 2024). This feeling is generally intensified based on how important a belief or an action is for a person (Jefferson, 2024; McLeod, 2025). Jefferson (2024) even highlighted how decision-making increases the chance of feeling this dissonance and personal investment, while McLeod (2025) mentioned that this dissonance often occurs picking between options that have both positive and negative aspects—like a dilemma.

Nguyen (2016) argues there are three likely responses for good natured players: a) change their beliefs, b) accept the discomfort, or c) rationalize their actions e.g. by blaming external factors. However, these three responses don’t include the option to change the action—like e.g. taking a different approach if the game allows it—seen in Figure 8. McLeod (2025) represents these three options to reduce dissonance in four adaptive strategies: a) changing the behavior, by directly adjusting the action that causes the internal conflict; b) rationalizing the behavior, by creating explanations or excuses that make the conflicting beliefs acceptable; c) justifying the action by seeking new information that supports or outweighs the dissonant belief; d) adjusting attitudes, by downplaying the importance of the dissonant belief or increasing the value of the chosen behavior. In terms of gameplay this means that players could downplay or rationalize the importance of the dissonance by disconnecting their own beliefs from the game, which would only leave believes about the gameplay and about the narrative elements that could

be at odds and challenged based on decisions. This aligns with Sicart's (2009) idea that the player determines how they are related to the PC. Whether this then is ludonarrative dissonance, a form of it or a different but similar concept is not clear but it can be an experience that may occur through ludonarrative dilemmas.

Especially the introduction of new information that challenges previously held beliefs aligns with the concept of Anagnorisis (Pynenburg, 2013) but it is not clear if this always causes a dissonance at all. Whether Pynenburg's (2013) Anagnorisis example of Samus being revealed to be a woman can be seen as inducing something like cognitive dissonance or simply what one may consider an epiphany may ultimately depend on the individual and how they renegotiate the narrative meaning. Similarly, one can refer to the "would you kindly"-twist from *BioShock* (2007) as an Anagnorisis and point out how Toh's (2015, 2018) participant Mary and Hocking's (2007) reacted differently to the same information that forced every player to reevaluate the narrative both on newly introduced information. While Mary understood the ludonarrative relationships better and felt her experience aligning with that of the PC (Toh, 2018), Hocking's (2007) considered the revelation a mockery of his willing suspense of disbelief. What Mary felt could even be considered a ludonarrative epiphany while Hocking's felt new information challenging a strongly held belief he had about *BioShock*'s (2007) gameplay and story.

Ethical cognitive dissonance may ultimately encapsulate whether the player is comfortable making choices within the system or if they feel dissonance because of their in-game actions. The friction doesn't necessarily come from inconsistency, but from moral ambiguity or the pressure to make a "wrong" or painful choice, maybe even in moments of wicked problems or when narrative and gameplay interests clash with each other or one's own moral beliefs. Which makes ethical cognitive dissonance a possible feeling when a player encounters a ludonarrative dilemma. But the potential for a positive or neutral reflection on what could theoretically be dissonance to others should not be disregarded either.

#### **2.2.4 ► Player's Mask Dilemma and Ludonarrative Discipline**

"Video Games ask players to assume two identities at once while allowing agency within the limitations of an authoring force [...] and serving as puppeteers to digital avatars" (Pynenburg, 2012). The character a player controls in a game can take many shapes, and players also may take many approaches when controlling them, especially considering the previously explained concepts (see 2.1.3) of characterizing the PC through the actions available through paidia rules (Ang, 2006). Bateman (2021) and Bartle (2003) both provided similar taxonomies to explain different approaches or stages between player and PC. The character is the animated figure in the game, while the avatar is the puppet or doll—depicted as the character—the player uses to interact with the world (Bateman, 2021; Bartle, 2003). Bartle (2003) argues that the player can also remove any separation between the avatar and themselves by turning the avatar into a persona of themselves. Bateman (2021) however argues that the player puts on a metaphorical mask that either represent the predefined character or something else—like a persona or a

role they want to play. These two concepts align with the previous concept of Sicart (2009) of players deciding how the PC relates to them when engaging with the gameworld. Nay and Zagal (2017) argued that player sometimes choose to deviate from their own personal convictions to better fit to the character—adapting the canonical character mask—while other times they may choose to drift the character closer to their own moral judgement—which would shape the character in the direction of a persona. This could then turn into a narrative dilemma if players feel conflicted about the way to represent the PC or themselves. But considering Zagal’s (2009) insights on gameplay or playstyle decisions being capable of subverting moral perspectives, it also means that a tension can arise between the preferred playstyle /gameplay and the chosen player mask.

Tensions between the chosen player mask and developer’s vision for the character are always possible when the PC/avatar is an authored character (Bateman, 2021). This tension exists primary on the narrative layer and could cause narrative conflicts, inconsistencies or dilemmas based on the player’s action. Pynenburg (2012) mentioned a similar tension through the ludonarrative mechanic called Character-Player Dissonance, which describes a case where the player is put into the role of a PC that has a significant different set of information. But Pynenburg (2012) argues this contrast can also provoke reflection—just like Sicart’s (2010) cognitive ethical friction. Toh (2018) sees this ludonarrative mechanic as a case of ludonarrative dissonance, but a true narrative inconsistency only occurs when a player uses their agency to act based on the differences, causing behaviors that make no sense for the PC. Which means Toh (2018) is right that there is a connection, but just because something can cause a scenario it is not the narrative inconsistency itself nor is it certain to cause one. Further, it is worth noting that this information dynamic can drastically shift based on external factors or the hermeneutic process.

### **Play Contracts, Discipline and Narratification**

To minimize the chance of this tension occurring researchers suggested ludonarrative approaches like: Communicating play contracts (Bateman, 2021), narratification (Mette & Nils, 2013) and forms of gameplay incentives and framing to guide players (Brown, 2017; Nero, 2024) towards adapting the intended player masks. The play contract is an implied unstated agreement between the game and the player which hints at the limits within the granted agency, just as the role of the PC and how they relate to the player (Bateman, 2021)—whether the PC is intended as a persona an authored character or has some potential to be shaped by the player. This concept leans back into Hocking’s (2007) original complaint about two opposing contracts—a ludic and a narrative one—that he identified in *BioShock* (2007). For authored characters Mette and Nils (2013) suggested the concept of narratification following their IGMC model—which lists and connects the PC and player through aligned or shared goals, motivation and conflict. The concept of guiding players to the best experience—like as protecting them from themselves Brown (2017)—also works to communicate the intended player mask by using extrinsic motivation. Players may get increased scores for executing gameplay actions that represent the PC as intended by the designers (Brown, 2017; Nero, 2024). Brown (2017) exemplified this through

*Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening* (2005), while Nero explained this through *Devil May Cry 5* (2019), which both use scores that provide positive reinforcement, whenever the player let the pawn actually behave as stylish as appropriate for Dante—the main character and PC of Devil May Cry games. If a player isn't capable of doing this, they may experience Bicer's (2013) narrative dissonance based on the difference between how Dante is depicted in cut scenes compared to the gameplay moments. This duality reflects Nero's concept of *ludonarrative discipline*.

Nero (2024) proposed the term ludonarrative discipline to describe the player's own responsibility to strive for a harmonic narrative experience—since a player-driven form of ludonarrative dissonance can occur whenever a player wants it to occur based on player agency and input. This concept can be described as that a player needs to be willing and capable of playing the game to a degree that presents the PC canonical on the narrative layer. But Nero's (2024) explanation also implies the opposite case in which the player fails to show ludonarrative discipline or simply doesn't want to. This describes a scenario one could describe as ludonarrative laxity, in which a player is unable or unwilling to characterize the PC—causing them to experience the character in a way they know or think is not intended. In that sense laxity treats the PC mainly as a playable figure like a pawn or doll. Especially in games that demand ludonarrative discipline, the player may feel conflicted between narrative and gameplay or feel a need to play differently to avoid ludonarrative dissonance. However, while Nero's (2024) concept of player-driven narrative incongruence, is not applicable to every case of ludonarrative dissonance. Nero (2024) explained that ludonarrative dissonance, as usually used for criticism, refers to cases where the incongruity within the narrative happens despite or specifically because the player plays as intended for the gameplay, which then contradicts narrative depictions like cutscenes.

### Three points of PC dilemma: Discipline and Laxity

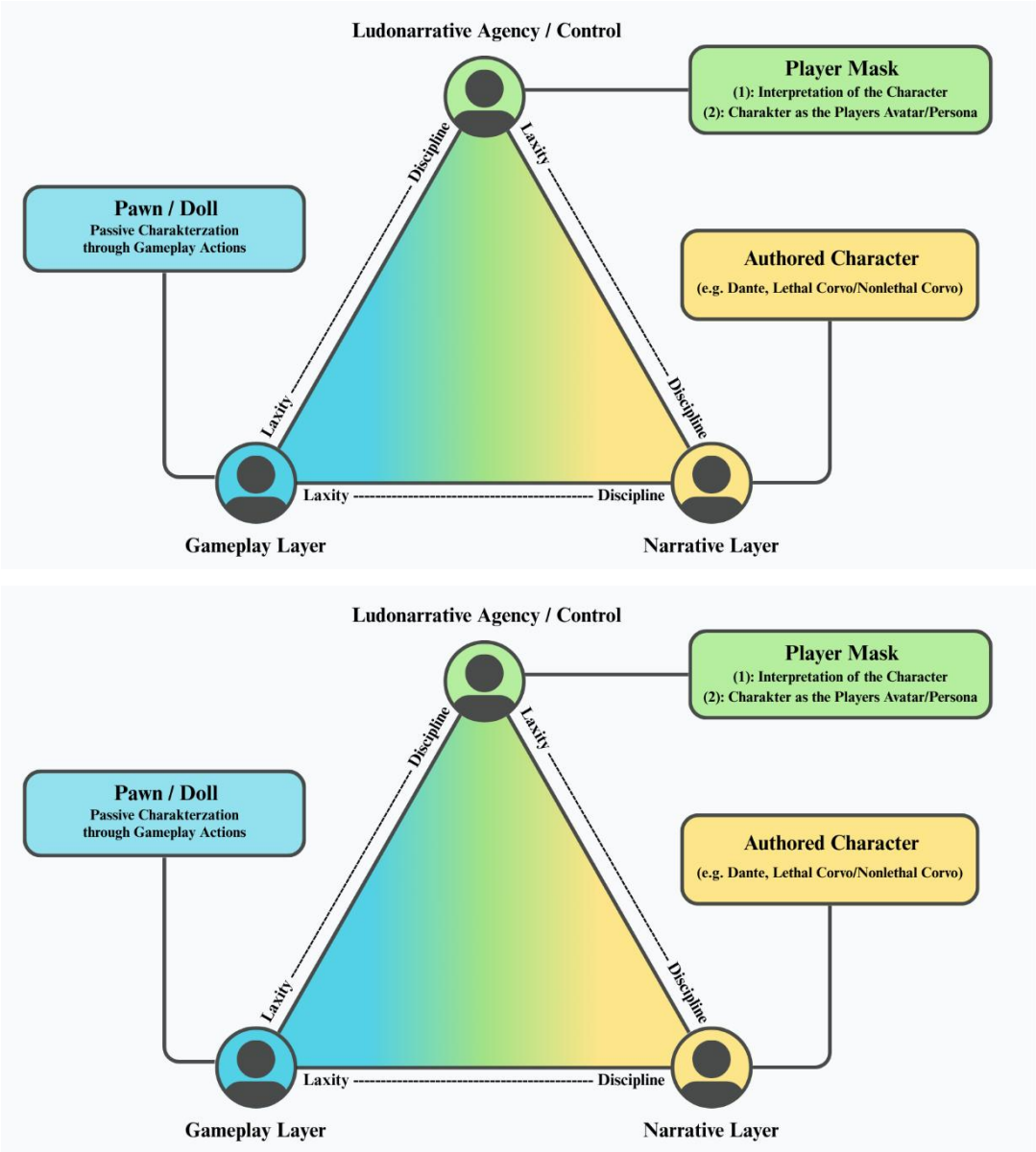


Figure 9 The Ludonarrative Discipline–Laxity-Triangle of playable character dimensions  
 Source: Own depiction based on Nero's (2024) concept Ludonarrative Discipline in relation to the tension between the player-mask and the authored character as described by Bateman (2021).

Figure 9 depicts what could be called the ludonarrative discipline-laxity triangle of PC dimensions. This illustrates the previously described tensions or dilemmas that can occur based on the different things the PC can be a) a doll the player plays with, b) an authored character and c) a character envisioned by the player. And these poles are in a discipline – laxity relationship between each other.

The original discipline laxity relationship exists between the authored character and the character as a controllable doll that acts based on player input. Showing discipline is encouraged by the designer through incentives and is the complete pole of discipline.

in the player experience based on Nero's (2024) concept of ludonarrative discipline and Bateman's (2021) concept of the player mask. In this triangle discipline refers to reaching specific narrative outcomes that feel right to the player while laxity disregards ludonarrative relationships and focus primarily on the PC as a pawn or doll.

...

## **2.3 Player Traits, Rewards and Motivation**

Lindley (2005) and Toh (2015) already considered player types and preferences as contributing factors in the player engagement between narrative and gameplay layer. Lindley (2005) framed tensions between the layers not as structural issues but whether player preferences are satisfied by different strategies for narrative engagement. Toh (2018, p. 179) used these traits to explore how they influence player actions and the corresponding mental model of the game experience— especially when shaping a player's focus toward either gameplay or narrative (pp. 100–102, 227). Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum (2009) even linked earlier type taxonomies to different desires relating to player agency and preference in provided choices. Which means the preferences of a player have an impact on how they engage with agency granted in video games. However, they were still using type instead of trait theory which wasn't as suited to classify how player motivations and behaviors worked in practice (Tondello & Nack, 2019). Distinguishing between gameplay and narrative interests is important to understand ludonarrative dilemmas, which gives trait models two key roles:

- Positioning actions, consequences, punishment and rewards across the ludic and narrative layers
- Revealing how strongly players lean toward different forms of engagement.

Through this, a dilemma could be identified as ludonarrative, and potential links between a player's reaction to them and their traits and interests can be observed. Building on this, the chapter explores previous research into player types, traits, motivation and rewards.

Since moral dilemmas are a staple of narrative in games (Tancred et al., 2018), ludonarrative dilemmas could commonly also be moral dilemmas or moral temptations. Narrative motivations must therefore consider whether the player even interacts with the game as a moral/ethical agent (Domsch, 2013; Sicart, 2009, 2010; Staines, 2023). Or if they mainly focus on understanding the system and gameplay strategies as a homo ludens oeconomicus (Domsch, 2013) or a reactive agent (Staines, 2010).

### **2.3.1 ► X From Player Types to Traits**

For the longest time, ludology research that investigated player behavior and preferences followed type taxonomies. Bartle (2003, p. 173–177) and Yee (2007) focused on different player types in MMO contexts, while Lindley (2005) combined various models to distinguish between gameplay-oriented and narrative-oriented players. Tondello and Nacke (2019) explained that “player type models rarely worked

in practice because people actually have several overlapping motivations”. This overlap should be the main cause for experiencing dilemmas based on different preferences. Current investigations into player interests and categorizations of motivations today mirrors a trend in psychology literature that moves away from type models and considers behaviors being shaped through individual differences in trait expression (Tondello et al., 2018). Even Yee (2007; 2015; 2019) who examined motivation taxonomies based on player types moved towards a model that considers motivation on a preference spectrum akin to player traits through the Gamer Motivation Model (Yee, 2015).

In a similar matter Tondello et al. (2019) developed the “Five Factor Player Trait” model or 5 Player-Trait model that distinguishes between narrative, challenge, aesthetic, goal and social orientation. Which should contribute to classifying preferences across gameplay and narrative engagement. Tondello and Nacke (2019) showed how the 5-Player-Trait model (Tondello et al., 2019) under consideration of preferred playstyles and game elements; gender and age can explain players’ preferences for different games. Quantic Foundry also focuses on what games are linked to their Gamer Motivation Model to preferred video games, although Yee (2019, 6:18) points out that these are only cases that exemplify their preferences. Which means these models should go beyond just matching target audiences to game titles or genres and potentially enable insights into the players’ decision-making process by considering where preferences are positioned across choices.

Table 3 shows the different orientation traits a player could have based on the 5 Player-Trait Model and how they relate to ludic and narrative engagement based on their descriptions.

Table 3 The HCI Games Five Factor Player Trait Model aka the 5 Player-Trait Model  
Source: Own Table based on HCI Games Group (2024) and Tondello et al. (2018)

HCI Trait	Description	Ludic	Narrative
<b>Narrative Orientation</b>	Prefers complex narratives, storylines, worlds or explore different character roles.	–	✓
<b>Low</b>	Prefers games without stories or stories that don’t interfere with the gameplay	✓	–
<b>Aesthetic Orientation</b>	Enjoy exploration, graphics, soundtracks, and customizing objects and characters	?	✓
<b>Low</b>	Consider gameplay more important than aesthetics	✓	–
<b>Challenge Orientation</b>	Prefer games that require a lot of skill to win, difficult challenges and fast-paced gameplay	✓	–
<b>Low</b>	Prefers easy relaxing games	✓	–
<b>Goal Orientation</b>	Wants to complete every quest, collect all rewards, explore every option.	✓	✓
<b>Low</b>	Prefer games with less quests and more freedom, while ignoring side quests in games that have them.	✓	✓

HCI Trait	Description	Ludic	Narrative
<b>Social Orientation</b>	Prefer to play with or against other players	✓	?
<b>Low</b>	Prefer to play alone	✓	?

Through these distinctions, the 5 Player Trait model should be suited to predict or deduce some form of narrative or gameplay focus within players. In contrast, the Gamer Motivation Model (Yee, 2015) has a stronger focus on gameplay itself and positions different forms of motivations within clusters that depict a common interest across those game elements. There is some overlap between the motivation clusters and the 5 Player Trait model in that they help to categorize different interests or forms of engagements and align them to player interests in a similar matter. The cluster themselves are useful to identify different kinds of motivations even if one doesn't use the Gamer Motivation Model to categorize players. But in contrast to the Player Trait the Gamer Motivation Model from depends on comparing the results to the enormous data set that is property of Quantic Foundry. Which is why this study focuses stronger on the 5 Player Trait Model but still aligns motivations to the clusters or derives motivations and player interests from them.

When one compares the two models...

...

The player trait model only uses the narrative-oriented trait to consider a player's interest in narrative engagement. The Quantic Foundry model, however, already distinguishes between the interest to engage in an authored story with a predefined role and the concept of engaging with a narrative rich world through a persona, by splitting the Immersion Cluster between Fantasy—persona related—and Story—authored characters related. This may be grounded in the fact that these clusters are partly influenced by Bartle's research (Yee, 2015).

Action and Mastery are both specific forms of ludic engagement that relate to two different forms of challenges and play styles.

For example, the achievement categories are similar to goal orientation which means

These categories may better align with types of games or gameplay and may be less suited to understand in game decision making in relation to ludic and narrative engagement. Furthermore, it is a model about motivation categories and not the elements themselves.

To understand dilemma, it may be better to view motivations as the different existing motivating elements or actions rather than looking at the clusters they belong to. Based on this evaluation, different kinds of motivating elements within video games that relate to ludic and narrative engagement could be considered alongside the players orientations—like social, challenge, goals, narrative or aesthetic. The

following segment will describe some video game elements and actions available to players that could intrinsically and extrinsically motivate players in their relation to ludic and narrative engagement.

**2.3.2 ▶ X Rewards, Motivation and Incentives**

As outlined in section 2.2, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators play a role in the decision-making process and how designers guide players. But ... (2.2 Intrinsic vs extrinsic)

Terms like “enjoy”, “prefer” / “preference”, as well as “interests” could be seen as descriptive terms to refer to intrinsic motivation.

Following Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum (2009) consideration that individuals decide based on preferences and types or traits. These motivations should all be to some degree internal and based on a player’s preferences. The external incentives used by designers could address these motivations or a player’s intrinsic needs. As Ryan and Deci (2000) explained, some extrinsic motivations or regulations are still leaning to or are completely internal, like Integration or Identification (2.2.2). And games themselves can address some intrinsic needs like autonomy, relatedness or feeling competence (Rigby and Ryan, 2011). To understand dilemmas within the player-experience one may rather focus on if motivation is related to actions and/or outcomes, whether they address narrative or gameplay; as well as what motivations matter to individual players. E.g., Goal Orientation (Tondello et al. 2018) or Achievement Cluster (Yee, 2015) specifically relates to an intrinsic motivation to fully complete a game or collect everything. In theory this fully relates to extrinsic motivations or rewards, but the player is intrinsically motivated to get the achievements or complete/collect everything in the game. Which could be linked to the intrinsic need to feel competence. While the specific ways different players shape their own experience would be fully intrinsic’.

2.3.2.1 Rewards and motivation table

Table 4 Motivations and Rewards based on expected alignment with ludic and narrative engagement. Source: Own depiction that integrates the sources of this chapter including: Tondello et al. (2018) and Yee (2015), as well as: Rouse III (2004), Wang & Sun (2011)... , Schell (2008)

Rewards & Motivation (Source)	Description Example(s)	Ludic	Narrative	Action	Consequence
---	---	✓	✓	✓	✓

Rewards & Motivation (Source)	Description Example(s)	Ludic	Narrative	Action	Consequence
Bragging (Rouse III, 2004)	A Player wants brags in social circles about challenges, their success and their experience.  E.g. they reached a goal that is hard to achieve or beat a hard challenge.	✓	?	✓	?
Exploration (... Rouse III, 2004)		✓	✓	✓	
Exploring Mechanics	Exploring different strategies, resources and mechanics (Rouse III, 2004) or tinker or experiment with the tools (Yee, 2015)	✓		✓	
Exploring Environment	Explore new spaces and environments		✓	✓	
Exploring the Narrative	A player may engage in replay for multiple reasons like the exploration of alternative narrative outcomes and choices		✓	✓	✓
Emotional Investment (					
Ludic Playstyle	Staines (2023) argued some games promote a purely ludic playstyle	✓		✓	
Playstyle: Strategy		✓		✓	
Playstyle: Action		✓		✓	
Playstyle: Roleplaying	Following the concept of immersion (Yee, 2015) players may want to pretend		✓	✓	
Win (Cardona-Rivera et al., 2020)	Succeed by reaching a predefined state that evaluates the performance.	✓	?		✓
Finish (Cardona-Rivera et al., 2020)	Succeed by reaching a predefined state without evaluation.	✓	✓		✓

Rewards & Motivation (Source)	Description Example(s)	Ludic	Narrative	Action	Consequence
	Finish the Story. The player may also consider winning in narrative terms to get a specific story (Mitchel & McGee, 2009)				
Prolong (Cardona-Rivera et al., 2020)	Keep the game going for as long as possible. Potentially narrative if a player wants to prolong a story.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ludic Victory	The player wants to win, finish or prolong in terms of gameplay	✓			
Narrative Victory	The player wants to get the preferred ending or shape the story as intended or keep engaging with the story following win, finish or prolong in a sense of “winning in narrative terms” (Mitchel & McGee, 2009)		✓		
Rewards / Punishment (Schell, 2008)	Rewards are given as a consequence to encourage behavior. Punishment can be “rewards in reverse”. The inverse of Win would be Loose.	✓	✓		✓
Feedback Message (Wang & Sun, 2011)	Simple Feedback on the screen to encourage behavior like: “Praise” e.g. NPC (Schell, 2008)	?	✓		✓
Negative Feedback	Punishment Inverse of Praise (Schell, 2008). Feedback that is supposed to discourage. Either UI feedback or narrative through NPCs.	?	✓		✓
			✓	✓	
Sticking to the Player Mask (Boon, 2021)	In relation to 2.2.5, the actions of the player characterize the PC. This is the specific motivation to stay in character as the play defined it through the Player Mask.		✓	✓	

<b>Rewards &amp; Motivation (Source)</b>	<b>Description Example(s)</b>	<b>Ludic</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Canonic Character Mask (Bartle, 2003; Boon, 2021)	The player wants to characterize the PC as canonic intended by the designer by showing ludonarrative discipline (Nero, 2024)		✓	✓	
Self-Representation (Bartle, 2003; Boon, 2021)	The player acts as a Persona or self-representing avatar. And want to stay in this role.		✓	✓	
Charakter Interpretation (Bartle, 2003; Boon, 2021)			✓	✓	
Ethical Agent (Sicart, 2009; 2010) Moral Reflection (Staines, 2023)	The player wants to engage with the game as an ethical agent and reflect morally on their actions or the actions of the PC, by applying their ethics or those of the PC.		✓	✓	

2.3.2.2 Rewards and motivation

Cardona River et al (2020) Prolong, Finish, Win.

Wang & Sun

Even feedback by itself can be considered a form of reward if it is encouraging with positive emotions (Wang & Sun, 2011). Just like that, the story in general can be seen as reward or punishment, unlocking new scenes, that are at least visually pleasing, mark milestones or provide more information about characters or the world (Dansky, 2021; Wang & Sun, 2011). Based on punishment being reward in reverse (Schell, 2008 pp. 192–193 <Move Up>), this also implies negative feedback can be punishing, without actual consequences attached to it

However, some motivation categories may help to understand types of ludic motivations. E.g., “Action” and “Strategy” could be seen as specific ludic playstyles a player could be interested in that both provide different challenges for challenge-oriented players.

Rewards and Extrinsic Incentives (bridges back to 2.2.3 Mark Brown) but motivation can also occur intrinsically.

But as Nero pointed out, the intrinsic motivation to apply one's own interpretation of the character may override the extrinsic incentives.

The most basic motivation a game that is ludus driven can include is winning. But considering Cardona-Rivera et Al. (---) and Michell & McGee we may need to distinguish between winning under gameplay terms or winning under narrative turns.

Exploring:

Exploring is a unique sub motivation that may actually be part of other motivations. Yee linke this to curiosity and ... Rouse III (2004) explained how exploration is multifaceted and can related to spatial exploration, different strategies, different combination, the different narrative interactions...

Yee's (2015) discovery shows the mechanical interest of exploration while exploration in itself may also be rooted in a drive to understand the world better.

Vriend (2017) explicitly considered exploration and curiosity as intrinsically motivated.

Based on the different way players explore, it may be one motivation but depending on what a player explores it may be either gameplay or narrative based, maybe it is even inherently ludonarrative. Preferences like this need to be treated with care to truly understand whether they are of ludic or narrative nature.

After completing tough challenges players also get what Rouse III (2004) calls bragging rights. This concept closely aligns with Rigby and Ryan (2011) argument that video games address intrinsic needs that society sometimes doesn't meet, which is the main reason games captivate players. They elaborated that gaming communities provide a group that "provide a sense of control, status, value, belonging and mattering", or simply "mastery" (p. 511). This mastery should be what grants the bragging rights among friends or within the community, making this a primary social and secondary ludic oriented motivation. Although a player me be able to brag about challenges or all the goals they reached.

Rouse III (2004) pointed out that players sometimes want a solitaire experience and sometimes they want to engage with others, which aligns with the social orientation trait, but then he also claims that players switch between those two motivations or that some players may even seek interaction with NPCs instead. This opens the question whether social orientation also affects behavior towards NPCs. whether one should dismiss it in single player games.

But as the opposite pole a dilemma could also involve punishment or undesirable consequences. Schell (2008, pp. 192–193) said punishment can be exciting but that is rather the case if it is about risk vs reward. In that sense everything given as a reward can also be taken away since punishments are simply rewards in reverse. For winning there is losing, for every positive feedback there is also a negative

counter, and everything the system gives—be it resources, items or powerups/mechanics—can be taken away

### **Specific Narrative motivations**

“When designing games, a writer can also use NPCs to provide motivation for the player character. They can need rescuing, offer quests, and turn traitor.” (Andre S. Walsh in *Gamewriting*, 2023) – linked to Emotional motivation 6-11.

Dillion (2010) differentiates between emotions that are – at oneself while others are pointed towards others. These emotions are then often directed at an NPC, who can be used by a writer to provide motivation for a PC in the sense that they may need rescue, offer quests or betray the player (Walsh, 2021).

Mitchel and McGee (2009) specifically differentiate between winning in narrative terms compared to win in ludic terms;

Mitchel (2020) further argued games can be designed to be rewarding through replaying. In doing so Mitchel (2020), points out that exploring the different ways the story unfolds or how the narrative system works can be a motivation itself. This contrasts with the motivation of getting the most correct or the right ending, that the majority of players supposedly strive for or move towards based on how it is presented (Nay & Zagal, 2017; Nguyen, 2016). Although this motivation may align with the behavior of taking specific actions that move to specific outcomes (Nay & Zagal, 2017) and prevent the true characterization a player would enact based on preferred actions.

The emotional motivation this is where the full spectrum of Dillon’s (2010, 2020a) 6-11 framework

Emotional motivation 6-11 framework by Dillion

Identifying with the PC or feeling emotions relating to NPC can support what Ryan (2009, p. 56) call emotional immersion. Exploring the game world or game mechanics can also engage players through epistemic or spatial immersion (Ryan, 2009). Therefore, a dilemma involving those motivations by pitting them against another could break immersion or even strengthen it, as Staines (2024) explained with the Lebedev dilemma.

#### 2.3.2.3 Narrative replaying and exploration, Exploring the system.

Narrative motivation Roll playing and LN Harmony as Characterization

### **Roleplaying (maybe needs its own category see below or refer back to 2.3.X – Player Mask**

Another narrative motivation that needs to be distinguished from role playing despite it forcing the player to do it is avoidance of ludonarrative dissonance or incongruencies in the narrative. This leans into Nero’s (2024) ludonarrative discipline and may be rooted in a desire to see a consistent story. This leans strongly into the player-mask tension (Bateman, 2021) in which the motivation to experience a

congruent narrative demands actions in line with the authored intention, while e.g. the preference to roleplay demands consistent action. This dilemma is mainly narrative, but it exemplifies two motivations that need to be tracked separately to compare them to ludic preferences.

Narrative Motivation Good vs Bad Ending (Juul, 2001)

” In these kinds of moral systems, players strive to achieve “the good ending”—that is to say, the best or “most correct” ending—by making choices implicitly understood to lead them there without considering the ethical implications of those actions, or allowing themselves to explore the various ethical viewpoints present within the game.” – Nay & Zagal 2017

Leaning towards the preferred narrative outcome—which is often considered the good, correct or morally right ending—is considered by Nay & Zagal (2007), Nguyen (2016) and Juul (2001, pp. 51–52).

Which may explain why player felt punished for not reaching this outcome when they took their preferred playstyle.

## **2.4.x Characterisation Roleplay Motivation (dubbelman, Zegal, Bateman / Playermask)**

### 2.3.2.4 Morals and Ethics – Reflection and Projection

The ethical player (Walk & Barret 2018)

Staines pointed out that ethically committed, moral players that engage with the game’s fiction in good faith become complicit through ethical scenarios being treated as ethical scenarios. The ethical avatar of walk... and Sicarts Virtues player can all three be combined into the Ethical Reflective Player. And this could either be a personal Trait or simply a game interest. This implies motivation through moral action.

Following Walk and Sicart.

*But when players evaluate ethics, it also matters what kind of ethical framework they adhere to, whether they use their own ethical beliefs by using the PC as a persona or the belief system of the character, and what situations or dilemma may cause the player-mask to slip. \*Own Thoughts*

whether players interact as a virtue’s player, moral agent (Sicart, 2009) or as a reflecting player (Staines, 2023), and what kinds of ethics guide their decisions, just as their interaction with the design practice of the ethical Avatar (Walk & Barrett, 2018), which provides ludonarrative agency (Staines, 2023).

Depending on the player’s mask (Bateman, 2021), players may choose to role-play the character as they interpret it, project themselves onto it—as a persona (Bartle, 2003)—or simply treat it as a pawn. Nay

& Zagal (2017) also argued players may try to deviate from their own convictions to fit the role or drift the portrayal through actions closer to their own moral judgement. Based on this (see 2.2.5), the player may apply different ethical principles to the gameplay, if they want to act as a moral agent (Sicart, 2009) or an ethical agent (Sicart, 2013) within the game: (a) their own belief system; (b) the moral code of the authored character; (c) a blend of both shaped by interpretation; or (d) roleplaying as a self-authored character—based on Bartle’s (2003) avatar. Some ethics to consider for evaluating ludonarrative dilemmas with moral motivations are:

- *Virtue Ethics* – Focuses on the moral character of the agent. Right actions are those that a virtuous person—cultivating traits like courage, wisdom, and temperance—would perform (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2022). Which Sicart (2009 p. 18) calls an ongoing process of ethical reflection.
- *Deontology Definition* – Asserts that actions are morally right or wrong based on inherent rules or duties, not on their consequences. Some acts are obligatory regardless of outcomes (Alexander & Moore, 2020).
- *Teleological Ethics* – A broad framework judging morality by what actions aim to accomplish. It derives duty from desirable ends, such as the purpose or goal of actions (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023)
- *Consequentialism* – A subtype of teleological ethics, claiming that the rightness of an action lies solely in its outcomes: an action is right if it produces the best overall results compared to alternatives (Armstrong, 2019).

Sicart (2009) argued that virtue ethics are best suited to evaluate moral actions and moral engagement relating to video games. But following Domsch (2013) homo ludens oeconomicus players may rather look at the outcomes of actions by considering narrative or gameplay rewards, just as Nguyen (2016) argued players would pick their path across the moral binary leaning towards morally righteous outcomes. And Nay & Zagal (2017) argued players may rather strictly focus on outcomes. Those three concepts lean into teleological choices or consequentialism based on a focus of what the outcomes are. While characterization through the use of mechanics (Dubbelman, 2016; Nay & Zagal, 2017) aligns closer with deontological ethics. However, this rather means that one can locate these morals accordingly within the choices and not that the choices are always linked to those ethics.

## **2.4 Towards a Framework for Ludonarrative Decisions & Dilemmas**

Prior works have laid a foundation to understand how ludonarrative dilemmas shape the player experience, but the true ludonarrative perspective regarding this tension was often neglected or focused mainly on the moral perspective of right and wrong. Moral engagement and narrative engagement may be linked but aren’t the same form of engagement which means when research dilemma in video games one shouldn’t neglect the dilemmas between narrative and gameplay interests. Ryan et al. (2016) already

made that distinction by seeing narrative interests in conflict with morally right decisions as moral temptations, but through the focus on moral and ethics the concept of dilemma between narrative and gameplay incentives may get neglected from the cases that can cause dilemma in video games. This shows ludonarrative dilemmas were considered by previous researcher but often through the perspective of ethics. The focus of prior works primarily lies on how gameplay interests prevent or hinders players from engaging in their narrative interests or their moral engagement but not whether these factors could affect preferred ludic experiences or cause an equally important conflict of interests.

Based on the literature review strong connections or overlaps between moral engagement, ludonarrative dilemmas and feelings of dissonance exist, but these concepts are clearly distinguishable. They are mainly connected through their ludonarrative nature and a sense of conflict which may contribute to overapplying the term ludonarrative dissonance simply because the nuanced vocabulary is still missing from academic and public discourse. The overlap becomes especially clear based on how each perspective can be and has been applied to *BioShock* (2007). Every form of ludonarrative concept revolves around the potential for tension between gameplay and narrative and/or the potential for mutual support. This may be the reason why the term ludonarrative dissonance is overapplied in general especially since different ludonarrative phenomena may occur simultaneously or in relation to each other. Using the terminology of ludonarrative dilemma specifically for cases of tension rooted in play preferences is useful to discuss these phenomena without needing to use a term that lacks clear consensus. Defining and using concepts like ludonarrative dilemma outside of their moral implications could improve the way we talk about ludonarratology or ludonarrative phenomena.

Ludonarrative dilemmas may manifest in two primary forms. The first arises when a player's narrative and ludic interests are in conflict. Namely, when story-driven preferences and gameplay-driven incentives pull the player in opposing directions. The second occurs when a moral dilemma is integrated into gameplay, creating a more intense and immersive experience. Given that moral dilemmas are commonly embedded within game narratives (Tancred et al., 2018), many ludonarrative dilemmas inherently involve ethical or moral considerations on the narrative side.

The closest model that considered and evaluated the ludonarrative decision process is Koenitz SPP model and ludonarrative hermeneutics derived from it. But while the system is clearly defined and the product is the resulting story, the process doesn't define how to evaluate the decision-making process beyond a basic hermeneutic evaluation. Which is why one would need to find a model to show how the hermeneutic process is occurring and consider the players' preferences and motivations—like Toh (2018) and Lindley (2005) did—while also considering the guidance by both game designers and game writers. Using such a perspective should allow to understand what impact ludonarrative dilemmas have on the player experience based on player traits and motivation. Which helps to understand the overall ludonarrative experience and this specific form of ludonarrative tensions, while also allowing a clearer communication about this topic.

### 3 Resulting Theoretical Framework

To adequately analyze ludonarrative dilemmas, I developed a theoretical framework called the Ludonarrative Decision-Making model (LN-DM). It is inspired by Koenitz (2023) Process of the SPP model and the ludonarrative hermeneutics, as well as Toh's (2018) consideration of player traits within ludonarrative player experiences. In doing so, it follows the concept suggested by Ryan (2001; 2006; 2023) of cognitive representation shaped through semiotic sense-making.

The LN-DM model is conceptualized to analyze the players' decision-making processes based on their preferences related to gameplay and narrative engagement, in conjunction with knowledge about their traits, interests, preferences and/or motivations. It is designed to work with interview-based methods, where players retell their experience, reflect on their decisions, explain factors that motivated them, and categorize their reasoning as they relate to gameplay and narrative engagement. In doing so, the model contributes to an analytic framework for identifying and analyzing ludonarrative dilemmas.

The LN-DM model is intended to be used in conjunction with an overarching ludonarrative analysis model or a synthesis of multiple models, as it does not interpret game systems or narrative design on its own. Which is important to understand the player experience and the system players interact with, just as where ludonarrative dilemmas are positioned within the design. For the purpose of this study, the SPP model (Koenitz, 2010; 2023) provides the base through the "process" and the ludonarrative hermeneutics (Roth et al. 2018). However, to better understand the system itself without focus on a single layer a stronger emphasis lies on Schell's (2008) Elemental Tetrads within which other models—such as Koenitz (2023) protostory, Toh's (2018) multimodal approach including multimodality (Kress, 2010; Dena, 2010) and Ang's (2006) understanding of rules—are positioned.

When applying the LN-DM model, it is also necessary to refer to existing trait models—whether they refer to player traits or motivations—to categorize actions, consequences and preferences along the ludic and narrative layer (see 2.3). Such models and classifications are essential to understand how ludic and narrative preferences and incentives are positioned when a decision is presented to a player and how they align with their interests. The following subchapters explain the LN-DM model, as well as the exchangeable concepts needed to apply it in practice and identify and analyze ludonarrative dilemma.

### 3.1 ▶? Player Traits, Motivation and Preferences

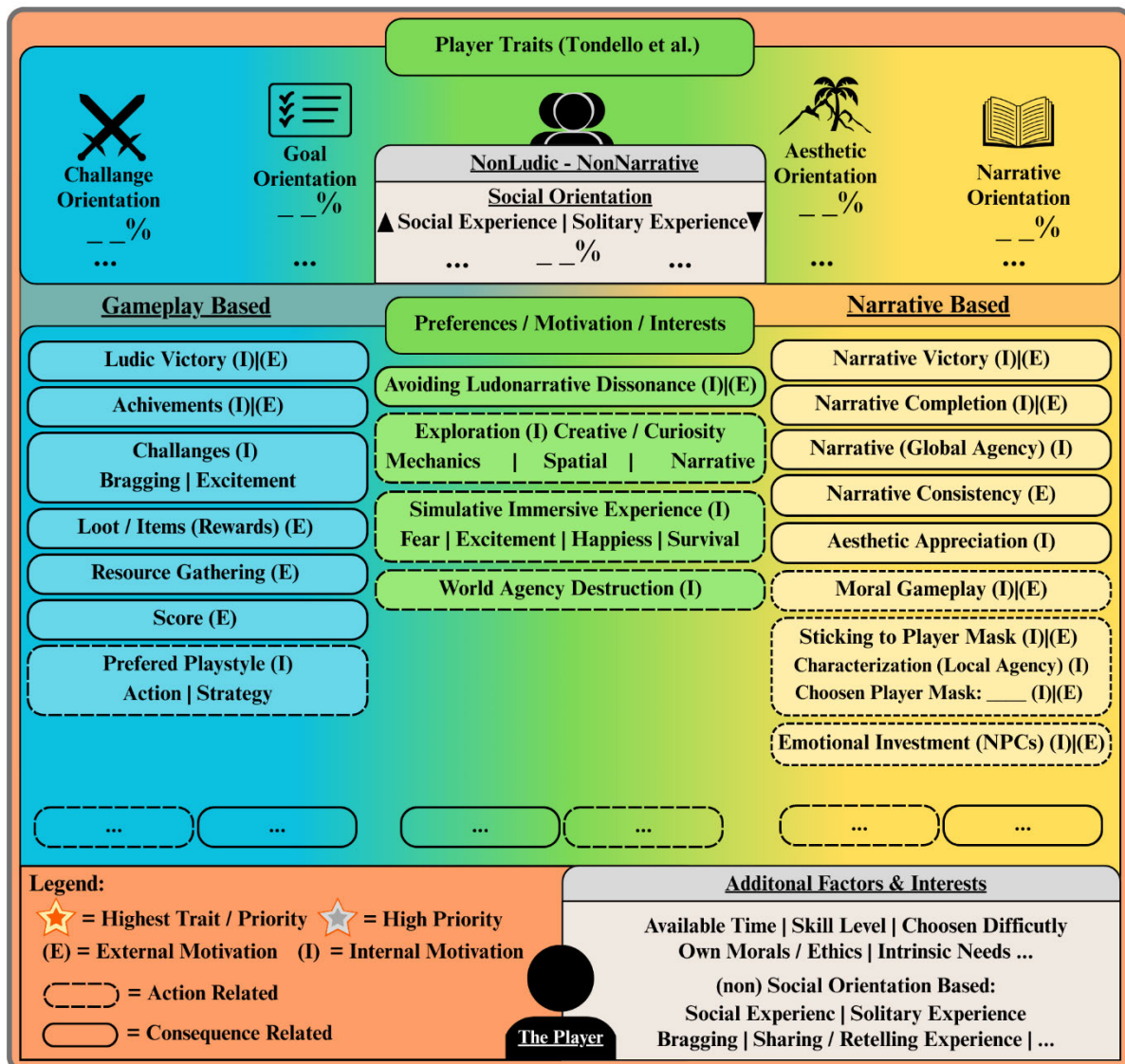


Figure 10 Preferences, Motivation and Interests categorized across gameplay and narrative in relation to the 5 Player Trait Model (Tondello et al. 2018)

Source: Own Depiction using the sources, concepts and distinctions as explained in (2.3) and Table 4 drawing from, Tondello et al. (2018), Yee (2015), Bartle (2003), Bateman (2021), Toh (2018), Sicart (2010), Staines (2023), wang & Sun, (2011), Mitchel & McGee (2009), Cardona-River et al. (2020), Schell (2008), Rouse III (2004), Rigby and Ryan (2011), just as Dillion (2010).

Figure 10 shows how player traits and motivation can be tracked while considering how much they align with narrative and ludic engagement and when the motivations are so entwined that a clear distinction can't be made without further inquiry. Traits and motivations can also be positioned based on how likely they are to influence ludic and narrative interests or whether they are a factor that should be dominantly outside of the narrative-ludic distinction like social orientation or different moral frameworks. The depiction refers to the motivations, preferences and traits discussed in relation to Table 3 and Table 4 from 2.3.

When tracking a player's general intrinsic motivations or extrinsic motivations that align with their interests and preferences, one can position them across the ludic and narrative layer as shown in Figure

10. In addition to that one can label them as “Intrinsic” or “Extrinsic” or even note what kind of external regulation applies (see 2.2.2) or mark whether they are “Action” or “Consequence” related. Figure 10 depicts how the factors that influence decisions when a player encounters ludonarrative dilemma can be visualized and represent specific players by visualizing their interests and how much an action or consequence aligns with a player’s internal motivation compared to external motivations.

Researchers can note highest and lowest traits and motivations or those that exceed others. A real depiction of a player most likely does not include every motivation depicted in Figure 10 nor can every detail be tracked realistically without heavy probing. In practice it may only track the preferences mentioned in relation to the analyzed decision, while those who weren’t mentioned can’t be tracked.

Furthermore, additional factors or contextual factors (Toh, 2018) can be considered as influences on the gameplay, which Toh (2018) noted as available time, skill level or chosen difficulty. But this also includes the morals and ethics that they believe in, which then would influence the narrative “Moral Gameplay”. Additionally, other socially motivated factors like “retelling” of the “instantiated narrative” (Koenitz, 2023) or “Bragging” in relation to “Bragging Rights” (Rouse III, 2004) can be positioned among the contextual factors (see Figure 10) even if they influence gameplay or narrative. Researchers e.g. can connect such contextual factors by writing them to the related motivation like positioning “Bragging” under “Challenges” and even note if it relates to an emotion from the 6-11 Framework (Dillon, 2010) like “Excitement” or “Pride”.

Depictions like Figure 10 don’t have to be filled out for each participant but can be used as a helping tool (**Resource 1** in Helping Resources). It is also possible to simply consider this visualization when evaluating players or participants of a study.

### **3.2 Ludonarrative Connections: A Synthesized Ludonarrative Lense**

To understand ludonarrative connections or relationships one can use different methods or see existing frameworks in relation to each other. Such frameworks help to compare the experience as it is actually designed or intended compared to how players perceive it or explain specific components in a ludonarrative context based on how they are linked. Each framework provides different foci, e.g. Koenitz (2023) focuses on storytelling, narrative and IDN design, while Toh (2018) focuses on multimodality and social semiotics in relation to gameplay and narrative as modules. Both use the concept of mental representation, images or models as suggested by Ryan (2001, 2006, 2023) to move past traditional narratology within games. Ang (2006) however focuses on rules akin to Frasca’s (2003b) view of games as simulations. Schell’s Tetrads (2008) provides a center framework in which elements or categorize from other frameworks can be positioned across what I redefine as layers of the game, which all link to forms of more or less obvious forms of engagement.

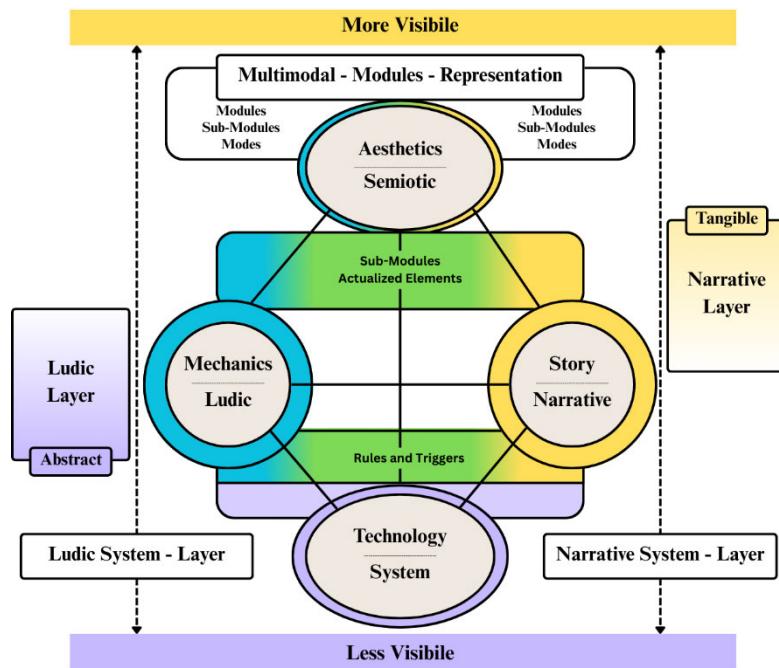


Figure 11 The Ludonarrative Layer Tetrads derived from Schell's (2008) Elemental Tetrads.

Figure 11 shows the adjustments I made to Schell's (2008) Elemental Tetrads, in which the *aesthetic element* is reconfigured into the *semiotic layer*, that includes the semiotic channels or modes of social semiotics (Kress, 2010) needed for multimodal discourse analysis (Toh, 2018), but also transmedial representation (Dena, 2010; Jenkins, 2004). In this layer the aesthetics, assets and UI of a game are shaped into semiotic actualized elements within modules, their sub-modules and through the arrangement of modes. This layer represents the form of visual engagement in which a player reacts to the aesthetics and incorporates them in their sensemaking process based on delivered feedback. The *story element* is reconfigured into the *narrative layer*, that includes the whole narrative design and narrative vectors (Koenitz, 2023), as well as the spatial representation and fabula (Ang, 2006). Based on this the narrative layer is the intended arrangement of elements from other layers and assigns narrative meaning that allows players to engage with the story and/or worldbuilding. The *mechanics element* is reconfigured into the *ludic layer*, which not only considers the mechanics itself but also how game designers construct the experience around them, lead the players, as well as protect them from themselves through extrinsic motivation following the perspectives of Brown (2017) and Meier (2010). It further includes Heaton's (2006) circular model of gameplay which tracks how new game states develop through the system on its own and the game reacting to the player—which could be seen as a gameplay trigger. Together with the semiotic and narrative layers the gameplay actions and goals are matched to their narrative counterparts and provide the ludonarrative experience. The *technology element* is reconfigured as the *system layer*, that focuses less on the technology itself but what Koenitz (2023) calls a dynamic system. This system focuses not only on the potential narrative but also potential gameplay, including both ludic and narrative decisions, consequences and available strategies as explained in Meier's (2010) GDC talk about interesting decisions. Based on this role the system is the base layer, that controls the other layers based on how the game development team

arranged them. The system layer controls narrative triggers (Boon, 2021) and gameplay triggers, as well as the rules that the other layers follow. These rules can be of narrative or gameplay nature, they can have cross layer representation and/or mutually influence each other (Ang, 2006) but ultimately exist within the system. The system has implications on how the players understand and interpret the experience or the game as a whole text (Franklin, 2015; Oslon, 2017). In theory the engagement with this layer relates to understanding the connections between the other layers.

### **Visibility, Abstraction and Tangibility**

Schell's (2008) arrangement based on "more visible" and "less visible" still applies, as the positioning of layers in Figure 11 shows. The systemic layer is obscured underneath the others while the semiotic layer is the visible gateway that communicates gameplay and narrative. The players can only understand the true system by evaluating the other three layers combined. Following Ang (2006), the gameplay or ludic layer is abstract and results from the rules, which we may locate closer to the system layer, just like Schell's (2008) categorization relating to the "left brain". The narrative layer leans heavily into the aesthetic layer which—in contrast to abstraction—is considered tangible based on the visual and aural representation through the semiotic layer. This categorizes narrative and semiotic layers together, just like Schell's (2008) "right brain" distinction. But following Oxland (2004) feedback is always transmitted aural or visual which means both gameplay and narrative feedback is presented through the semiotic layer. Based on this, every element depicted through modes carries intended information for both forms of engagement: narrative and ludic. This feedback is the basis for the player's decision-making process in relation to their motivations (2.3). Feedback and cross layer representation of rules, mechanics and goals are the reason why the abstract gameplay is still more visible than the system itself.

### **Narrative and Gameplay Focus**

When focusing on the narrative layer the other layers should be viewed using Koenitz (2023) SPP model to see how the system is designed in relation to it; how the procedural elements on the gameplay layer are incorporated and positioned within the narrative design, and how the semiotic layer presents UI and assets are arranged to convey narrative meaning, as well as how this forms narrative vectors especially to guide players extrinsically. One could even go as far as arguing that the system or protostory (Koenitz, 2023) is a focus on the system layer and its relation to the narrative layer. Based on this, the other two layers are viewed based on their contribution to this connection. Within the Ludonarrative Layer Tetrads we could refer to this focus as the *narrative system layer* (Figure 11), which groups the individual parts of the system according to narrative impact. Moral dilemmas are best viewed through the narrative layer by applying the ludonarrative hermeneutics (Roth et al., 2018) as well as the SPP model (Koenitz, 2023); and then examining the narrative design through the four moral lenses (Ryan et al, 2016) and player actions linked between gameplay and narrative layer through paidia rules. With that a focus on the narrative layer includes everything of interest for the narrative part for potential ludonarrative dilemma, and if they actually align with a player's intrinsic motivation.

When focusing on gameplay one could focus on how the ludic layer and how the system controls and positions the elements of the other layers in relation to it. This focus could then be seen as the *ludic system layer* and groups the individual parts of the system according to gameplay impact. In that sense one may view gameplay as the moment-to-moment interaction (Brown, 2017) or the changes to the game state based on player interaction or without it (Heaton, 2006) through gameplay trigger. The relates to the gameplay agency that allows players to choose a playstyle or strategy (Brazie, n.d.; Meier, 2010) and how to win, finish or prolong the game (Cardon-Rivera et al., 2020) just as any reward (Wang & Sun, 2011) that supports those goals. Gameplay can also focus on ludus and paidia rules (Ang, 2006), as well as ludus and paidia play (Ryan, 2009) and mainly view the narrative implications and semiotic representation as Feedback (Oxland, 2004) that explains gameplay. Or in that sense looks at how the narrative supports gameplay (Dansky, 2021; Juul, 2001). But most importantly it focuses on how the game designer guides and protects the player (Brown, 2017) through what I consider ludic vectors. This focus becomes especially relevant when considering temptations based on gameplay within moral temptations (Ryan et al. 2016). Through such a focus on the gameplay layer includes everything of interest for the ludic part for potential ludonarrative dilemma, and if they actually align with a player's intrinsic motivations.

Narrative and ludic vectors are therefore defined as the communicative methods used by both game designers and writers that use the semiotic layer to inform and guide players with feedback relating to the respective layers. This includes all forms of agency the system allows, and methods employed to extrinsically encourage, discourage and restrict specific actions. And through these vectors a player realizes when they face a ludonarrative dilemma that presents their preferences across two different outcomes within the agency the system allows.

### 3.3 The Ludonarrative Decision-Making Model

\*reading direction bottom → up

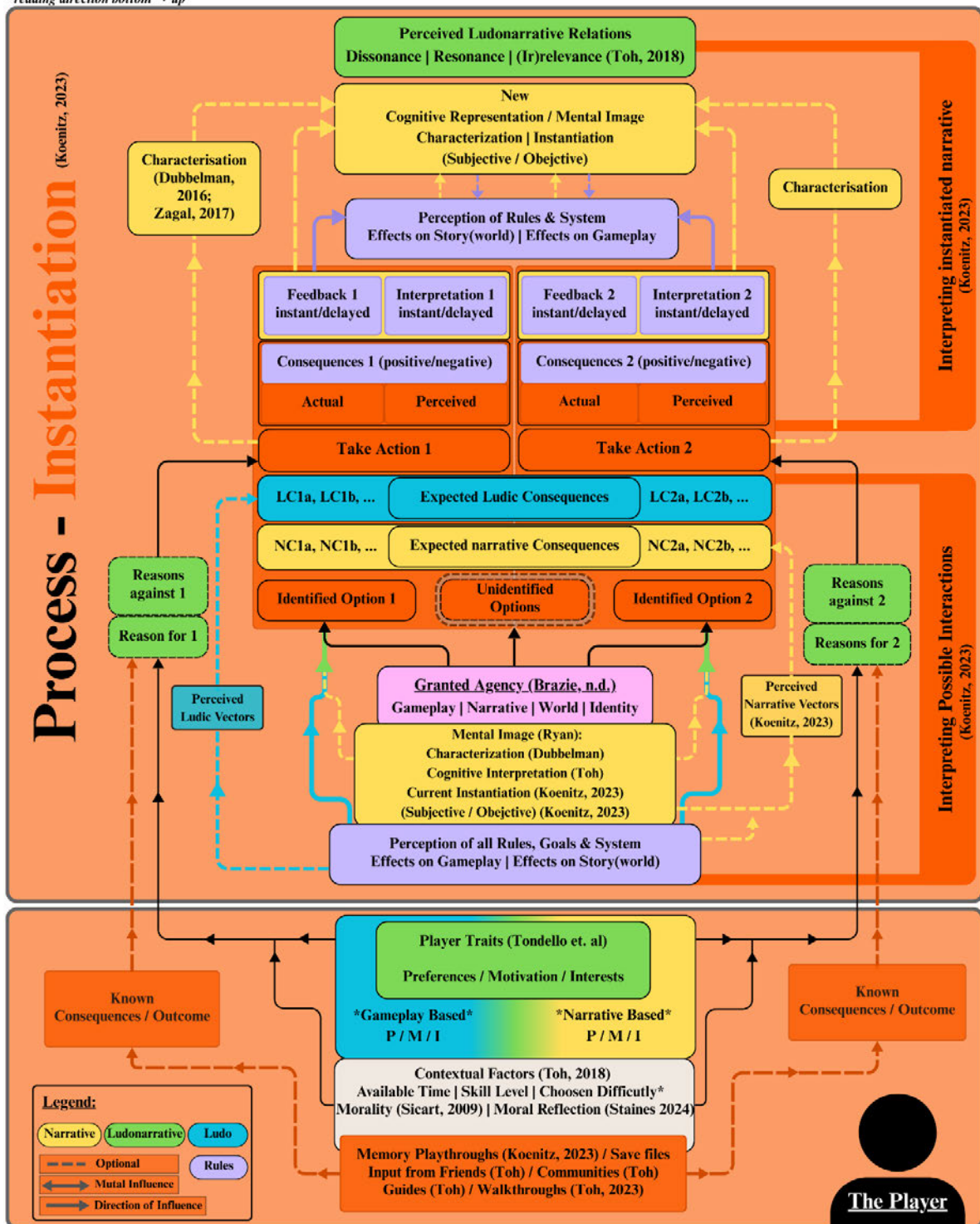


Figure 12 The Ludonarrative Decision-Making Model

Source: Own Depiction adding an analytic framework to the Process within the SPP (Koenitz, 2023) model providing a lens to understand a player's decision-making model considering a synthesize of ludonarrative models and related concepts described in (2) and (3.2).

The Ludonarrative Decision-Making model (LN-DM model) is primarily grounded in the concept of the ludonarrative hermeneutic (Roth et al., 2018) with a stronger dual focus on gameplay and narrative while considering the effects of the players individual traits as suggested by Toh (2018). Figure 12 shows

the first part of the LN–DM model which places the player in front of the ludonarrative experience engaging in the process of Koenitz (2023) SPP model based on their knowledge of the system and through the hermeneutic process (Roth et al., 2018). As a model describing the decision-making process, the focus lies on how players make their decisions, what influences them in that process, and how they evaluate their decisions. Just as in the original ludonarrative hermeneutics (Roth et al. 2018), the model looks at a player’s hermeneutic process. In this interpretive activity players identify possible interactions; take an action; and then interpret the new instantiated narrative (Roth et al., 2018) or game state (Heaton, 2006); just as the memory gained and evaluated through the third hermeneutic circle (Koenitz, 2023). This model focuses on the factors that let players identify “Decisions” / “Options” within the “Granted Agency” and the “Reasons for” and “against” each option in relation to “Expected Ludic Outcomes” and “Expected Narrative Outcomes”. Based on this the player makes a decision by taking an “Action”. This results in “Feedback” and “Consequences” that the player perceives as positive or negative, influencing how they interpret the instantiated narrative. To understand what lead to the decision, one has to consider the player’s “Knowledge & Memory”, “Contextual Factors” (Toh, 2018), as well as “Player Traits” in relation to “Narrative Based” and “Gameplay Based”: “Preferences”, “Motivations” and “Interests”—which generally describes what the player intrinsically likes, making the three terms interchangeably when describing the process.

The player’s preferences and traits are positioned and considered based on their relation to narrative and ludic engagement as previously depicted in Figure 10 in chapter (3.1) following the information from chapter (2.3). The same is true for the contextual factors (Toh, 2018), consisting of “Available Time”, “Skill Level”, “Chosen Difficulty”, the applied “Morality” (Sicart, 2009) and whether a player engages in “Moral Reflection” as additional influences. Since the LN-DM model looks at individual decisions, the third hermeneutic circle (Koenitz, 2023) doesn’t occur as an interpretive activity. It rather affects the decision-making process as “Knowledge & Memory” that provide reasons for and against a decision based on strong evidence or even proof, shaping “Known Consequences / Outcomes”, whether they are real or just “Perceived”. This third hermeneutic circle is used in the adjusted form as described in chapter 2.1.1 following Figure 7, that considers the “Memory from Playthroughs” (Koenitz, 2023), “Memory from Save Files” via save scumming (Extra Credit, 2019), as well as “Input from Friends / Communities”, “Guides” and “Walkthroughs”, as well as potential “Cheat Codes” (Toh, 2018). This doesn’t add a fourth interpretive activity but rather adds additional sources of knowledge that occur within the third process, like what other players did and what they suggest alongside, just as all previously witnessed consequences that become known instead of interpreted through clues. However sometimes the Knowledge that is gathered could be wrong and therefore the “Known Consequences / Outcomes” are only perceived as real.

Within the LN-DM Model the player always encounters and identifies the “Granted Agency” based on their “Mental Image” and their “Perception of all Rules” “Goals & the “System” which are interpreted through their engagement with the system and how they understand the semiotic layer—including what

they understand as the information conveyed about the narrative and ludic layer as previously described in (2.2.2) and (3.2). The “Mental image” includes the “Current Instantiation”, which describes the “Subjective” or “Objective” narrative experience or resulting story including how a player understands the narrative design and the narrative representation including: “Narrative Goals”, the “Fabula”, the “Spatial Representation”, “Characterization” through action (Dubbelman, 2016; Nay & Zagal, 2017, Toh, 2018) and all the rules that control the narrative represented simulation (Ang, 2006; Frasca, 2003b) and present the sematicized rules (Domsch, 2013). In the LN-DM model a distinction is made between rules based on their “Effects on Gameplay” and “Effects on the Story / Storyworld”. This division groups the rules within the system layer according to their impact on the narrative and ludic experience according to ludic and narrative system layers while recognizing their potential for mutual influence (see Figure 5 & Figure 11). These effects as described prior are emerging and authored branching narratives and emerging and engendered gameplay; as well as the extrinsic guidance and restrictions explained as the Ludonarrative Vector Perspective. Which is why this rules-distinction results in the “Ludic Vectors” and “Narrative Vectors” perceived by the player based on their reading of the semiotic layer and narrative design (3.2).

Based on all this one can describe the LN-DM process (see Figure 12) alongside the ludonarrative hermeneutic process as follows. The first part focuses on “Interpreting Possible Interactions” or the actual decision-making process, which includes the first five steps of the 7 steps to effective decision-making (Laoyan, 2025; UMass Dartmouth, 2022). The player identifies that they must or can make a decision within the granted agency based on how they understand the gameplay and the narrative. They use the combined knowledge to identify the available options which are at least two but considering that there may be more or “Unidentified Options” too. Based on Brazie (n.d.) this choice can allow players to decide on how they play by making different strategies and mechanics available; affect the narrative; show an influence on the environment; or allow the player to self-express and customize. The player then looks at the guidance through the game designer and the game writer, as well as the systems rules to identify “Ludic Vectors” and “Narrative Vectors”. This causes them to expect specific “Narrative Outcomes” based on “Perceived Narrative Vectors”, as well as “Ludic Outcomes” based on “Perceived Ludic Vectors”. But they can also view the ludonarrative implications to interpret further “Expected Ludic Outcomes” based on “Expected Narrative Outcomes” and vice versa. “Outcomes” in this case includes both expected “positive” and “negative” “Consequences”. Based on their expectations players should consider “Reasons for” and “Reasons against” each “Option” rooted in their “Player Traits”, their “Gameplay Based Motivations”, their “Narrative Based Motivations”, the “Contextual Factors”, as well as their “Knowledge & Memory” relating to that decision. If a player struggles to decide during this evaluation this should indicate that they face a dilemma based on preferences aligning with “Option 1” and other preferences aligning with “Option 2”, or that they dislike each expected Outcomes based on their preferences. When the player takes the “Action” the “Outcome” still depends on the players

performance and prior experience of gaming (Roth et al., 2018; Toh, 2018), which determines whether the “Action” is executed as planned within the “Chosen Difficulty”.

After that the system enters a new state (Heaton, 2006). Based on this the player enters the last step of the decision-making process—reflecting on the choice and whether the “Consequences” and “Feedback” align with their initial “Expected Outcomes”. This shifts the focus of the hermeneutic process to the interpretation of the instantiated narrative or current game state, which changes how the player views the “Mental Image” as a “New Narrative Interpretation”, and sometimes changes how they understand the “System” itself through a “New Perception of Rules & System”. The “System” delivers the “positive” and “negative” “Consequences” related to the “Action”. These only become tangible through the “Feedback” and therefore the player only “perceives” the “Consequences” as an “Interpretation” of the “Feedback”. This “Feedback” can take many shapes as discussed in chapter 2.2.2 Table 1. based on the extension of Oxland’s (2004) feedback taxonomy Table 1. Based on the “Feedback” and the interpretation of the semiotic layer, the player may also evaluate the “Characterization” that is caused by the “Action” (Nay & Zagal, 2017). Depending on the decision the feedback could be instant without real consequences in relation to local agency; or delayed with a branching story impact in relation to global agency. This distinction is often not tangible especially when the choice was systemic (Tancred et al., 2018). The players reflection on the decision is crucial to see how the choice, the “Consequences” and the “Feedback” shaped the player experience. However, it may be just as important to look at a player’s reaction that occurred based on this reflection.

After each decision players reevaluate their mental image and rules-book to reflect how the game and narrative functions and what stories can be extracted. In this process they may also look at the information conveyed and see if the implications based on ludonarrative relationships are coherent or not, as in Bycer’s (2013). Based on this interpretation the play could make claims about ludonarrative dissonance or resonance—using Hocking’s (2007) original claim Toh’s (2018) categories or any other interpretation. However, the reevaluation could also cause cognitive ethical friction (Sicart, 2010) or cognitive dissonance based on information that opposes their previous beliefs about the game as previously explained in (2.2.3) and addressed in (3.2).

# The Ludonarrative Decision-Making Model as a Decision-Tree

\*reading direction bottom → up

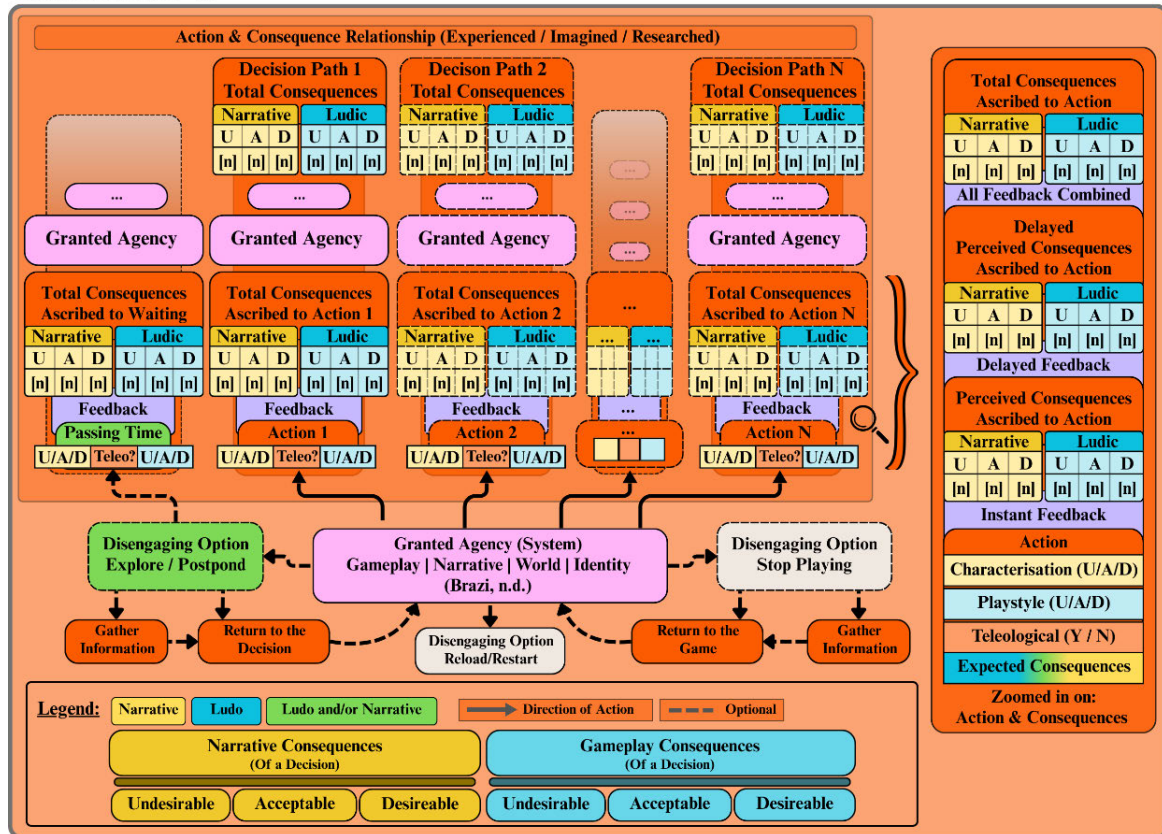


Figure 13 The LN-DM Model as a Decision Tree  
Source: Own Depiction as a follow-up on Figure 12.

Figure 13 shows the LN-DM as a decision tree as such a decision tree based on Lucid Software Inc (n.d.) concept of visualizing decision-making processes in a decision tree that examines the probability for success and the expected payout. In this case the different decisions a game provides at any given moment are evaluated by the player based on expected consequences as the result while assigning each consequence to the chain of decisions that lead to it. As Lucid Software Inc (n.d.) and Laoyan (2025) argued people may make a pro and contra list to evaluate their decisions. These consequences are then evaluated based on whether they are undesirable, acceptable or desirable—undesirable taking the spot of contra, while desirable takes the spot of pro, lastly acceptable is a neutral leaning consequence. Furthermore, players and researchers can distinguish whether the consequences or decisions are related to the narrative or gameplay. The distinction between narrative and gameplay will help to evaluate for researchers and players who weigh their options to determine if the decision is a narrative, ludic or ludonarrative dilemma.

Just as with the regular LN-DM players encounter moments of potential agency or interaction and weigh the reason for and against an action or a chain of actions. However, this decision tree shows not just two options but all available options, including those that let them disengage from one decision and make another decision instead—if the game allows it at that moment. Based on my own experience with video games, a player could completely disengage from a game and reflect on the potential decisions they can

make within the granted agency, without actively engaging with the game. These moments could be used to gather external information like guides or consult friends (Toh, 2018). Or a player could reload a previous save file. But if a player stays in the game, they evaluate the current options and decide by evaluating what actions they have to take and what consequences that would lead to. But they can also gather additional information, by disengaging from the moment of agency but still stay in the game, by exploring or postponing the decision. Through exploration the player could then find new opportunities for interaction within the granted agency that cause different expected outcomes.

Each action, including exploration, can be followed by instant or delayed feedback by the system, which then communicates the consequences to the player. These consequences then should be ascribed to specific action or a chain of actions. Based on this the player expects consequences they evaluate within their decision tree based on the available actions which can be any number of different options. However, the player should always at least have the option to take one action or disengage. When evaluating the decisions the player has different options. Toh would classify actions as strategic (Thinking and planning) or instrumental (instinctive) actions but for a dilemma this distinction is not of importance. Instead, I adopt the term teleological from the concept of outcome orientated choices and ask was this decision based on the perceived or know consequences or not. From that view the only three aspects to consider are: a) whether the characterization caused by the action is undesirable, acceptable or desirable; b) whether the playstyle linked to the action is undesirable, acceptable or desirable; and c) whether the action is teleological, which means the player expects a specific consequence from it that is desirable to them. Furthermore, a player may then also categorize the narrative and ludic consequences they expect based on whether they consider them acceptable, desirable or undesirable, but also how many of those consequences there are by following a similar principle as a pro and contra list. Or a player may engage in this process retroactively as a reflecting player to consider save scumming.

Feedback and consequences occurring and being contributed to passing time through waiting or exploration, accounts for Heaton's (2006) concept of the system generating new states even without player input. And even this action can be teleological if a player waits on purpose to let the system move towards a new state. Which means that in some cases even doing nothing or postponing a decision is an action that leads to consequences.

Researchers don't have to track each action separately but also describe a chain of actions leading to a specific outcome or consequence. In that sense Action 1 could already be a short descriptive decision path in itself. The most important factor is to track the noteworthy decisions that lead to the consequences, which actions a player contributes to the consequences, just as what consequences were actually perceived. One could use the decision path for a micro analysis tracking each single action taken, although it may be better to use it to track long term consequences rooted in accumulative feedback (Oxland, 2004) and systemic choices (Tancred et al., 2018) leading to delayed feedback related

to global agency (Roth & Vermeulen, 2012). It is worth noting that players may not specifically consciously think in the form of this decision-making tree and that the decisions and evaluations may sometimes need to occur within seconds or faster based on the gameplay moment. However, when a player encounters a tough decision, they may pause for a moment or even disengage from the game completely until they come up with a solution.

## 4 Case Study & Interview Results

### 4.1 ►X Methodology

In my qualitative content analysis, I conducted a case study of the two video games *Dishonored* (2012) and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution – Director’s Cut* (2013)<sup>15</sup> (DXHR) to analyze them for occurring ludonarrative dilemma. I analyzed them based on my LNDM–Model rooted in Koenitz’s (2023) ludonarrative hermeneutics and social semiotics and supplemented it with the statements of players. To analyze the player effects of ludonarrative dilemma on the player experience I recruited four interview partners who replayed the games and involved them in a problem centered interview (Kruse, 2015). I base this process on Mayring’s (2014) grounded theory which I applied through emerging categories and those I deduced from the literature review, considering ludonarrative engagement, research into dilemma just as trait and motivation taxonomies.

research approach (qualitative, interpretative, interview-based, case-informed)

Case selection rationale (Dishonored & Deus Ex: HR)

Participant selection criteria

Analytical strategy: *how* you will apply the categories (motivations, ludonarrative relationship types, agency) — tie this to your framework

### 4.0 Qualitative Research

Methodologie und wissenschaftliches Paradigma (interpretativ / hermeneutisch) zu verankern. Hier kannst du auch auf den generellen „Reason for qualitative, mixed case study + interviews“ eingehen.

Toh (2015) used the empirical data gathered from his game study’s interviews to understand the player’s motive(s). This research instead used the HCI Games Player Trait test to see how much players lean towards different forms of engagement and then compare that data with their decisions and ludic and narrative consequences or motivations they considered.

An interviewee may not always share or want to share the ethics they follow, but it can be interpreted from their actions, or one could ask if it is of specific interest to understand a specific decision.

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<sup>15</sup> This study considered only the Director’s Cut but was prepared to consider *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* in case it was brought up by participants.

An interviewee may not always disclose the ethics they follow, but their ethical stance may be inferred from their actions—or clarified through direct questioning, if relevant to understanding a specific decision.

#### 4.1.1 Games of Interest

Staines (2023) considers the design philosophy of immersive sims as “highly consonant with the four lenses framework” and “ideal for exercising moral expertise”, offering multiple different approaches and enabling different playing styles. He also links them to meaningful choices, observable consequences and a high degree of agency. Which means they may easily provoke conflicts of interest if choices include rewards or even if a preferred gameplay approach is linked to unpleasant but logical narrative consequences. This aligns with the claims of *Dishonored* punishing a specific playstyle and confirms *Dishonored* as a reasonable game of interest. Another immersive sim with a similar release date is *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* (henceforth *DX:HR*)<sup>16</sup>.

Staines sees immersive sims as a great opportunity for moral engagement and ludonarrative agency. This agency is at the heart of a debate about *Dishonored* (2012). Moral dilemma as a staple of narrative in games (Tancred et al. 2018) makes immersive sims for potential ludonarrative dilemmas. Such games tend to have enough scripted decisions that can easily be identified but also some degree of systemic choices that shape how the game is perceived, especially *dishonored*.

*DX:HR* and *Dishonored* are both immersive sims that were released around the same time which causes the games to adhere to roughly the same technological standards and designed for a similar target audience. Which means both were developed roughly considering the same games from the same genre as precursors. The main difference of interest for this examination is that both may allow players to influence the story but in contrast to *Dishonored* that heavily uses systemic choices for the chaos system and make the ending dependent on the system choices, *DX:HR* mainly uses scripted choices and adjust the ending sequence by a single decision the player makes in the last level. A similarity of interest here is the concept of combat or stealth and lethal or non-lethal strategies, which have a higher impact on *Dishonored* based on the Chaos System.

Being able to compare the player experience with the actual system is a crucial point of evaluation. Which demands deep knowledge about the systemic and scripted choices (Tancred, 2018), just as when specific actions cause different outcomes or branching paths, regardless of how these differences are presented or communicated in the game. The analysis is rooted in my personal experiences with *Dishonored* and *DX:HR* that I acquired prior to this research substituted with the *Dishonored* Chaos Doc (Appendix. DCD) and information from the fandom wikis (*Dishonored* Wiki. n.d.; *Deus Ex: Human*

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<sup>16</sup> For this Study *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* (2013) refers to both *DX:HR* (2011) and *DX:HR – Directors Cut* (2013). There are noteworthy differences especially regarding the boss fights. But this distinction is only relevant if a participant mentions the boss fights as a dilemma. The provided save files were from *DX:HR – Directors Cut*.

Revolution Wiki. n.d.). Through this I'm able to compare the actual system with the experience shared online and those of my interviewees. The moments of interest were decided based on my own experience with the games and based on noteworthy opinions I found online—like identified moral temptations or people arguing about narrative and gameplay incentives.

#### 4.1.2 Interviews

For my interviews I considered Kruse's (2015) expert interviews by considering players who played the games as those who have specialist knowledge. In addition to that the interviews followed a problem centered approach, by informing players about the topic and shortly explaining the concept of ludonarrative dilemma. To avoid further priming I asked interview participants to refer to personal examples before confronting them with examples of potential tensions. Instead of letting players define a ludonarrative dilemma themselves, they were provided a short definition and got an explanation of what kind of experiences are of interest for the interview. The examples I identified based on the case study were only explained after the players mentioned their own examples. This opened the possibility for interviews in which one or both examples most noteworthy for an interview partner were also among the example provided by the interviewer.

Mäyrä (2008, p. 14) emphasized that the player experience is rich and multidimensional but hard to articulate when interviewed about the exact quality of the experience, especially if the player was immersed. This may be even tougher after a long time. Most players most likely played Dishonored or DX:HR roughly 10 years ago and won't remember specifics. Interview partners got save files as a resource to reexperience and refresh their memory surrounding key moments of interest to account for one part of this issue. In addition to that, they were primed before replaying the games to specifically consider moments in the game where they felt like their gameplay interests clashed with the narrative interests. This was done to ensure players focus on the problem the study wants to examine and that they have an easier time remembering such situations that happened in their previous playthroughs. Introducing the concept beforehand may help players identify cases they consider represented by that category easier similar to how people may use the term ludonarrative dissonance. This is a heavy priming, but it does not prevent players from explaining how these situations affected their player experience—it rather provides them with needed tools to even identify moments of interest themselves.

These Interviews would be what Koenitz (2023) calls a retold second order narrative—or product within the SPP model—of the IDN experience, from which one can deduce the process and understand it using my LN-DM model through follow up questions, that asks interviewees about their motivations, evaluations, just as potential contextual factors. Interviewees shall give their own linguistic-, semiotic-, and narrative interpretation and retell their mental images to describe how they reacted in the moments identified as potential sources of ludonarrative dilemmas and what motivates their decisions

## Interview Recruitment and Preparation

When I wrote a previous paper about boss fight approaches and ludonarrativity in immersive sims comparing *DX:HR* with the approach of *Dishonored* I gathered many participants within a VTuber<sup>17</sup> community that I'm part of myself. Which means there was a good chance to find people who already played both games and heard about the concept of ludonarrativity before. Since this study needed dedicated participants who would also be willing to replay the games, I asked the streamer—who likes to stay anonymous—for permission to recruit participants within the community's discord server. Since there is a strong sense of solidarity and mutual support there is an increased chance for participants who dedicate themselves to this study. Further, the community is quite diverse, I expected a wide pool of different participants from different countries who all speak English and participate in the English interviews. More male than female or non-binary participants has not been unlikely, but it was anticipated that there was a higher demographic diversity among the participants. These expectations were not met as later shown in 4.2, but the participants were dedicated to replay the games of interest.

After participants expressed their interest in participating in the study, I offered them to choose between German and English interview to make the interview more comfortable for them. The contact forms A.1-DE & A.1-EN were selected based on preferred language. The participants were first informed that they should provide their results from the HCI-Games et al (2024) survey to determine their player traits. The messages included screenshots (A.3.1-A.3.3) of the 5 factor player trait test to show participants what information they are expected to share. Further, a decision was made that it increases the reliability of interview statements if the participants replay the games partly to refresh the memory. That is why I provided save files<sup>18</sup> that enabled an easy re-entry into different game moments with close to no unspent resources and maximized access to items and resources. This enabled participants to adjust the save files to their previous approaches in case they didn't have excess to their first save files. Before the participants started to re-play the games, they were given follow up information (A.2-DE & A.2-EN) that explains what kind of moments are of interest and that a ludonarrative dilemma relates to situations like in which “they felt a sense of conflict, tension or difficulty choosing—especially if anything about the story or gameplay pulled them in different directions.” They were further informed that I'm interested in how their personal playstyle affected decisions and how the dilemmas affected their engagement or enjoyment of the games.

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<sup>17</sup> A VTuber is a category of live streamer who uses a digital 2D / 3D avatar—often a unique anime style inspired character—as representation, which moves through translation of facial and body tracking of the actual streamer.

<sup>18</sup> The save files are available on the digital storage device at the university.

## **Interview Guide & Procedure**

Instead of conducting the HCI Games et al.'s (2024) questionnaire myself and determining the percentiles of the traits, I asked participants to visit the website <https://hcigames.com/player-traits/> or to use the direct link to the survey and fill it out there before we decided on a date for the interview. The interviews were conducted using the browser version of discord and conduct a video or audio call with the participants while recording the audio of the interview.

For the interviews an interview guide was used that enabled a semi-structured problem centered interview. The interview guide was developed prior to the first interview and stayed the same for each participant with the exception of adjusting the follow up questions based on the previous interviews until it took the shape of AG1-DE. The interview guide AG1-EN was developed for potential English-speaking interviewees. The semi-structured interview explored topics like narrative and gameplay motivations in games, dilemmas and ludonarrative sensemaking. The questions generally looked at what decisions caused a dilemma for the players and how narrative and gameplay factors influenced them. The follow up questions tried to probe all the narrative and gameplay elements that influenced the decisions and what caused difficulties choosing.

At the start of the interviews the players were asked for two personal examples of ludonarrative dilemmas by only providing a short explanation rooted in its etymology. The participants got the option to separate the interview into one segment about *Dishonored* (2012) and another about *DX:HR* (2013), instead of providing two personal examples first and then evaluating how they engaged with the decision examples picked by the interviewer.

## **Transcription Process**

After each interview each audio file was transcribed using the Microsoft Word transcript function and got controlled to remove errors. The transcripts were turned into a smooth verbatim transcript (Kruse, 2015) in which notable utterances were included but those that were considered unimportant got removed or were not added when the transcript function hasn't recognized them. The German transcripts were translated with DeepL to save time and resources, most noteworthy translation errors by the service got corrected but are not immune to human oversight<sup>19</sup>. The original full German verbatim transcripts were only included in digital form.

## **Ethical considerations**

Interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that the interview recordings will be deleted from all devices after the study is completed and that their personal information is anonymized through the code names we agreed upon. This follows suggestions and wordings for

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<sup>19</sup> In one case the DeepL translation turned the meaning of the smooth verbatim transcript into its inverse. This was corrected, but it is possible that some translations are still wrong. The codes were applied using the original meaning from the German transcripts in mind.

interview guides by shrike! - master your studies (2021). Further, participants were assured that they don't have to answer questions they don't want to answer. And that the most important information is their personal subjective opinion.

Participants were informed that the survey they had to fill out to provide me with information about their player traits is not made by myself and that they will provide the host of the survey with the information too. After the interviews ended a consent form (AG.2) was used to confirm that the participants are okay with the information they provided to be used.

#### **4.1.3 Case Study: Online Discourse Analysis & Own Player Experience**

My Cases study attempts to understand the actual structure of the games layers and how it is presented by using my own experiences with *DX:HR* and *Dishonored*. To strengthen these observations and exemplify player experiences that can occur from them, I triangulate my personal view with online discourse and the experiences of my interview partners. By limiting the study to two most pronounced experiences of the players and specific moments I observed myself, the case study uses comparable player experiences that focuses on the same elements or moments but from individual viewpoints.

As additional supplementation the Elemental Tetrads (Schell, 2008) and ludonarrative hermeneutics (Koenitz, 2023) are used to describe the games but with the reframing of the separate elements which refer to different modes of engagement as explained in 3.2:

- Aesthetics: Aesthetic / Semantic Layer = considers multimodal representation of actualized elements across modules
- Story: Narrative Layer = investigates the story within the game and explained by player, narrative design and narrative vectors (Koenitz, 2023)
- Mechanics: Ludic / Gameplay Layer: considers gameplay actions, game design and the ludic vectors that are meant to lead players
- Technology: System Layer: the underling rules that link everything and make up the game.

Beyond all that, a descriptive leaning evaluation approach is taken to describe the dilemmas observed among my participants and through analysis of online discourse. To explore different interpretations of and reactions to potential ludonarrative dilemmas, within the games and the player experience. These moments are then described from the perspective of the LN-DM model (3.3).

#### **4.1.4 ► X Coding Schemes WIP**

Categories were developed and written on printed versions of the

Spielermotivationen wurden auf Basis qualitativer Aussagen aus den Interviews codiert und im Abgleich mit bestehenden motivationalen Modellen (Yee 2015; HCI-Ansätze) interpretiert siehe tabel X (die sich in 3.X befindet). I use two category models that I developed from my evaluation of

established literature. The first category is reframes Toh's ludonarrative categories as ludonarrative relations.

Many Ludonarrative categories are not mutually exclusive which means in some cases one should consider multiple tagging.

#### Additional codes

Roleplaying as the player mask is tracked as motivation. But considering the nature of dilemma it is worth tacking to not only consider which Mask the player uses and when it is part of a dilemma, but also when the mask slips.

Kategorie	Subkategorie	Quelle	Typ	Beschreibung
Playstyle Motivation	Action / Strategy	Yee (2015)	Deduktiv	Klassische Gameplay-Motive
Playstyle Motivation	Familiar / Habit	Interviewdata	Induktiv	Routinen, die aus Gewohnheit gespielt werden
Playstyle Motivation	Roleplay	Theorie + emp.	Hybrid	Spielstil an Maske angepasst
Characterisation – Mask	Canon	Bateman	Deduktiv	Charakter wird wie in Originalwerk gespielt
Characterisation – Mask	Self-Representation	Bateman	Deduktiv	Spieler handelt wie er selbst
Characterisation – Mask	Interpretation	Bateman	Deduktiv	Eigenständige Auslegung des Chars
Characterisation – Mask	(Playstyle-driven?)	Diskussion	Hypothese	Maskierung resultiert aus Spielmechanik-Optimierung

Zusätzlich wurde abgeglichen ob Toh's ludonarrative codes passen, welche angepasst wurden, um auch auf Fälle zuzutreffen in denen z.B. Motivation ohne Dissonanz auftreten würde, quasi wenn Spieler eine logische Konsequenz als harmonisch ansehen.

## 4.2 Player Traits and Key-Interests of Interviewees

The sample size of interview partners consisted of the four participants listed in Table 5, who got the code names: Rudi, Ed, Ingo and Siemens. Despite the diversity within the community, the small sample

size of four participants mainly consisted of a about 30-year-old males from Germany as seen in Table 5. Other community members specifically said they would like to participate but weren't able to remember the games well enough and had no time to replay the games either.

Demographic Information	1 <sup>st</sup> Participant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Participant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Participant	4 <sup>th</sup> Participant
Code Name	Rudi	Ed	Ingo	Siemens
Gender (Identification)	Man	Man	Man	Man
Age	29	35	31	36
Weekly Gaming Hours	>20 hours per week	>20 hours per week	>20 hours per week	1-10 hours per week
Country of origin	Germany	Germany	Germany	Russia
Current Country	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany

Table 5 Demographic Information of Participants following HCI-Games Survey information  
Source: Information provided by the individual participants after participating in the HCI-Games Survey

HCI Trait	Rudi	Ed	Ingo	Siemens
Narrative Orientation	70%	73%	87%	57%
Aesthetic Orientation	87%	100%	87%	80%
Challenge Orientation	77%	83%	73%	50%
Goal Orientation	63%	80%	63%	30%
Social Orientation	80%	50%	43%	3%

Table 6 Player Traits of Interview Partners  
Source: Information provided by the individual participants after participating in the HCI-Games Survey

► **Rudi**

Malik original nicht rettbar wegen Fähigkeitsmangel, aber narrative motiviert sie zu retten, wegen affection to the NPC. Multiple attempts and faced a hard decision on whether to play on or spend more time. Dilemma caused by lack of skill fort he preferred outcome but was accepted as in the moment not solveable and wanted to see how the story goes on.

## ► Ed

Sometimes dissonance is *necessary* for fun—but only *if the player can manage or reinterpret it*.

Ed actually felt a dilemma between his motivation to explore and the narrative goal to save the hostages. This dilemma was artificially intensified through the perceived and implied congruence between gameplay and narrative rule modules. But even if he tried to cast his exploration motivation aside, he was unable to succeed which caused his frustration.

In relation to LN cognitive dissonance Ed started the other way around with a rules interpretation he did not like and was relieved when the new instantiation through a friend's input proofed it wrong.

## Ingo

Ingo's (Transcript 3) main interest for narrative games like DX:HR and Dishonored is the narrative which is why he evaluates the information the game provides to pick a player mask that he considers correct from among the options he sees the developers offer. Instead of taking a playstyle like action based or strategy based, he looks at what playstyle best reflects the PC's personality. This means the "Playstyle: Roleplay" theoretically exist but it exists only to decide which playstyle feels appropriate. The only exception to this Ingo mentioned is that he can't adapt to a different playstyle after he got used to it for a game and therefore can't adjust it when a game asks him to take on a different role (Transcript 3.6). This moment Ingo described in which he wasn't able to play Daud lethal after being used to playing Corvo using a strategic stealth approach would warrant then category "Playstyle: Habitual"—a case where the playstyle becomes a habit and the player can't adjust it without being hampered in their enjoyment of a game.

With that Ingo shows a great interest in sticking to a player mask and rarely treats the PC as a pawn if he plays a story driven game, which shows him displaying ludonarrative discipline. However, Ingo also mentioned a tendency for min-maxing (Transcript 3.9). By following this concept, he sometimes let Adam do actions that may appear odd by just looking at the characters behavior, as Ingo described it "So anyone who watched me playing probably wondered what I was doing, going through the levels twice or three times" describing that moving through every area would bring extra XP to unlock abilities (Transcript 3.9, 1:00:27–1:01:47). This reward driving concept of optimization lets Ingo lean into ludonarrative laxity.

In contrast to that, Ingo would actually stick to the player mask even in narrative decisions from which he thought the PC would've acted differently if it had his information because the PC doesn't have the knowledge about it (Transcript 3.1). Ingo acts as both a reflecting player in the sense of moral reflection but also whether a decision makes sense based on the characters knowledge regardless of consequences. Based on what he said about the side quest of that mission, Ingo does resort to save scumming in scenarios where he simply failed the side objective based messing up the sequence of actions.

## ► Siemens

Siemens considered his own moral beliefs when making narrative decisions; but the ethical principles he adheres to were neither discussed nor inferred from his actions. (Transcript 4.-).

## 4.3 Dishonored

### Criteria for Moments of Interest

For dishonored I picked two specific moments I remembered as moral temptations based on my personal past playthroughs like Moral Temptations: Poisoning the Distillery (4.3.2) and Moral Temptations: The Duel with lord Shawn (4.3.3).

### 4.3.1 Chaos System

One specific reason why Dishonored is important for this study is the Chaos System, since people argue that it respects the players' choices and through that addresses the issue of ludonarrative dissonance (Howard, 2022). Users of the NeoGAF forum even agreed with the OP Remachinate's argument that Dishonored is an example of ludonarrative harmony (NeoGAF Users, 2013). But there is a discussion on whether the narrative framing punishes players for using lethal abilities—like Taylor (2021) argued—or if it rewards players not only with respecting their agency but also by providing more enemies to fight—as Cassidy (2021) and Tarason (2021) argued—which puts the punishment on the avatar not on the player (Tarason, 2021). Most noteworthy one commenter named Sophia argued about Remachinate's NeoGAF post that *Dishonored's* ludonarrative harmony only really made her feel punished for enjoying the game.

Participants responded to the claim that the chaos system punishes certain playstyles, although because the interview question didn't specify which playstyles were punished nor how, the interpretations of interviewees diverged significantly from the discourse discussed in online.

While the common discourse suggests that the chaos system punishes aggressive players by assigning them an undesirable narrative outcome, Rudi (Transcript 1.7) offers a reversed perspective. He considered *low chaos* as potentially punishing—not because of differing narrative results, but because it requires a time-consuming playstyle. In this view, the punishment lies in the demand to invest more time to access a specific ending, rather than getting a negative perceived ending for playing a preferred playstyle. Although both perspectives involve a conflict between playstyle and narrative, Rudi's emphasis shifts the problem from narrative consequence to time investment (Transcript 1.7).

This hints at a dilemma between “preferred playstyle” and “available player time”, which contrast with the concept of “available game time” that may hinder players from exploring. In Rudi’s view, the imposed playstyle linked to a specific ending // maybe = This reveals a dilemma between intrinsic player preferences and extrinsic temporal constraints, where a preferred playstyle conflicts with the time investment required to pursue a particular narrative path.

#### **4.3.2 Moral Temptations: Poisoning the Distillery**

Moral Temptation

#### **4.3.3 Moral Temptations: The Duel**

Trap Moral Temptation Dilemma

### **4.4 Deus Ex: Human Revolution**

#### **4.4.1 First Mission Hostage Situation**

Forbidden Explorations Dilemma

Designed to Fail: Forced-Save-Scumming-Dilemma

#### **4.4.2 Giving Windmill a Gun**

Giving Windmill a gun is a classic moral temptation with a slight twist of tempting the player with a self-inflicted punishment for helping Windmill aka Arie van Bruggen. During the first stay in Hengsha Adam looks for a hacker that was involved with a terror attack on Sarif industry and tries to get answers from him. After finding Arie he helps the Adam despite him harming the player through his role as a hacker at the start of the game by being involved with the enemy.

Demands a cost from the player which is not directly a moral temptation but rather a negative consequences example with a clear right and wrong outcome but

## 4.5 Identified Dilemma and Dilemma Responses

### 4.5.1 Weak and Strong Moral Temptation

**Saving the woman** in the ally from the guards. This normally shouldn't be a moral temptation since saving the woman is always a benefit for the player. However, when players engage to save her, they risk increased chaos—even if chaos realistically wouldn't increase from just that (Appendix. DCD). Another reason why this is a temptation is achievements since intervening may risk being seen or forces the player to take the guards out lethally. Being seen would oppose the “ghost” achievement, while murdering the guards would ruin the “clean” hands achievement. This however is just the case if a goal-oriented player doesn't want to replay the game.

Granny Rags & the Duel with Lord Shawn are strong Moral temptations. Lord Shawn is an easily solvable dilemma since one doesn't have to use lethal force in the duel. But the narrative still claims that he died even if he is just knocked out, which could cause confusion. Participants felt more justified to duel against Lord Shawn, than poisoning the distillery. Siemens (Transcript 4.1.) said he felt as if he was in a dilemma relating to that decision, but he said it was still okay to get a ruin for poisoning the bottle street gang, although he would've felt conflicted about it if actual civilians would be harmed. However, he did not realize that this was the implied consequence. Other players like Ed and Ingo realized the elixir that they supposed to poison would endanger civilians (Transcript 3.3) or was some kind of trap (Transcript 2.3) which is why they abstained from getting the rune by completing the quest. Rudi said he did the same as Siemens during his first play through and also reasoned that he didn't mind poisoning them the first time but during his later play through he realized that it was still wrong (Transcript 1.3). Rudi's case shows that the perspective on a dilemma or moral temptation can change over time, which could indicate older players lean more towards reflecting on narrative consequences. What makes Lord Shawn a strong moral temptation despite being easily solvable is the fact that killing that NPC will prevent players from getting the clean hands achievement. But the participants felt justified in fighting and killing him based on narrative framing (Transcript, 1.4, Transcript 3.4, Transcript 4.4). Even Ed (Transcript 2.4) just shot Lord Shawn—since he already forfeited the nonlethal playthrough achievement—but he realized he can at least use save scamming to see if a non-lethal solution would've been possible.

Giving Windmill one of the PCs guns is often a weak moral temptation since the guns are readily available in the level and the player may carry an expendable lethal weapon. But in the case that the player only has lethal weapons they don't want to lose it becomes a strong moral dilemma, especially if they don't know where to look for an expendable weapon. For Siemens (Transcript 4.7) this temptation and the punishment to lose an upgraded weapon, was so strong that he simply offered no weapon to Ari van Bruggen. Rudi (Transcript 1.6) had the opposite problem, since the moral temptation was so weak

that he just did what the game suggested without thinking about narrative implications, since Rudi said he didn't even like the NPC, which made it odd for him that he even helped him in the first place.

#### **4.5.2 Dilemma with uncertain Reasoning**

Since the player experience is complex, a player may sometimes only recognize a dilemma was there but they can't fully recall or even understand their own reasoning.

Sometimes a player may not know what they even considered in a situation or retrospectively wonder why they even did an action. When Ed knows for sure that the "Hostage Situation" in DX:HR prevented him from the intrinsic *motivation to explore that game, but he had troubles explaining what motivated him to save the hostages.*

In a similar vein when Rudi reflected on the DX:HR moral temptation of giving a weapon from the inventory to Windmill so he has a chance to defend himself, Rudi wondered why he even sacrificed a weapon for an NPC he didn't even like, he just did it because he had a weapon he could spare. Which means he may have reacted with gameplay rational based on the game asking him to do it, and because the choice had no downside for him.

#### **4.5.3 Play-Mask Playstyle Dilemma**

Habitual Playstyle vs Player Mask (From Corvo to Daud) (Transcript 3.6). Ingo normally would adapt the playstyle based on role-playing the PC within a game but when he started the DLC of Dishonored after directly finishing Corvo's story in a strategic non-lethal manner, he got used to playing this way. This habitual play style was so strong that he couldn't characterize Daud through gameplay action and felt a strong disconnect between the characters action and how he imagined Daud in his head based on his previous ludonarrative process (Transcript 3.6).

Adam the Explorer Min-Maxing vs narrative coherence (Ingo Transcript 3.9). When Ingo played Adam he tried everything to get as many resources as possible to level up the next ability. He argued that in this case people may have looked at this narrative unfolding and see the illogical behavior. Since there were no direct narrative consequences Ingo leaned towards ludonarrative laxity to get as much experience points as possible.

Rudi (Transcript 1.1) Dilemma wanted to try stealth now since he previously played lethal to quickly get it over with. But since he tried to play stealthy, he also looked more at civilians that may need saving and he considered it challenging to save them without alarming the guards.

Similarly, Ed (Transcript 2.1) wanted to save that female civilian from the guards but also to punish them for their inappropriate behavior. It is not clear whether Ed tried to roleplay as Corvo or if Corvo became his persona. But Ed felt a conflict between his goal orientation to get both the clean hands achievement—not killing any person—and the ghost achievement—not being seen. If he had let the

NPC die, he could've gotten both achievements in one playthrough, but that wasn't an option so he tried multiple times through save scumming until he gave up and surrendered one achievement.

#### **4.5.4 Time-Limitation Dilemma (IRL vs IG)**

Time limitation Dilemma IG (In Game):

Case of Hostage Situation. The hostage situation in DX:HR caused a conflict of interest for Ed and Ingo since both would've loved to explore the level first. Ingo simply

Ed's repeated save scumming behavior relating to the DX:HR Hostage situation turned his in-game time limitation dilemma an issue relating to his IRL available time limitations since he didn't want to keep playing after failing that often.

Similarly, Ed's available time played a role when he had to decide whether to engage in his narratively preferred character behavior of protecting the innocent or if he wants to complete two achievements. He only tried to get both achievements in one playthrough since he often plays single player games only once (Transcript 2.1). Which means from his perspective giving up one achievement in this moment was actually making it less likely that he ever get the achievement, turning this into a true ludonarrative dilemma based on available time.

Rudi (Transcript 1.9) Rudi considered the low chaos approach punishing players that didn't have much time since he thought the non-lethal approach was more time consuming and therefore punishingly slow instead of considering narrative framing to punish those who engage in a lethal playstyle.

#### **4.5.5 Response: Save Scumming**

#### **4.5.6 Response: Accepting Consequences**

Ingo (Transcript 3.1) had a reflective player moment when he saw the delayed consequences by seeing High Overseer Campbell and realized that Corvo's action in the second mission caused him to suffer a faith worse than death, making him think the PC wouldn't have let that happen if he knew the faith. But Ingo (Transcript 3.1) specifically argued that Corvo couldn't have known the consequence, and he wouldn't change the decision through save scumming nor during another playthrough. Ingo's ludonarrative discipline prevents him from breaking character and accept the consequences. Which means that Ingo tend to decide the actions based on what the character would do and accept the consequences the PC faces for the actions that make sense to him.

## **Response: Reevaluating for next Playthrough**

The concept of reevaluating or reflecting on a dilemma or outcome of a decision for the next playthrough can be seen as a subcase of accepting the consequences. But in this case the player tries to look for information that explains alternatives after or while continuing to play. This response values getting through the game and getting another experience next time. This mentality may be especially immune to ludonarrative dilemma and rather enjoy all the different outcomes ludonarrative agency provides.

Siemens (Transcript 4.6) had a strong emotional attachment to Malik and wanted to protect her, but in his first playthrough he wasn't able to save her despite multiple attempts. But he mainly proceeded since he wanted to proceed in the story and instead misinterpreted how the system works, considering Malik's death to be a scripted event. In a later playthrough he realized he could actually save her which updated his belief about the game, causing an epiphany that made him try and fail multiple times to get his preferred narrative outcome. It may be that such cases of reevaluation are mainly accepting the consequences because they misinterpret the system's rules and that the player would've used save scumming or simply retry many times if they'd known an alternative existed.

### **4.5.7 Unsolvable / Unacceptable Dilemma**

Rudi and Ingo both encountered what can be described as an unsolvable or unacceptable dilemma. These dilemmas most likely cause players to stop playing since neither option the game offers is unacceptable or can they solve the dilemma.

Ed (Transcript 2.2) misinterpreted the warning that Adam has to hurry to the manufacturing side and save the hostages in a way that he thought the same time limit that applied in the first segment applied to the second segment too. That caused him to try over and over again thinking he always spent too much time and failing to save the hostages. He sacrificed his interest to explore by rushing through the level just to think that he is too slow to save the hostages. This misinterpretation frustrated Ed and not only put him into a ludonarrative dilemma but one in which even sacrificing his behavior of exploring and adapting to an unwanted playstyle didn't give him the preferred outcome. This made the dilemma unacceptable to him and he stopped until a friend told him that the timer wasn't real and only existed while at Sarif Industry but disappeared as soon as one traveled to the manufacturing side.

For Ingo (Transcript 3.6) the unacceptable dilemma occurred when he was unable to adapt to a playstyle that fitted the image he had from the PC after switching from one avatar to another. Seeing that the Character behaved oddly and was even described as such by other NPCs made him think that he mischaracterizes the PC and stopped playing. Since, on one hand he couldn't play the style that characterizes Daud correctly, on the other hand he couldn't keep playing while seeing Daud acting out of character because of the playstyle he got used to.

## 4.6 Evaluation & Discussion

It was expected that the similarly high percentage in narrative and gameplay-oriented traits would mean that players equally focus on both narrative and gameplay equally, but Ed and Ingo both had a clear priority. And that priority may be linked to the 10% difference in trait focus.

Both interviewees—Ed and Ingo—are highly interested in the narrative and gameplay layer as shown through the described player experience and their player traits, but Ingo favored role-playing the PC while Ed leaned towards succeeding in challenges. However, Ed’s heavy exploration focus could be explained by the extremely high aesthetic-oriented trait expression which exceeded the other two interests. Either already small imbalance between challenge or goal orientation and the narrative interests could hint at the dominant interest or hierarchy that strongly affects how a ludonarrative dilemma is perceived; or the severity of a dilemma depends on other factors that weren’t observable. However, a slight tendency towards decisions aligning with the trait hierarchy can be observed. The traits of Siemens are interesting since they are overall lower relating to narrative, challenge and goal orientation, and it appears there is a lower investment relating to the outcomes of dilemmas. A similar mentality of “it is just a game” was also observed in Rudi who

Can we understand ludonarrative dilemmas as not solely designed objects that cause player interests to clash; but co-constructed through the interplay between player motivations and interpretive habits. The case of Ed certainly showed that his dilemma got intensified by believing the narrative guidance and their gameplay implications too much and thinking the same limitations will persist through the whole level or even the whole game. Which also means players could imagine dilemmas that aren’t there from the ludonarrative sensemaking process alone, based on factors that aren’t known yet.

Another reoccurring factor surrounding ludonarrative dilemma was time. This is rather surprising since available time is a contextual factor outside of the game. But it makes sense because in theory many dilemmas in games can be solved by putting more time into them, by engaging in save scumming until the consequences satisfy the player or exploring all alternatives in different playthroughs. But realistically speaking even players who play more than 20 hours a week may not spend that much time subverting a dilemma.

One server factor within the player experience occurred when the playstyle or characterization were at odds with the players interests, which means that player mask tensions surrounding the ludonarrative discipline-laxity triangle (Figure 9) is a common source of ludonarrative dilemma.

Regarding moral evaluation players rarely talked about morals in general but in some cases they passively mentioned something that could be considered moral reflection. What was certain is that it was easier for players to fall in the moral temptation of fighting lord Shawn in a duel—which had an option to subvert the dilemma—than consider the decision of poisoning the whole distillery. The only person that didn’t considered this issue was Siemens, who didn’t realized that innocent people were

harmful in the narrative based on the decision. The consequences of this scenario were misattributed to the systemic choice and the chaos system instead of seeing the poisoned civilians as a consequence of poisoning the distillery.

## 5 Reflexion

### 5.1 ▶ XSummary & Conclusion

Through my literature review and analysis of interview material I showed different expressions of ludonarrative dilemmas that were examined in previous research but never coined this way while also extending the perspective away from the moral vs gameplay distinction.

... -> What are LN Dilemmas

I introduced the LN-DM model and applied it to interviews and public discourse surrounding the games *Dishonored* (2012) and *DX:HR* (2013). The LN-DM provides a lens that help to identify dilemma in general but also when a dilemma is a ludonarrative dilemma.

... -> How can they be identified?

By analyzing player interviews I showed the perspective of four players who shared how they perceived specific ludonarrative dilemmas and what noteworthy dilemmas they experienced themselves in the games of interest.

The interviews showed that player interests have an impact on how some players behave in specific situations and whether they feel the dilemma in the first place. Having high investment in both gameplay and narrative doesn't mean both will pull *equally* in every decision, sometimes one interest is considered more important in general or within a specific situation. However, some situations put ludic and narrative in conflict. If such a conflict subverts an important preference or none of the perceived outcomes are acceptable for the player, the player experience is ruined, based on an unsolvable ludonarrative dilemma. This became especially apparent in the cases of Ed and Ingo who actually stopped playing because they couldn't resolve the conflict within the game.

The experiences of my interviewees also showed that some reflective players are also capable strongly detach themselves from the avatar while still focusing heavily on the narrative like Ingo.

When a ludonarrative dilemma is too weak or easily solvable some players tend to look for the best outcome by using save scumming or simply find an easy solution that aligns with their interests anyway. Such cases may make the moment identifiable a moral temptation or a ludonarrative dilemma, but the player does not perceive them as such. In extreme cases—like Rudi's experience with Windmill—a player may instinctively just help an NPC in need if the cost isn't too high for them, even if they dislike the NPC.

The hardest cases of ludonarrative dilemmas that were recalled by the participants—Ed and Ingo—caused them to stop playing the game. Ed may have returned after a friend changed his perception of the dilemma and therefore removing a dilemma that was mainly imagined, while Ingo completely dropped it and still considered he may return to the game another day, but still both of them stopped playing and wouldn't have returned to the game without any external factors. Which means, the worst-case scenario is that a ludonarrative dilemma ruins the player experience completely. And it is worth considering whether ludonarrative dilemmas are one of the main reasons some players stop playing a game.

Relating to a potential connection between player traits and ludonarrative dilemmas one can only argue that having high investment in both gameplay and narrative doesn't mean both will pull *equally* in every decision. Being interested in both gameplay and narrative may be a prerequisite to experience ludonarrative dilemma in the first place but such trait distributions don't guarantee every dilemma will be experienced, since one trait may still be evaluated higher than another.

## **5.2 Position within the discourse**

Toh (2018) considered multiple concepts discussed in this thesis on a continuum between ludonarrative dissonance and resonance. Especially by viewing ludonarrative demotivation as dissonance one could consider ludonarrative dilemmas as inherently dissonant. But following Haely (2018) and Roth et al (2018) this may weaken the analytic clarity of both terms. By viewing dissonance, demotivation and dilemmas as distinct phenomena that could occur together or separate from each other, ludonarratology and related research could communicate better about relationships between gameplay and narrative, just as the player experiences. One can still apply ludonarrative relations as Toh (2018) originally described them, but this paper argues that Toh's (2018) concepts become stronger by introducing different continuums that can exist alongside each other. That way a ludonarrative dilemma or demotivation can exist within coherent narrative experiences. And by making these distinctions one can improve the vocabulary we use when examining or describing ludonarrative experiences beyond using a continuum between dissonance and resonance.

The LN-DM model is primarily designed to work alongside interviews, but with enough data about the research subject one could even analyze playthroughs like suggested by Roth et al. (2018) in the ludonarrative hermeneutics. In this case one would need strong evidence from moments of hesitation relating to a decision and/or survey the research subjects using the Five-Factor Player Traits Model (HCI Games Group, 2024), the Quantic Foundry's Gamer Motivation Model (Yee, 2015) or use another method to reliably determine their preferences. In this sense one could also combine interviews, surveys and gameplay recordings like Toh (2015) did and analyze the decision-making process using the LN-DM model. Ludonarrative models based on the SPP model (Koenitz, 2010, 2023) may also benefit by using the LN-DM to evaluate the processes of the IDN experience.

In contrast to the perspective of ethics research surrounding video games, a ludonarrative dilemma may not always be moral and may work on players even those that aren't engaging as moral agents or virtuous players. But even if a player does not reflect on the narrative based on moral implications, they may still see them within the unfolding narrative, not as moral dilemmas but as ludonarrative ones by evaluating narrative and gameplay enjoyment instead of moral implications. However, the theory that applies for ludonarrative dilemma also applies to moral dilemmas in video games. As Tancred et al. (2018) already said there isn't much written in how to design or test games with moral dilemmas and this thesis about ludonarrative dilemmas, and the LN-DM model could add to that body of research.

### 5.3 Weaknesses and Limitations

Despite the attempt to find a diverse sample size of interviewees by looking within a community that can be considered diverse, the participants turned out to mostly belong in the same demographic group. Furthermore, their player traits of interviewees as determined through the Five-Factor Player Traits survey (HCI Games Group, 2024) rarely showed anomalies relating to gameplay and narrative like low narrative and high challenge orientation, and vice versa. Further, the kind of player who specifically saw high chaos as a reward through more enemies, wasn't among the participants either, but neither did the participants mention they felt punished. This means there are still other perspectives that should exist but weren't part of the sample size. The risk of potential similarities in traits within the small sample size may therefore simply indicate preference that led to playing the game and not factors that contributed to decisions—like a tendency towards high Aesthetic Orientation.

Open-ended interviews are subjective, and it's not always clear why a specific interviewee understood a ludonarrative relationship or interpreted the video game in a specific manner. Through follow up questions I tried to reduce miscommunication and clarify if I understood their motivation surrounding the decisions in *Dishonored* (2012) and *DX:HR* (2013) correctly, but it is still possible that I have misinterpreted their experience. An attempt was made to confirm if the interpretations that occurred during the interview are correct but that still doesn't guarantee a correct interpretation. Another limitation of this work is common for qualitative approaches. The small sample size and the scope of this study prevent it from being generalizable, but the study aimed at providing exploratory insights that may function as a basis for further research. Additionally, it wasn't possible for me to actually evaluate the full scope of transcript data and online discourse I sighted for the study, which is why many data samples were not fully evaluated and the documentation of the coding in digital form is lacking some transparency about the coding process and in what specific areas the categories were applied.

I mainly wanted to explain how ludonarrative dilemmas function in the player experience, but to place this concept adequately within ludonarrative discourse, I had to detach them from ludonarrative dissonance for a more nuanced view. However, by trying to position them in a way that does them justice the research may have deviated from the concept of ludonarrative dilemmas alone. To keep my focus

on ludonarrative dilemmas and their effects on the player experience I couldn't address every aspect enough to give them justice. I further developed the LN-DM model to visualize how ludonarrative dilemmas can be identified but this model—despite being rooted in an extensive literature review—is still hypothetical and wasn't used to the fullest extent within the examination. This means that the LN-DM model still needs to be tested and applied further before its usefulness can be determined through case studies.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Work**

Future works could apply the LN-DM to studies that have a bigger scale and a larger and diversified group of participants. Further a refinement of the analysis relating to traits and motivation into a taxonomy that makes clearer distinctions between how motivation relates to ludic or narrative interests. For example, one could find new categories for different forms of narrative engagement. This could be better suited to understand ludonarrative dilemma and might improve analytic clarity. In doing so new ludonarratological analysis tools could be developed or previous frameworks can be expanded or refined. The concept of ludic vectors as a counter pole to narrative vectors, which both need semiotic feedback to provide players with guidance towards a rewarding experience, are a useful distinction that was implemented in the LN-DM model, but this concept could also be applied to other ludonarrative models or even to Koenitz (2023) SPP model when the IDN of interest has gameplay.

Future Works could delve deeper into examples of ludonarrative dilemmas by adapting or adjusting the theoretical framework of this study or provide further legitimization for the approach. One could conduct a survey that asks players about their narrative and gameplay motivations. Such participants could then play games or prototypes that force them into a decision that pits their narrative and gameplay interests against each other.

In the realm of moral dilemmas, the LN-DM model may also contribute to not only track ludonarrative dilemmas but also to better analyze moral dilemmas and temptation or investigate how player react to these moral scenarios based on their traits or interest.

Especially researchers who investigate moral reflection could reach out to people who share their gaming experience online and apply the LN-DM model through surveys or interviews based on existing trait taxonomy or even develop a trait taxonomy for moral agent engagement. In this sense the LN-DM model provides a lens that could support investigation relating to moral dilemmas and ethical engagement within video games and distinguish between moral, gameplay and narrative engagement. And how these forms of engagement effect the player experience in general, not just moral reflection.

Maybe researchers should apply the ludonarrative decision model to other games like *Papers, Please* (2013), *BioShock* or other games previously evaluated based on morality or ludonarrative relations.

Based on the Dishonored Chaos Doc (**Appendix, DCD**) as a resource, *Dishonored* (2012) becomes an excellent example for researching dilemma and the players decision making process by unveiling the systemic choices to researchers. Researchers can have a complete grasp of the system and all the consequences by conducting three to four investigative playthroughs. If that data is gathered it is possible to let players try the game for the first time and conduct a study like Toh (2015) did and analyze recordings and interview the players substituted with questionnaires to determine traits, motivations, interests and preferences. But one could also try to contact streamers who play the game for the first time to interview them after analyzing the playthrough according to the approach Roth et al. (2018) used when they introduced and applied the ludonarrative hermeneutics.

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## Ludography

*A Way Out* (2018) – Hazelight Studios; Electronic Arts (EA Originals); Windows PC

*BioShock* (2007) – 2K Boston / 2K Australia; 2K Games; Windows PC

*Deus Ex* (2000) – Ion Storm; Eidos Interactive; Windows PC

*Deus Ex: Human Revolution* (2011) – Eidos Montreal; Square Enix; Windows PC

*Deus Ex: Human Revolution – Director's Cut* (2013) – Eidos Montreal; Square Enix; Windows PC

*Dishonored* (2012) – Arkane Studios; Bethesda Softworks; Windows PC

*Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn* (2005) – Intelligent Systems; Nintendo; Wii

*Left 4 Dead 2* (2009) – Valve; Self-published; Windows PC

Mentions:

*Afternoon* (2020) – Kaz VA; Self-published; Windows PC

*Deathloop* (2021) – Arkane Studios; Bethesda Softworks; Windows PC

*Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening* (2005) – Capcom; Self-published; Windows PC

*Devil May Cry 5* (2019) – Capcom; Self-published; Windows PC

*Doom* (2016) – id Software; Bethesda Softworks; Windows PC, Xbox One; PlayStation 4

*Papers, Please* (2013) – 3909 LLC; Self-published; Windows PC

*Space Invaders* (1978) – Taito; Atari, Inc; Arcade

*The Last of Us* (2013) – Naughty Dog; Sony Computer Entertainment; PlayStation 3 & 4

*Thief: Deadly Shadows* (2004) – Ion Storm; Eidos Interactive; Windows PC

*Façade* (2005) – Procedural Arts; Self-published; Windows PC

# Appendix

## Interview Informations

### A.1-EN: First Information – English

Hello \*Interviewpartner\*,

First of all, thank you very much for participating in my interview about Deus Ex: Human Revolution and Dishonored. My professor advised me to provide more context for the study, so I'd like to briefly share my research focus with you. I'm interested in how ludonarrative dilemmas shape the player experience based on player traits and motivations.

Before the interview via Discord, I'd like you to complete the 5 Player Traits survey (provided by the University of Waterloo), which helps me understand your player profile. You can either fill it out online and send me screenshots of your results and demographic responses (optionally the way you filled out the survey), or complete the attached form manually, and I will enter your responses into the survey system for you. I will need some information you shared in the test and the results. The screenshots attached to this message show you how the screenshots of the test should look like. If you're using FireFox, the shortcut "ctrl + shift + s" can help to take a qualitative. I need the information shown in 1. & 2, the other (3) is optional:

1. "Censored 5 Player Traits Profil" – this shows which part of your result I need. The key information is partially blacked out so it doesn't influence your self-perception. Please note: low percentages are just as meaningful as high ones. They reflect preferences, not scores. **(A.3)**
2. "Demographic Information - 5 Player Traits" – shows demographic information to answer for the survey. Just a screenshot is fine. **(A.4)**
3. (Optional) 5Player-Traits-Questionair" – a snapshot of the answered questions (this is appreciated but not required). These information will allow me to better assess your preferences and link specific motivations to your beyond player traits. **(A.5)**

This link leads directly to the survey without prior information:

[https://uwaterloo.ca/1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_a3OJu0N3871hrGl?ref=hcigames.com](https://uwaterloo.ca/1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3OJu0N3871hrGl?ref=hcigames.com) If you would like to find out more about the test before completing it, you can use the following link. Just let me know which link you have used. <https://hcigames.com/player-traits/> The interview will be conducted via Discord and should last around 1 hour. We can arrange a date of your choice to hold the interview. For our interview, I would like to invite you to call me by my first name. Please let me know how you'd like to be addressed during the interview and how I should mention you in my thesis. The interview can be anonymized if you wish, so that no conclusions can be drawn about you personally. I could also use the assigned code name during the interview although I will most likely address you with "you". If you wish to share additional thoughts after the interview, feel free to message me on Discord. I'm also allowed to use messages we exchanged in my thesis, but only with your explicit permission. Thanks again for taking part in this study. I'm genuinely looking forward to hearing about your experiences and insights.

With kind regards,

Marvin Sürig / Interviewers Name

### **A.1-DE: First Information – German (align with English)**

Hallo \*Interviewteilnehmer\*,

zunächst einmal vielen Dank, dass sie sich dazu bereiterklärt haben, an meinem Interview teilzunehmen. Wie besprochen schicke ich die Vorbereitungsmaterialien zu dem Interview.

In dem Interview werden Fragen zu Ihren allgemeinen Motivationen in Video Spielen und den Spielen Deus Ex: Human Revolution und Dishonored gestellt.

Im späteren Verlauf werden weiter Fragen zu Ihren Spielerlebnissen gestellt.

In dem Interview geht es um Ihre persönlichen Empfindungen. Ich als interview Leiter gebe lediglich die Themen vor.

Bevor das Interview über Discord abgehalten wird und wie einen Termin zwischen den \_\_.\_\_.2025 und dem \_\_.\_\_.2025 ausmachen können benötige ich die Ergebnisse aus einer Online-Umfrage.

Diese ist nicht von mir selbst sondern wird von der University of Waterloo zur Verfügung gestellt.

Ich benötige gewisse Informationen über Ihre Angaben und Resultate bezüglich dieses Tests.

Im Anhang befinden sich die folgenden Dateien, die Ihnen helfen mir die notwendigen Informationen über ihren Testverlauf und Ergebnis zukommen zu lassen. 1. & 2. wird in Form eines Screenshots benötigt. 3. Ist freiwillig:

1. "Censored 5 Player Traits Profil" Diese zeigt welchen Teil des Ergebnis Sie mir zuschicken sollen. Die Informationen sind geschwärzt, damit die Informationen ihre Beantwortung nicht beeinflussen. **(A.4)**

2. "Demographic Information - 5 Player Traits" zeigt einen Teil der für sie zu beantwortenden Fragen aus der Umfrage. Wenn sie diese im Test ausgefüllt haben, sollten sie diese mit einem Screenshot ebenfalls zuschicken. **(A.5)**

3. Die Datei "5Player-Traits-Questionair" zeigt welche Fragen sie in dem unten angegeben Link beantworten müssen. Sie können einen Screenshot von Ihren ausgefüllten Fragen beilegen, diese ist aber nicht verpflichtend für die Vorbereitung auf das Interview. **(A.6)**

Dieser Link führt direkt zur Umfrage ohne Vorinformationen:

[https://uwaterloo.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_a3OJu0N3871hrGl?ref=hcigames.com](https://uwaterloo.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3OJu0N3871hrGl?ref=hcigames.com)

Möchten Sie sich vor dem Ausfüllen des Tests über diesen informieren, können sie den folgenden Link nutzen. Schreiben sie mir lediglich welchen Link sie verwendet haben.

<https://hcigames.com/player-traits/>

Für unser Interview möchte ich Ihnen hiermit das Du anbieten. Bitte informieren Sie mich darüber, wie sie während des Interviews angesprochen werden möchten und wie ich Sie in meiner Arbeit erwähnen soll. Das Interview kann auf Wunsch anonymisiert werden, sodass keine Rückschlüsse auf Ihre Person möglich sind.

Mit freundlich Grüßen,

Marvin Sürig / Interviewer

## A.2-EN: Pre-Interview Priming Information – English

During the interview you'll be asked to reflect on:

- How your personal playstyle and motivations influenced your decisions in the games.
- Whether you felt a sense of conflict, tension, or difficulty in choosing—especially if anything about the story or gameplay pulled you in different directions.
- How these dilemmas affected your engagement or enjoyment of the games.

I will bring up specific moments of interest to make experiences more comparable across participants and provide examples of what might be considered a ludonarrative dilemma. However, I also greatly appreciate hearing about personal ludonarrative dilemmas you encountered in these games and how you engaged with them. Whether they occurred in specific moments or relate to anything in general throughout the game.

There are no right or wrong answers—your individual experience and interpretation are what matter most.

As discussed, I will send you the preparatory materials for the interview. It's much appreciated that you volunteered to refresh your memory using the provided save files. I understand that replaying these moments may take an uncertain amount of time. Please don't feel obligated to play through everything included in the save files. These are just suggestions. You can stop once you feel you remember the moment well enough or want to stop playing. Even briefly revisiting one game—or parts of both games—is enough to participate meaningfully. Moments you still vividly remember, even without replaying, are also valuable.

## A.2-DE: Pre-Interview Priming Information – German

Während des Interviews werden Sie gebeten, folgende Erfahrungen einzuschätzen:

- Wie Ihr persönlicher Spielstil und Ihre Motivationen Ihre Entscheidungen in den Spielen beeinflusst haben.
- Ob Sie bei der Auswahl ein Gefühl von Konflikt, Spannung oder Schwierigkeit verspürt haben – insbesondere, wenn Sie durch die Handlung oder das Gameplay in unterschiedliche Richtungen gezogen wurden.
- Wie sich diese Dilemmata auf Ihr Engagement oder Ihren Spielspaß ausgewirkt haben.

Ich werde bestimmte interessante Momente ansprechen, um die Erfahrungen der Teilnehmer\*innen besser vergleichen zu können, und Beispiele für mögliche ludonarrative Dilemmata nennen. Ich würde mich jedoch auch sehr freuen, wenn Sie mir von persönlichen ludonarrativen Dilemmata berichten, denen Sie in diesen Spielen begegnet sind, und Ihren Umgang mit diesen. Dabei spielt es keine Rolle, ob diese Dilemmata in bestimmten Momenten auftraten oder sich allgemein auf das gesamte Spiel bezogen.

Es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten – Ihre individuellen Erfahrungen und Interpretationen sind das Wichtigste.

Wie besprochen, werde ich Ihnen die Vorbereitungsunterlagen für das Interview zusenden. Ich weiß es sehr zu schätzen, dass Sie sich bereit erklärt haben, Ihr Gedächtnis mithilfe der bereitgestellten Speicherstände aufzufrischen. Ich verstehe, dass das erneute Durchspielen dieser Momente eine unbestimmte Zeit in Anspruch nehmen kann.

Bitte fühlen Sie sich nicht verpflichtet, alles in den Speicherständen Enthaltene durchzuspielen. Dies sind nur Vorschläge. Sie können aufhören, sobald Sie das Gefühl haben, sich gut genug an für Sie entscheidende Moment zu erinnern, oder wenn Sie aufhören möchten. Selbst ein kurzes erneutes Durchspielen eines Spiels – oder anspielen von Teilen beider Spiele – reicht aus, um sinnvoll teilzunehmen. Momente, an die Sie sich auch ohne erneutes Durchspielen noch lebhaft erinnern, sind ebenfalls wertvoll.

\*Since I am a known member in the online community and the community members don't treat me in a formal tone the communication in German used the informal "Du" instead of the formal "Sie".


### A.3.1: 1st Attachment of A1 and A2


## Results


Based on your answers, this is your player traits profile!


Note: Your answers are not saved yet! Please click the button below one more time to save your answers. **Please Screenshot the red marked area**


**This Information is redacted to not spoil your experience**

 **Orientation: X %**  
Players that score high in [redacted]  
[redacted]  
Players that score low in [redacted]

 **Orientation: X %**  
Players that score high in [redacted]  
[redacted]  
Players that score low in [redacted]  
[redacted]

 **Orientation: X %**  
Players that score high in [redacted]  
[redacted]  
Players that score low in [redacted]  
[redacted]

 **Orientation: X %**  
Players that score high in [redacted]  
[redacted]  
Players that score low in [redacted]

 **Orientation: X %**  
Players that score high [redacted]  
[redacted]  
Players that score low in [redacted]  
[redacted]

Source: HCI Games Group et al. (2024), Censored Trait description.

### A.3.2: 2nd Attachment of A1 and A2

#### Demographic Information

This section is optional, but if you provide the following information, it may help us better understand the player traits.

In which country were you born?

In which country do you live now?

What is your age?

With what gender do you identify yourself?

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-identify:

Do you play digital games on the following platforms?

- Desktop or laptop computers
- Consoles
- Smartphones or tablets

How much time do you usually spend playing games weekly?

- None at all
- 1-10 hours per week
- 11-20 hours per week
- More than 20 hours per week

Please name up to three games that exemplify the type of games you like:

Game 1	<input type="text"/>
Game 2	<input type="text"/>
Game 3	<input type="text"/>

**Source:** HCI Games Group et al. (2024)

### A.3.3: 3rd Attachment of A1 and A2

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about your preferences when you play games:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I like games that let me play in guilds or teams.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I enjoy complex narratives in a game.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like it when progression in a game demands skill.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I often prefer to play games alone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like games with detailed worlds or universes to explore.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Story is not important to me when I play games.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like storytelling often gets in the way of actually playing the game.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I don't like playing with other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like completing games 100%.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I like games that pull me in with their story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to play online with other players.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I like it when games challenge me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to spend some time exploring the game world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I like to interact with other people in a game.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel stressed if I do not complete all the tasks in a game.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I like games which make me feel like I am actually in a different place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to complete all the tasks and objectives in a game.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I like to customize how my character looks in a game.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel in awe with the landscapes or other game imagery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I usually skip the story portions or the cutscenes when I am playing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I usually play games at the highest difficulty setting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I like it when goals are hard to achieve in games.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like finishing quests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I enjoy highly difficult challenges in games.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I usually do not care if I do not complete all optional parts of a game.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>								

Source: HCI Games Group et al. (2024)

### A.4-EN Developed new First Information. Combined A1-EN + A2-EN

Hello ~Name~,

First of all, thank you very much for participating in my interview about *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* and *Dishonored*. My professor advised me to provide more context for the study, so I'd like to briefly share my research focus with you.

**I'm interested in how ludonarrative dilemmas shape the player experience based on player traits and motivations.**

During the interview you'll be asked to reflect on:

-How your personal playstyle and motivations influenced your decisions in the games.

-Whether you felt a sense of conflict, tension, or difficulty in choosing—especially if anything about the story or gameplay pulled you in different directions.

-How these dilemmas affected your engagement or enjoyment of the games.

I will bring up specific moments of interest to make experiences more comparable across participants and provide examples of what might be considered a ludonarrative dilemma. However, I also greatly appreciate to hear about personal ludonarrative dilemmas you encountered in these games and how you engaged with them. Whether they occurred in specific moments or relate to anything in general throughout the game.

There are no right or wrong answers—your *individual experience and interpretation* are what matter most.

As discussed, I will send you the preparatory materials for the interview.

It's much appreciated that you volunteered to refresh your memory using the provided save files. I understand that replaying these moments may take an uncertain amount of time.

Please don't feel obligated to play through everything included in the save files. These are just suggestions. You can stop once you feel you remember the moments well enough or want to stop playing.

Even briefly revisiting one game—or parts of both games—is enough to participate meaningfully. Moments you still vividly remember, even without replaying, are also valuable.

Before the interview via Discord, I'd like you to complete the **5 Player Traits** survey (provided by the University of Waterloo), which helps me understand your player profile.

You can either:

**Fill it out online** and send me screenshots of your results and demographic responses (optional the way you filled out the survey), or

**Complete the attached form manually**, and I will enter your responses into the survey system for you.

I will need certain information you filled out and results regarding this test.

The screenshots attached to this message show you how the screenshots of the test should look like. If you're using FireFox, the shortcut "ctrl + shift + s" can help to take a qualitative. I need the information shown in 1. & 2, the other (3) is optional:

1. **"Censored 5 Player Traits Profil"** – this shows which part of your result I need. The key information is partially blacked out so it doesn't influence your self-perception. Please note: low percentages are just as meaningful as high ones. They reflect preferences, not scores.
2. **"Demographic Information - 5 Player Traits"** – shows demographic information to answer for the survey. Just a screenshot is fine.
3. *(Optional)* **"5Player-Traits-Questionair"** – a snapshot of the answered questions (this is appreciated but not required). These information will allow me to better assess your preferences and link specific motivations to your beyond player traits.

This link leads directly to the survey without prior information:

[https://uwaterloo.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_a3OJu0N3871hrGl?ref=hcigames.com](https://uwaterloo.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3OJu0N3871hrGl?ref=hcigames.com)

If you would like to find out more about the test before completing it, you can use the following link. <https://hcigames.com/player-traits/>

Just let me know which link you have used.

The interview will be conducted via Discord and should last around 1 hour. We can arrange a date of your choice to hold the interview.

For our interview, I would like to invite you to call me by my first name. Please let me know how you'd like to be addressed during the interview and how I should mention you in my thesis. The interview can be anonymized if you wish, so that no conclusions can be drawn about you personally. I could also use the assigned code name during the interview although I will most likely address you with "you".

If you wish to share additional thoughts after the interview, feel free to message me on Discord. I'm also allowed to use messages we exchanged in my thesis, but only with your explicit permission.

Thank you again for taking part in this study. I'm genuinely looking forward to hearing about your experiences and insights.

Best Regards,

~name~

## Interview Guides

### A.G1-En: Interview Guide English

#### **Interview guide - Problem-centered expert (target group) interview**

This document is used for English interviews on the topic of ludonarrative dilemmas.

Main questions are written in bold and capital letters, while secondary questions are written in small italics.

#### **Greeting**

Marvin Sürig, 32, Student at the HAW Hamburg and am currently writing my Master's thesis in the Time-based Media/Games program.

Thank you for participating in my interview. *A quick warm up chat about their experience replaying the games using the provided save files.*

Before we start, a quick reminder of what the interview is about:

“I'd like to talk to you about how you perceived decision-making moments in Dishonored and Deus Ex: Human Revolution.

I'm interested in what role your playstyle, motivation and preferences played in these situations - especially when your gameplay and narrative preferences were in conflict”

There are no right or wrong answers—my interest lies in your individual experience and interpretation.

You can refer to moments that you have experienced during the latest revision, or to memorable impressions that have come back to you. I just need to be able to relate these experiences.

The audio files of this interview are recorded, transcribed, anonymized and aggregated. The results will be processed as part of a study at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg). After completion of the study, all recordings will be deleted from the end devices.

Do you give your consent that I record our conversation for evaluation purposes? I can assure you that anonymity will be preserved and therefore no conclusions can be drawn about your person.

Do you have any unanswered questions before the interview begins? If so, please feel free to ask them now.

Then I'll start the recording now.

## **Narrative prompt - self-identified dilemma / cases**

**As we discussed earlier, I'm interested in the instances where you found decisions in Dishonored and Deus Ex: Human Revolution particularly difficult - especially when the story and gameplay pulled you in different directions.**

**Before I go into specific moments from the games:**

**Feel free to tell me one such moment from each game that stood out for you—perhaps because it conflicted with your preferences or interests.**

### *Follow-up questions for personal examples*

*Can you describe the moment in more detail? <sup>2</sup>*

*Can you describe how the moment unfolded? Feel free to describe the surroundings, the NPCs and conversations to describe the situation. <sup>2</sup>*

*What made this decision especially noteworthy?*

*How did your motivation affect your decision or approach? (e.g. exploration, efficiency, immersion)*

*What narrative motivations did you consider?*

*What gameplay motivations did you consider?*

*Was there anything else that influenced how you approached the situation?*

*Why did you feel conflicted about this decision?*

*What was hindering you from choosing an approach?*

*Was there something that made you reconsider the approach?*

*Did you revisit that moment in different playthroughs or through save features?*

*Did something make you reevaluate your decision?*

*In which playthrough was this experience? <sup>2</sup>*

**A.G1-En**

**... p2 ...**

## Specific examples from the games

**Thank you for the personal examples – \* honest additions and acknowledge if one of the examples was also one of the selected examples.**

**As announced earlier, I like to address a few specific situations from the games of interests. I want to know how you have experienced them or whether you have experienced them.**

After the explaining the example, vary the specific situations if necessary:

... „How did you deal with this situation?“

... „What did you do during that moment?“

... „ How did you resolve the situation for yourself?“

### Dishonored

1. **The first moment from Dishonored that interests me is the following. You meet an elderly woman there—Lady Rags—a reward, she gives you a rune. Shortly afterwards, she asks you to poison the gang's stash of elixir and promises you another rune in return... *What did you do in that moment?***
2. **A nother moment that interests me is the following. Before traveling to the Boyl estate, Lord Pendelton gives Corvo a letter to hand in as a side quest. If this is done, the player takes on the role of Pendelton's stand-in in a pistol duel. How did you react?**

### Deus Ex: Human Revolution

Now I would like to discuss examples from Deus Ex.

1. **First of all, I'm interested in how you felt about the start of the game, where Adam was called in to take care of a terrorist attack on Sarif Industry. How did the hostage situation affect your experience and how did you deal with it?**
2. **I have a second scene of interest. After you find the hacker - Ari van Bruggen - his whereabouts are discovered by Belltower troops who want to kill him. He asks you to give him one of your weapons. How did you resolve the situation?**
3. **The last example from Human Revolution that I would like to address relates to the return to Hengsha. The helicopter has been shot down, so Malik and Adam crash and are surrounded by Belltower troops. You are given the choice of fleeing or trying to rescue Malik. How did you approach this?**

A.G1-En

... p3 ...

*Follow-up questions for the above examples in general*

*Was there anything else that influenced your approach?*

*Was there something that spoke against this decision for you?  
Was there an inner conflict for you? Were you hesitant to decide?*

*What influenced your action at that moment?*

*What consequences of your action did you expect or experience?*

*Did anything about the story or gameplay pull you in different directions?*

*What was going through your mind when you made that decision?*

*Did you feel conflicted about your decision? Why or why not?  
Did you hesitate to make a decision?*

*Was there anything else that influenced how you approached the situation?*

*What narrative motivations did you consider? Reward - Punishment  
What gameplay motivations did you consider? Reward - Punishment*

**A.G1-En**

**... p4 ...**

## Assessment of general (online discourses) - Chaos System & Bossfights/Playstyle

Regarding Dishonored, I'm also interested in how the Chaos system affected your decisions.

- Was there anything else related to the mission objectives?

- Online the idea that the Chaos system would penalize certain styles of play has often been discussed. How do you see this?

**Were there moments in Dishonored or Deus Ex where your play style conflicted with the storyline, or vice versa?** (Reference to the boss battles, but fits both games in general. This allows players to address the boss fights if there was a problem with that.)

Or did your play style contradict the behavior you would have felt was appropriate for the character?

- How do you decide which actions suit the character?

- What kind of characters do you usually prefer in games?

## Open Reflection & Complementary Discussion

Since we've finished with the examples, are there any other decision-making moments that have struck you as personal dilemmas?

Are there general motivating or demotivating factors that influence you when making decisions in games? Rewards, achievements or consequences, if applicable.

---

Unfortunately, the scheduled time for our interview is already over. If you have noticed any other personal dilemmas that you would like to share, or if there were any other information that you would like to add, please write to me via Discord.

Cut

Thank you for taking part in my research, I know the interview and refresher on gaming experience took a lot of time.

A.G1-En

... p5 ...

## Alternative Order in case a person wants to separate the interview by game

As we discussed earlier, I'm interested in the moments in Dishonored and Deus Ex: Human Revolution where you found decisions particularly difficult - especially when the story and gameplay pulled you in different directions. As requested, let's start with Dishonored - ~~DeusEx~~ first.

Before I go into specific moments from Dishonored:

Feel free to describe a moment from Dishonored that stood out for you—perhaps because it conflicted with your preferences or interests.

\* Use follow-up questions from the original interview guide. If the participant wants to start with Deus Ex: Human Revolution, the names/segments must be exchanged.

### DISHONORED:

As announced earlier, now I would like to address a few specific situations from Dishonored. Since I want to know how you have experienced them or whether you have experienced them.

1. The first moment from Dishonored that interests me is the following. You meet an elderly woman there—Lady Rags—a reward, she gives you a rune. Shortly afterwards, she asks you to poison the gang's stash of elixir and promises you another rune in return... *What did you do in that moment?*
2. Another moment that interests me is the following. Before traveling to the Boyl estate, Lord Pendelton gives Corvo a letter to hand in as a side quest. If this is done, the player takes on the role of Pendelton's stand-in in a pistol duel. How did you react?

Regarding Dishonored, I'm also interested in how the Chaos system affected your decisions?

- Was there anything else related to the mission objectives?

- Online the idea that the Chaos system would penalize certain styles of play has often been discussed. How do you see this?

Gab es Momente in Dishonored, wo dein Spielstil mit dem Ablauf der Geschichte in Konflikt stand, oder umgekehrt?

Or did your playstyle contradict the behavior you would have felt was appropriate for the playable character, e.g. Corvo??

- How do you decide which actions suit the character?

- What kind of characters do you usually prefer in games?

I would now like to move on to the other game, unless there are any special decision-making moments in this game that you have noticed as a personal dilemma and that you would like to mention. Otherwise, you can also name other moments from this game when we're done with Deus Ex / Dishonored.

A.G1-En

... p6 ...

**Before I return to specific moments from the games:**

**Feel free to describe a moment from Deus Ex: Human Revolution that particularly stuck in your mind**  
– perhaps because it conflicted with your preferences or interests.

**As we discussed at the beginning, I'm interested in moments from Deus Ex: Human Revolution where you found the decisions particularly difficult - especially when the story and gameplay pulled you in different directions.**

\* Use follow-up questions from the original interview guide. If the participant wants to start with Dishonored first, the names/segments must be exchanged.

**DEUS EX: Human Revolution:**

**Now I would like to discuss examples from Deus Ex.**

- 1. First of all, I'm interested in how you felt about the start of the game, where Adam was called in to take care of a terrorist attack on Sarif Industry. How did the hostage situation affect your experience and how did you deal with it?**
- 2. I have a second scene of interest. After you find the hacker - Ari van Bruggen - his whereabouts are discovered by Belltower troops who want to kill him. He asks you to give him one of your weapons. How did you resolve the situation?**
- 3. The last example from Human Revolution that I would like to address relates to the return to Hengsha. The helicopter has been shot down, so Malik and Adam crash and are surrounded by Belltower troops. You are given the choice of fleeing or trying to rescue Malik. How did you approach this?**

**Were there any moments in Deus Ex: Human Revolution where your play style conflicted with the storyline, or vice versa?**

**Or did your playstyle contradict the behavior you would have felt was appropriate for the playable character, e.g. Adam?**

*- How do you decide which actions suit the character?*

*- What kind of characters do you usually prefer in games?*

### **Open Reflection & Complementary Discussion**

\*See original interview guide

**A.G1-En**

**... p7 ...**

## A.G1-DE: Interview Leitfaden Deutsch

### **Interview Leitfaden – Problemzentriertes Experten (Zielgruppen) Interview**

Dieses Dokument wird bei Deutschen Interviews zum Thema Ludonarrative Dilemmata verwendet.  
Hauptfragen sind fett und große geschrieben, während Nebenfragen klein und kursive geschrieben werden.

#### **Begrüßung**

Marvin Sürig, 32 – Student an der HAW Hamburg und schreibe derzeit meine Master-Thesis im Studiengang Zeitabhängige Medien/Games

Vielen Dank für die Teilnahme an meinem Interview. *Auflockernd wie das Auffrischen der Spiele war.*

**Bevor wir gleich starten, noch eine kurze Erinnerung, worum es im Interview geht:**

„Ich möchte mit dir darüber sprechen, wie du Entscheidungs-Momente in *Dishonored* und *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* wahrgenommen hast.

Mich interessiert dabei, welche Rolle dein Spielstil, deine Motivation und deine Vorlieben in solchen Situationen gespielt haben – vor allem, wenn deine spielerischen und erzählerischen Präferenzen dabei in Konflikt standen.“

Es gibt hier keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten – es kommt vor allem auf deine individuelle Erfahrung und Interpretation an.

Du kannst dich dabei sowohl auf Momente beziehen, die du beim Auffrischen erlebt hast, oder eingeprägte Erinnerungen, die dir wieder eingefallen sind. Ich muss diese Erlebnisse lediglich zuordnen können.

Die Audiodateien dieses Interviews werden aufgezeichnet, verschriftlicht, anonymisiert und aggregiert. Die Ergebnisse werden im Rahmen einer Studie an der Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg (HAW Hamburg) aufbereitet. Nach Fertigstellung der Studie, werden alle Aufzeichnungen von den Endgeräten gelöscht.

Bist du damit einverstanden, dass ich unser Gespräch zu Auswertungszwecken aufzeichne? Ich kann dir hierbei versichern, dass die Anonymität gewahrt bleibt und daher keine Rückschlüsse auf deine Person möglich sind.

Hast du vor Beginn des Interviews noch offene Fragen? *Wenn ja, dann kannst du diese jetzt gerne stellen.*

Dann fange ich jetzt mit der Aufzeichnung an.

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## Erzählaufforderung – selbst identifizierte Dilemma / Fallbeispiele

Wie wir vorhin besprochen haben, interessieren mich die Momente in *Dishonored* und *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*, in denen dir Entscheidungen besonders schwer fielen – vor allem, wenn dich die Geschichte und das Gameplay in unterschiedliche Richtungen gezogen haben.

**Bevor ich gleich auf spezifische Momente aus den Spielen eingehe:  
Beschreibe mir gerne jeweils einen solchen Moment aus den Spielen, der für dich besonders herausstach – vielleicht, weil dabei Vorlieben oder Interessen im Konflikt standen.**

Fangen wir zunächst gelassen mit einem Moment an und wir wechseln dann zu dem anderen Spiel, wenn ich keine Folgefragen habe.

### *Folgefragen für das persönliche Beispiel*

*Kannst du den Moment genauer schildern? <sup>2</sup>*

*Kannst du beschreiben, wie der Moment abgelaufen ist? Beschreib ruhig die Umgebung, die NPCs und Unterhaltungen, um die Situation zu schildern. <sup>2</sup>*

*Was machte diese Entscheidung besonders erwähnenswert?*

*Wie haben deine Motivationen deine Entscheidung / Herangehensweise beeinflusst?  
(Erkundung, Effizienz, Immersion)*

*Welche narrativen Beweggründe hast du in Betracht gezogen?*

*Welche Spielmotivationen hast du in Betracht gezogen?*

*Gab es sonst noch etwas, das deine Herangehensweise beeinflusst hat?*

*Warum fühltest du dich bei der Entscheidung hin- und hergerissen / in einem inneren Konflikt?  
Was hat dich zurückgehalten die Entscheidung zu treffen?*

*Hat etwas dazu geführt, deine Herangehensweise zu überdenken oder zu ändern?*

*Hast du dich mit dem Moment nochmal auseinandergesetzt? Ggf. durch Speicherstände oder ein weiteres Playthrough?*

*Hast du wegen etwas deine Entscheidung im Nachhinein neu bewertet?*

*In welchem Playthrough war dieser Moment? <sup>2</sup>*

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## Spezifische Beispiele aus den Spielen

Danke für die persönlichen Beispiele.

*\*ehrliche Ergänzungen und anerkennen, wenn eines der Beispiele auch eines der ausgewählten Beispiele war.*

**Wie vorhin angekündigt, würde ich jetzt gern ein paar konkrete Situationen ansprechen, die in den Spielen vorkommen und von denen mich interessiert, wie du sie erlebt hast oder ob du sie erlebt hast.**

Nach dem Erzählen, der Spezifischen Situationen evtl. variieren:

... „Wie bist du mit dieser Situation umgegangen?“

... „Was hast du in diesem Moment getan?“

... „Wie hast du die Situation für dich gelöst?“

### Dishonored

1. Ich beginne mit einem Moment aus *Dishonored*. Man trifft dort auf eine ältere Frau – die Lumpen-Gräfin – und kann sie vor drei Schlägern der Bottle Street Gang retten. Als Belohnung gibt sie dir eine Rune. Kurz darauf bittet sie dich, den Elixier-Vorrat der Gang zu vergiften, und verspricht dafür eine weitere Rune... *Was hast du in diesem Moment getan?*“
2. Ein weiterer Moment, der mich interessiert, ist folgender. Bevor man zum Anwesen der Boyl reist, gibt Lord Pendelton Corvo einen Brief, den man als Nebenquest abgeben soll. Wird dies getan, tritt man als Pendeltons Stellvertreter in einem Pistolen-Duell an. Wie hast du gehandelt?

### Deus Ex: Human Revolution

Jetzt würde ich gern auf Momente aus Deus Ex eingehen.

4. Als erstes interessier mich, wie du den Einstieg in das Spiel empfunden hast, wo Adam einberufen wurde als es einen neuen Terroranschlag auf Sarif-Industrie gab. Wie hat sie sich die *Geiselsituation* auf dein Erlebnis ausgewirkt und wie bist du damit umgegangen?
5. Ich habe noch eine zweite Szene von Interesse. Nachdem man den Hacker – Ari van Bruggen – auffindet, wird sein Aufenthaltsort von Belltower-Truppen entdeckt, die ihn töten wollen. Er bittet dich ihm eine deiner Waffen abzugeben. Wie hast du die Situation für dich gelöst?
6. Das letzte Beispiel aus Human Revolution, das ich ansprechen möchte, bezieht sich auf die Rückkehr nach Hengsha. Der Helicopter wurde abgeschossen, sodass Malik und Adam abstürzen und von Belltower-Truppen umzingelt werden. Du wird vor die Wahl gestellt, fliehen oder versuchen Malik zu retten. Wie bist du hier vorgegangen?

*Folgefragen für gennante Beispiele generell*

*Gab es noch etwas, das dein Vorgehen beeinflusst hat?*

*Gab es etwas, das für dich gegen diese Entscheidung sprach?*

*Hat dich etwas zögern lassen, diese Entscheidung zu treffen oder demotiviert? <sup>2</sup>*

*Gab es für dich einen inneren Konflikt? Hast du gezögert eine Entscheidung zu treffen?*

*Was hat deine Handlung in dem Moment beeinflusst?*

*Welche Konsequenzen deiner Aktion hast du erwartet oder erlebt?*

*Hat dich etwas an der Geschichte oder dem Gameplay in verschiedene Richtungen gezogen?*

*Was ging dir in dem Entscheidungs-Moment durch den Kopf?*

*Gab es für dich einen inneren Konflikt? Warum oder Warum nicht?*

*Hast du gezögert, eine Entscheidung zu treffen?*

*Gab es noch etwas, das dein Vorgehen beeinflusst hat?*

*Welche Motivationen sahst du bezogen auf die narrative Handlung? -Belohnung -Bestrafung*

*Welche Motivationen bezogen sich auf dein spielerisches Interesse? -Belohnung -Bestrafung*

## Einschätzung von Allgemeinen (Online Diskursen) – Chaos System & Bossfights

**Bezüglich Dishonored interessiert mich außerdem, inwiefern sich das Chaos System auf deine Entscheidungen ausgewirkt hat?**

- Gab es noch irgendwas Bezogen auf die Missionsziele?

- Online wurde oft die Vorstellung diskutiert, dass das Chaos System gewisse Spielstile bestrafen würde. Wie siehst du das?

**Gab es Momente in Dishonored oder Deus Ex, wo dein Spielstil mit dem Ablauf der Geschichte in Konflikt stand, oder umgekehrt?** (Anspielung auf die Bosskämpfe, aber passt allgemein zu beiden Spielen. Dies ermöglicht Spieler die Bosskämpfe zu adressieren, falls es damit ein Problem gab.)

**Oder widersprach dein Spielstil dem Verhalten, was du als zutreffend für den Charakter empfunden hättest?**

-Wie entscheidest du welche Aktionen zu dem Charakter passen?

-Was für Charaktere bevorzugst du in Spielen?

### Offene Reflexion & Ergänzungen

**Wir sind nun mit den Beispielen fertig, wenn du möchtest, können wir noch über weitere Entscheidungs-Momente reden, die dir als persönliche Dilemma aufgefallen sind.**

**Oder wir reden darüber, was für dich im Allgemeinen motivierende oder demotivierende Faktoren, die dich beim Treffen von Entscheidungen in Spielen beeinflussen? Ggf. Belohnungen, Achievements, Konsequenzen oder etwas bezogen auf den Ablauf der Story.**

**Gibt es sonst noch etwas, was du ergänzen möchtest?**

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Leider ist die eingeplante Zeit für unser Interview schon vorbei, wenn dir noch weitere persönliche Dilemma aufgefallen sind, die du noch mitteilen willst; oder es noch andere Informationen gibt, die du ergänzen willst, schreib mir doch gerne über Discord.

Cut

Vielen Dank für die Teilnahme an meiner Forschung, ich weiß, dass das Interview und das Auffrischen der Spieleerfahrung viel Zeit in Anspruch genommen hat.

Evtl. fragen, ob ich noch gewisse Informationen nachträglich nachfragen darf, wie eine Liste von eigenen Motivationsfaktoren, die Entscheidungen Beeinflussen.

Und ggf. nochmal schriftlich Ungefähr wiedergeben, wie oft die Spiele insgesamt gespielt wurden und wann die Spielanläufe waren.

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**Alternative Reihenfolge für interviewte Personen, welche die Spiele nacheinander durchgehen wollen.**

Wie wir vorhin besprochen haben, interessieren mich die Momente in *Dishonored* und *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*, in denen dir Entscheidungen besonders schwer fielen – vor allem, wenn dich die Geschichte und das Gameplay in unterschiedliche Richtungen gezogen haben. Wie gewünscht fangen wir zunächst mit *Dishonored* an.

**Bevor ich gleich auf spezifische Momente aus *Dishonored* eingehe: Beschreibe mir gerne einen solchen Moment aus *Dishonored*, der für dich besonders herausstach – vielleicht, weil dabei Vorlieben oder Interessen im Konflikt standen.**

\*Folgefragen vom originalen Interview Leitfaden verwenden. Sollte der/die Teilnehmer\*in zunächst mit *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* anfangen wollen müssen die Namen/Segmente ausgetauscht werden.

**DISHONORED:**

**Wie vorhin angekündigt, würde ich jetzt gern ein paar konkrete Situationen aus *Dishonored* ansprechen, von denen mich interessiert, wie du sie erlebt hast oder ob du sie erlebt hast.**

3. Als erstes interessiert mich der folgende Moment aus *Dishonored*. Man trifft dort auf eine ältere Frau – die Lumpen-Gräfin – und kann sie vor drei Schlägern der Bottle Street Gang retten. Als Belohnung gibt sie dir eine Rune. Kurz darauf bittet sie dich, den Elixier-Vorrat der Gang zu vergiften, und verspricht dafür eine weitere Rune...  
*Was hast du in diesem Moment getan?“*
4. Ein weiterer Moment, der mich interessiert, ist folgender. Bevor man zum Anwesen der Boyl reist, gibt Lord Pendelton Corvo einen Brief, den man als Nebenquest abgeben soll. Wird dies getan, tritt man als Pendeltons Stellvertreter in einem Pistolen-Duell an. Wie hast du gehandelt?

**Bezüglich *Dishonored* interessiert mich außerdem, inwiefern sich das Chaos System auf deine Entscheidungen ausgewirkt hat?**

- Gab es noch irgendwas Bezogen auf die Missionsziele?

- Online wurde oft die Vorstellung diskutiert, dass das Chaos System gewisse Spielstile bestrafen würde. Wie siehst du das?

**Gab es Momente in *Dishonored*, wo dein Spielstil mit dem Ablauf der Geschichte in Konflikt stand, oder umgekehrt?**

**Oder widersprach dein Spielstil dem Verhalten, was du als zutreffend für den spielbaren Charakter z.B. Corvo empfunden hättest?**

-Wie entscheidest du welche Aktionen zu dem Charakter passen?

-Was für Charaktere bevorzugst du sonst in Spielen?

Ich würde nun gerne zu dem anderen Spiel übergehen, es sei den es gibt in diesem Spiel noch besondere Entscheidungs-Momente, die dir als persönliche Dilemma aufgefallen sind und die du unbedingt erwähnen möchtest. Ansonsten kannst du weitere Momente aus diesem Spiel auch noch benennen, wenn wir mit *Deus Ex* fertig sind.

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**Bevor ich nun erneut auf spezifische Momente aus dem Spiel eingehe:**

**Beschreibe mir gerne einen Moment aus Deus Ex: Human Revolution, der dir besonders im Gedächtnis geblieben ist – vielleicht, weil dabei Vorlieben oder Interessen im Konflikt standen.**

**Wie wir anfangs besprochen haben, interessieren mich Momente aus *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*, in denen dir die Entscheidungen besonders schwer fielen – vor allem, wenn dich die Geschichte und das Gameplay in unterschiedliche Richtungen gezogen haben.**

*\*Folgefragen vom originalen Interview Leitfaden verwenden. Sollte der/die Teilnehmer\*in zunächst mit Dishonored anfangen wollen müssen die Namen/Segmente ausgetauscht werden.*

**DEUS EX: Human Revolution:**

**Jetzt würde ich gern auf Momente aus Deus Ex eingehen.**

- 4. Als erstes interessier mich, wie du den Einstieg in das Spiel empfunden hast, wo Adam einberufen wurde als es einen neuen Terroranschlag auf Sarif-Industrie gab. Wie hat sie sich die *Geiselsituation* auf dein Erlebnis ausgewirkt und wie bist du damit umgegangen?**
- 5. Ich habe noch eine zweite Szene von Interesse. Nachdem man den Hacker – Ari van Bruggen – auffindet, wird sein Aufenthaltsort von Belltower-Truppen entdeckt, die ihn töten wollen. Er bittet dich ihm eine deiner Waffen abzugeben. Wie hast du die Situation für dich gelöst?**
- 6. Das letzte Beispiel aus Human Revolution, das ich ansprechen möchte, bezieht sich auf die Rückkehr nach Hengsha. Das Helicopter wurde abgeschossen, sodass Malik und Adam abstürzen und von Belltower-Truppen umzingelt werden. Du wird vor die Wahl gestellt, fliehen oder versuchen Malik zu retten. Wie bist du hier vorgegangen?**

**Gab es Momente in Deus Ex: Human Revolution, wo dein Spielstil mit dem Ablauf der Geschichte in Konflikt stand, oder umgekehrt?**

**Oder widersprach dein Spielstil dem Verhalten, was *du als zutreffend für den spielbaren Charakter z.B. Adam empfunden hättest?***

*-Wie entscheidest du welche Aktionen zu dem Charakter passen?*

*-Was für Charaktere bevorzugst du sonst in Spielen?*

**Offene Reflexion & Ergänzungen**

*\*Siehe originaler Leitfaden*

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## A.G2: Post Interview Consent Form EN & DE

### Consent to the use of the data:

This interview was recorded, transcribed, anonymized and evaluated in aggregated form. The results will be incorporated into a scientific study at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg). After completion of the study, all original recordings will be deleted from the end devices.

We have agreed that [insert pseudonym] will be used as your pseudonym to ensure your anonymity.

If you agree to the processing of your statements and the shared results from the "5 Player Trait Surveys" for research purposes under these conditions, please write the following (or something similar) here in the chat:

**"I, [pseudonym], consent to the recording of my interview being transcribed, anonymized and evaluated as part of the above-mentioned study. I understand that my anonymity will be preserved and that the original files will be deleted after the study has been completed."**

### Einverständnis zur Nutzung der Daten:

Dieses Interview wurde aufgezeichnet, verschriftlicht, anonymisiert und werden in aggregierter Form ausgewertet. Die Ergebnisse fließen in eine wissenschaftliche Studie an der Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg (HAW Hamburg) ein. Nach Fertigstellung der Studie werden alle Originalaufnahmen von den Endgeräten gelöscht.

Wir haben uns darauf geeinigt, dass **[Pseudonym einfügen]** als dein Pseudonym verwendet wird, um deine Anonymität zu gewährleisten.

Wenn du mit der Verarbeitung deiner Aussagen und der Information aus dem „5 Player Trait Surveys“ zu Forschungszwecken unter diesen Bedingungen einverstanden bist, schreibe bitte folgendes (oder etwas Sinngemäßes) hier in den Chat:

**"Ich, [Pseudonym], bin damit einverstanden, dass die Aufzeichnung meines Interviews transkribiert, anonymisiert und im Rahmen der oben genannten Studie ausgewertet wird. Ich habe verstanden, dass meine Anonymität gewahrt bleibt und die Originaldateien nach Abschluss der Studie gelöscht werden."**

## Interview Transcripts

Transcript 1.	Interviewer Transcript	Motivation / Dilemma / Experience
1.1	Interview Rudi 00:02:06 – 00:08:06	
	<p>00:02:06 Interviewer As we discussed earlier, I'm interested in the moments in Dishonored and Deus Ex Human Revolution where the decisions were particularly difficult, especially when the story and gameplay pulled you in different directions. Before I go into specific moments from the games, please describe one such moment from each game that stood out for you. Let's start with one moment and then move on to the other game when I don't have any follow-up questions.</p> <p>00:02:35 Rudi Okay. Uh. What can I say about that? I mean, with one point, of course, you start the game over again so you can answer that question properly, you could almost say, and I have hch, what's the second, third mission or something in Dishonored, when you try to save the lady. I can definitely remember that, mh, when I looked into my old save files, I think, that I especially used to really like...</p> <p>00:03:04 Rudi I just wanted to get things over with, and I just put the knife in. Yeah, problem solved, so to speak. uh, in particular. I did, um, now I've tried, when replaying, to do things a little differently of course, because I think even those 12 or 13 years ago, when that was, I think the last save file was 13 or something from 2013 or so.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:03:26 Rudi Hm. There I have tried to play completely stealthily.</p> <p>00:03:28 Rudi And I also think now that trying to save people, like that lady in the alley, in a somehow stealthy way, knocking people out instead of killing them.</p> <p>00:03:42 Rudi Uh. It was interesting to do, and I managed it. Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:03:46 Rudi Yes, I did. Of course, I didn't necessarily remain undetected, but I saved the woman, she told me about the key and the stuff and stuff like that. It was actually pretty nice. Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:03:56 Rudi And all the stuff after that, too.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it was now...</p> <p>Rudi:</p>	<p><i>Moment</i>      <i>Dishonored:</i> <i>Woman get attacked by</i> <i>guards</i> -- Playstyle: Strategy/stealth Dilemma Playstyle vs NPC Emotional investment</p>

In the mission...

00:03:59 Interviewer  
In the third level, uh?

Rudi: I, I'm... what's the third level with the...

Interviewer: Those were the Pen...

Rudi: Uh.

Interviewer: ...dletons, uh, at the Golden Cat.

00:04:07 Rudi  
The Pendletons. Exactly.

00:04:09 Interviewer  
Because, uh, I think there was also a situation in the second level where you could rescue a woman who was also being threatened by two people. Only there, the woman's brother was still there.

00:04:19 Interviewer  
That's why I just wanted to make sure.

00:04:19 Rudi  
Ah, okay. No, I know in the... one mission, I think it was two, uh, I think it was three of these crooks.. thugs, where two of them wanted to beat up the other one because he had stolen something.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:04:32 Rudi  
Even if I remember correctly. But the situation with the woman, for example, is a bit of a different dilemma, because you want to help her.

00:04:40 Interviewer  
Ah yes, help the woman.

00:04:40 Rudi  
You could say that. Yes, because with the gangster guy in the first level, for example, who was knocked down by his colleague, I thought to myself: Ah, I'll just sneak past.

00:04:51 Rudi  
Because I didn't find that such a big dilemma, because there's that big point again with...

00:04:56 Interviewer  
Yes, I just wanted to...

Rudi: Uh.

Interviewer: I didn't want to ask about that moment. I just wanted to know, uh, which moment with the woman it was, so I could place it. So.

Rudi: It was the one with the Pendletons.

00:05:06 Interviewer

So we can go into that moment in more detail, because I'm interested in what motivated you to approach the situation that way.

00:05:18 Rudi

Okay. Yes. So, I mean, one reason for doing it that way was that I didn't really want to kill anyone, of course. I wanted to play the character in such a way that he only knocked people out.

00:05:29 Rudi

Uh, so that you go through the mission more like a good guy and stuff. So it's a good framework for yourself, of course, because you don't kill anyone. And I thought, ah, I could try that, and I also wanted to try, in terms of gameplay, to knock out the two of them without them noticing, and of the two people, for example, I caught the first one pretty easily, and I just missed the second one by a second, I think, and then I caught him with the sleeping bolt, which knocked him to the ground, and then the woman gave me the key.

00:06:09 Interviewer

How does that differ from your first approach?

00:06:13 Rudi

I think I helped the lady the first time I approached her, because I'm the kind of person who likes to help people. But because I was more aggressive and used my blade, I think I just finished them off. Yes, and then I just left it at that. I think that was also the point, if I remember correctly, in my first game, or rather my first playthrough, I think it was in the first mission or the second mission, depending on how you want to look at it. Where you're also running around in the same area, I think I even finished off the two crooks who wanted to beat up their colleague. So that they wouldn't finish off their colleague. But I found that, for example, when you try not to knock them out, there's always a bit of a problem with the game mechanics, I think.

00:07:02 Rudi

It wasn't really possible to knock them out without being discovered, and for me too, because I hadn't updated the crossbow yet. It was a bit more difficult to knock them out without attacking one of them with the blade. Yes.

00:07:20 Interviewer

And why did you want to remain undetected and generally like that? What motivated you to do so?

00:07:27 Rudi

Well, on the one hand, I actually find stealth games, i.e. games where you play with camouflage and sneaking around and stuff like that, more enjoyable to play in a way that makes you want to be the better person. For example, you don't kill anyone unnecessarily if it's not necessary. And that's why. Yes. That's why.

00:07:57 Interviewer

Okay.

00:07:57 Rudi

But 13 years ago, I don't think I was that interested in it, because I think I just caught most people by the neck, so to speak.

1.2 Interview Rudi 00:08:06 – 00:13:51	
<p>00:08:06 Interviewer Ah. Okay. Yes, then I have no further questions about this example. Would you like to give another example from Deus Ex?</p> <p>00:08:17 Rudi From Deus Ex.</p> <p>00:08:20 Rudi Windows Deus Ex was also a huge deal, for example. I mean, what was there? There was this scene, there was that scene, oh yes, the one thing that I found quite extreme, for example, when I went through the game again, was the thing with the helicopter crash or plane crash by what's her name?</p> <p>00:08:42 Interviewer You mean Malik, right?</p> <p>00:08:44 Rudi Malik. Yes, Malik's</p> <p>00:08:45 Rudi plane crash. I tried to get through it without killing anyone, of course, and it was difficult. Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: Which ones?</p> <p>Rudi: It took a few really long attempts, so to speak, because I didn't want to destroy all the people who were trying to break the helicopter, without killing them, so to speak. Or shooting them down or something like that. And that I just stun them. And it took a really long time to get it right, but it's also very nice to do, and I don't think I remember trying to save them in my first playthrough. Because I think in my first playthrough I found it too difficult and ran through it.</p> <p>00:09:31 Interviewer Ah, OK.</p> <p>Rudi: Because of this situation.</p> <p>Interviewer: So because of the difference now in the playthroughs.</p> <p>00:09:36 Rudi Yes, exactly, because I've definitely played the game twice now, or at least one and a half times, because I don't think I played through it completely the second time. Because I think I skipped a few things there. Side missions and stuff like that. And I'm having a hard time remembering my first playthrough here. I have to admit that.</p> <p>00:09:58 Interviewer OK, but the first one wasn't fatal either, was it?</p> <p>00:10:03 Rudi No, I think I went through that one fatally too.</p> <p>00:10:06 Interviewer Ah, OK, so that was fatal too, but it was still too difficult at the time. And then?</p> <p>00:10:13 Rudi Yes, yes, I think I, I don't know, I think I, I don't know, I was even younger, maybe I just said something, yes.</p> <p>00:10:22 Interviewer So what game motivation did you consider when you were in this situation?</p> <p>00:10:28 Rudi On the one hand, it was the challenge I was looking for, to see if it was possible to save Malik, and on the other hand, it was simply the fact that I had been in contact with this character so often throughout the game, and you don't want to hear or see them die or anything like</p>	<p><i>Moment Deus Ex: Rescue Malik</i></p>

<p>that, and that's just the way it is, no, it has to be possible somehow. Yeah.</p> <p>00:10:56 Interviewer So you basically reconsidered your approach in the second playthrough, which you've now refreshed.</p> <p>Rudi: Yes, exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer: What led you to rethink this approach?</p> <p>00:11:10 Rudi I think it's more because of my overall video game experience, which I've built up over the last few years. And actually, when you look at it that way, my favorite games at the moment are games like Dark Souls, Armored Core, and Monster Hunter, which, when you look at them on average, are actually more difficult games where you always have challenges ahead of you, which is why I wanted to challenge myself a bit by playing them again. And not 12/13 years ago. Just to get through the game, I think.</p> <p>00:11:51 Interviewer And back then, you still hesitated when you couldn't save Malik, right?</p> <p>00:11:59 Rudi I think I hesitated too, but I think I just accepted it because the enemies destroy her very quickly, they can destroy the helicopter so quickly, sometimes, if you're not really careful. It really wasn't easy.</p> <p>00:12:20 Interviewer Okay. And on a narrative level, you were just concerned with saving the character. And even back then, that was a conflict for you to move on.</p> <p>00:12:27 Rudi Yeah. In a way, but then again, of course, you have a video game in front of you, and you think you find that quite a shame, first and foremost, and I think I tried to restart a few times. But then? Oh, I don't know, at a certain point I don't think I did, I just didn't find the time for it, so to speak, and then I just continued playing the game because I wanted to get through the whole story of the game again. And I didn't want to just stick to one storyline, so to speak.</p> <p>00:13:07 Interviewer Yes. Good. The thing with Malik was also an example of what I wanted to ask about. That's something that probably makes a lot of people hesitate. Accordingly.</p> <p>00:13:21 Rudi Yes, I can imagine. Just with the cut scene and stuff like that before and stuff where you... Because you're actually this.... I think this cut scene, where you fly to the location, is actually in the game several times, if I remember correctly. I mean, is that what you think about? "Ah yes, routine flight." Nothing should happen, and then suddenly. You're shot down, so.</p> <p>Interviewer: OK.</p> <p>Rudi: Well, it's just not nice.</p> <p>00:13:49 Interviewer Yes.</p> <p>00:13:50 Rudi Yes.</p>	
<p>1.3 Interview Rudi 00:13:51 – 00:21:46</p>	<p><i>Poisoning the Distillery + slight High Chaos</i></p>
<p>00:13:51 Interviewer</p>	

Thank you for sharing your personal examples. As I mentioned earlier, I would now like to address a few specific situations that occur in the games and I'm interested in how you experienced them or whether you experienced them at all.

Rudi: Yeah.

00:14:10 Interviewer

I'll start with a moment from Dishonored. There, you meet an elderly woman, the Granny Rags, and can save her from three thugs from the Bottle Street Gang. As a reward, she gives you a rune. Shortly afterwards, she asks you to poison the gang's supply of elixir and promises you another rune in return. What did you do at that moment?

00:14:34 Rudi

I think that when you had to take out the three people in front of their door, you could even do it without killing them, just knock them out, so to speak, because you could sneak up on all three of them. That means, I first sneaked up on them, of course in the first situation, collected the ruin, and always like "hah nice".

00:14:57 Rudi

Just like that. It was really nice, but then the thing with poisoning them, I think, was in my first playthrough, if I remember correctly, because it also happened when I played it again myself.

00:15:15 Rudi

I think I just took the thing. I snuck up on them. Through the gang and I think I poisoned everything. Even the first time. But the second time, I actually thought about it, hm, because I also remember a little bit of the story, which is technically a bit ago and such. They're not really bad people, this gang. Yeah. They're actually just victims of their environment, so to speak, which I didn't ignore the time I replayed, after I knocked out the three people. But I didn't use the poison.

00:15:54 Interviewer

Okay, so in the first part of the game, what consequences did you expect when you poisoned them?

00:16:01 Rudi

At the time, I think I just thought, yeah, it's a side mission, a timed level, the people won't come back or something. So, yeah, youthful simple... simpleness or no, like reckless. You could almost call it youthful recklessness. Just trying it out, really? Just playing side missions, just playing through the game. What's going to happen to me? Yeah, and not really thinking about the consequences at first. But then, of course, when I played it again, I knew the consequences and a few things about it.

00:16:42 Interviewer

So how did you feel the first time you decided to poison it? What consequences did you perceive from your decision?

00:16:53 Rudi

Well, at first, there weren't really any major consequences. It was more like, "Yes, I'm helping an old lady here."

00:16:59 Rudi

I didn't think much further than that at first. I just thought, yes, it's a good deed. Yes, I did a good deed.

00:17:03 Interviewer

So when you poisoned it, too, or only when?

Rudi: When poisoning, yes, when poisoning the first time, so to speak. The second time, well, I thought about it first. I thought about it more carefully, because theoretically, the lady could also, when she

talks about herself and things like darkness and stuff, and that she can make these runes and things, and I thought to myself: Actually, she was a real witch back then, wasn't she?

00:17:29 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:17:30 Rudi

And actually more of a, you could almost say, chaotic character who causes more chaos in the world than good, and then I thought to myself: Well, I can still do the first part of the mission, I don't have to cut anyone's head off, but for the second part, I thought to myself: "yeah, I'd rather not."

00:17:53 Interviewer

So if you did that, then this is something for you. You did it once and didn't do it once, did you notice anything different in the third level?

00:17:57 Rudi

Hm.

00:18:05 Interviewer

What then?

00:18:06 Rudi

I mean, I think what was it? because, for example, in the game playthrough, where I obviously didn't poison her, the guy was actually very nice to you. He didn't really do anything. But I remember that when you did that, he was a little mad at you, I think, but he wasn't necessarily that upset that someone had poisoned him. Because I think that when you play through it like that, he doesn't really know it was you. Of course, I actually thought, "ha, that's quite interesting." So I didn't really see any major consequences from it, but I did at least see that I had kind of betrayed the NPCs who were nice in a way. That's just how it is for me, oh well, maybe next time I'll read and listen a little more.

00:19:02 Interviewer

Okay, what interests me particularly in this situation is that in the first run, there were probably also weepers in the brewery. So these zombie-like NPCs, who were just ordinary citizens who got infected.

00:19:20 Rudi

Yeah. Yeah.

00:19:22 Interviewer

What do you think was the reason... why did this happen, this event?

00:19:31 Rudi

If. Wasn't that kind of the big point that I think the gang has... I think that's the point why I didn't do it the second time around. Because the gang still helped some people in the area with the elixirs they had mixed around. That meant they didn't get sick so quickly, right?

00:19:58 Rudi

If you poison them and stuff like that, then more and more people in the area get sick, and that wouldn't be so nice, you could say.

00:20:07 Interviewer

So did you reflect on the consequences in the game world?

00:20:12 Rudi

Yes, exactly. But I think that only dawned on me during the second playthrough. I don't think I thought that far ahead during the first one, you could say.

00:20:21 Interviewer

So the first time.

00:20:22 Rudi

The first, so to speak, yeah.

<p>00:20:24 Interviewer So you didn't notice any consequences the first time either?</p> <p>00:20:28 Rudi Yeah, not any major ones, yeah....</p> <p>00:20:34 Rudi And I mean, I played High Chaos. So.</p> <p>00:20:40 Interviewer So.</p> <p>00:20:40 Rudi That's what I thought too. Oh, a few more people on the street isn't a big deal. Just a little bit.</p> <p>00:20:47 Interviewer So you noticed the first time that you were playing High Chaos there.</p> <p>00:20:52 Rudi Yeah, yeah, definitely.</p> <p>00:20:54 Interviewer Okay, and then you got the other end in the end, in that sense?</p> <p>00:21:00 Rudi I think in the end, there were still two endings, where you either save her and kill, what's his name?</p> <p>Interviewer: Admiral Havok.</p> <p>00:21:13 Rudi Ah yes. Yes, exactly. I can't remember names.</p> <p>00:21:16 Rudi And you just let her fall, so to speak. Then you have the two High Chaos endings, right?</p> <p>00:21:24 Interviewer Yes, but you didn't get to the end with the Low Chaos run this time, did you?</p> <p>00:21:30 Rudi With the Low Chaos? No, not quite. I didn't quite finish the last mission, yes.</p> <p>00:21:36 Interviewer Ah, okay.</p> <p>00:21:39 Rudi But I think I have no idea. I don't know how far I got.</p> <p>00:21:41 Interviewer Yes, that's okay.</p> <p>Rudi: Yes.</p>	
<p>1.4 Interview Rudi 00:21:46 - 00:25:54</p>	<p><i>Duell Pendleton</i></p>
<p>00:21:46 Interviewer Another moment that interests me is the following: Before traveling to the Boyle estate, Lord Pendleton gives Corvo a letter to deliver as a side quest. If you do so, you enter into a pistol duel as Pendleton's representative. How did you act?</p> <p>00:22:07 Rudi Actually, I have to admit that I did that, even in my low chaos run. Because, purely in terms of the story, I thought, because he's actually a local nobleman who supports you, who is also someone who would probably help clean up the city afterwards, so I thought: "Well, fighting the duel there shouldn't be a big problem." Because even if you play Low Chaos, it doesn't really matter if you do one or two things that are typically High Chaos, because it all adds up, which made me think, in terms of the story, that it would actually be good if the duel was over and Pendleton didn't have to worry about it</p>	

anymore. So that you can be sure that he can still help you afterwards.  
Purely in terms of the story.

00:23:09 Interviewer

So there wasn't really any conflict?

00:23:13 Rudi

I don't think so, because I'm always someone, that when I look back to the age like that. It's actually the beginning of industrialization, the end of the Middle Ages, you could almost say. I think duels were, how should I put it, more of a thing of the past, a thing of that time.

00:23:38 Rudi

What you did to restore your honor, whether you worked with someone as a representative or fought the duel yourself, was actually a great honor, you could say, to fight such a duel.

00:23:54 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:23:56 Rudi

Which is why I didn't really see it as a problem, because of my other things and so on.

00:24:04 Interviewer

Ah, OK. So was there anything else that influenced this approach at that point?

00:24:11 Rudi

You mean with the

Interviewer: With the duel.

Rudi: With the duel? I don't think so. I mean, the first time I played, I think I just did it because I thought, "Uh, side quest." But the second time, I thought about it more because, well, he was a supporter of ours. Or is a supporter of ours. So you can help him a little bit too.

Interviewer: Okay.

00:24:32 Rudi

So yes, the dilemma was more that I just...

00:24:41 Interviewer

It doesn't have to have been a dilemma. It's more about how you felt about it and why it might not have been a dilemma or why it was a dilemma. You don't have to interpret it as a dilemma. It's really about your own interpretation, whether it was a dilemma for you personally and why you felt that way, whether you can also say, no, it wasn't a dilemma, and then also, depending on how you felt about it.

00:25:09 Rudi

I mean, I didn't really find it that much of a dilemma, to be honest.

Interviewer: Okay.

00:25:15 Rudi

It was just... I actually found it an interesting story, and you can kind of see where it's coming from, right? A little bit. Yeah, purely in terms of the story.

00:25:25 Interviewer

Yes, so you didn't think about the consequences, but it just fits into the story and...

00:25:30 Rudi

Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: Ah, okay.

00:25:40 Interviewer

And you weren't influenced by Pendleton in any way, by the possibility of a reward in the background?

00:25:48 Rudi

Not really.

<p>00:25:51 Interviewer  Okay, just...  Rudi: That's right.  Interviewer: Okay.</p>	
<p>1.5 Interview Rudi 00:25:54 - 00:29:16</p>	<p><i>Hostage situation</i></p>
<p>00:25:54 Interviewer  Now I'd like to look at some moments from Deus Ex. First, I'm interested in how you got into the game, where Adam is called in when there's another terrorist attack on Sarif Industries. There was a hostage situation. How did that affect your experience, and how did you deal with it?</p> <p>00:26:23 Rudi  Well, I have to admit something here. I had to replay the mission because I went through it a little bit first. I didn't really think about it at the time, but the hostages would already be on the way. I sneaked around, kept myself well camouflaged, and thought to myself, oh, I can sneak past them here, so I kept going. And then I did that thing with, what's his name, the hacker, who was also in that first mission after the prologue, so to speak. I got there first and thought to myself. "Okay. Yeah, it's going pretty well," and then the hostage situation is canceled. I'm like, "Wait, what?" I was a little confused at first because I actually wanted to rescue the hostages, um. I just didn't find them the first time around, and the way to the hostages was also a little strange because I had completely lost track of the level, which made me, how should I put it?</p> <p>Which is why I found it really unfortunate that I completely failed the first time around and had to replay the mission. I've always wanted to do something like rescuing hostages as a side mission, even if I had to run through the level with my weapon drawn or something like that, I would always have rescued the hostages because I...</p> <p>00:28:01 Interviewer  So, purely from a narrative point of view, always saving the hostages is what you want to do, right?</p> <p>Rudi: Yes, exactly, because I...</p> <p>Interviewer: And there's no other motivation in the background, like rewards or anything like that. That was secondary.</p> <p>00:28:15 Rudi  I mean, of course you get experience points for it, but I always find games like that more interesting because of the mechanics and the story behind them than because of the actual rewards.</p> <p>00:28:34 Interviewer  Ah, okay. And you said that you didn't manage to do it the first time, so you took another look at the situation and realized the consequences of simply going ahead without first searching for the hostages and thinking that the game would lead you there anyway.</p> <p>00:28:53 Rudi  Yes, exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Rudi: Because then the whole thing seems to me like the hostages are now dead, you can't do anything for them anymore. I was like, "mhh. I didn't want that." And so, I decided to do it again, so to speak.</p>	
<p>1.6 Interview Rudi 00:29:16 - 00:33:19</p>	<p><i>Arie van Bruggen</i></p>
<p>00:29:16 Interviewer  Then there's another part of Deus Ex? I think it was in Hengsha, after you find the hacker Arie van Bruggen, his location is discovered by</p>	

Bell Tower troops who want to kill him, and he asks you to give him one of your weapons. How did you resolve the situation?

00:29:42 Rudi

I mean, I also wondered a bit whether I should give him a weapon or not, because I really thought, he's just a hacker, he's just an NPC, and what would it do for me in the long run, also in terms of the story. Yes. I ended up giving him a weapon because I always have a weapon from some enemy or something in my hand... I mean, I always have one lying around in my inventory, so I figured it wouldn't be a big deal to give him a weapon.

00:30:21 Rudi

I really asked myself what the point of it was. In terms of the story, that is.

00:30:28 Rudi

I think he calls you back afterwards. And tells you that he owes you something and stuff like that.

00:30:36 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:30:37 Rudi

But. Well, it was more of a thing where I thought to myself. "Hm, I would rather not have given him one, in a way, because he actually knows information about us and could betray us," but in another sense, it was the point again. Well, I have a weapon anyway, maybe he won't survive at all.

00:31:07 Interviewer

So, handing over the weapon.

00:31:07 Rudi

Therefore.

00:31:08 Interviewer

That would have been a demotivating factor, but.

00:31:14 Rudi

I actually thought it was more about the character.

00:31:17 Interviewer

Ah, okay, so purely in terms of the story.

00:31:19 Rudi

Because exactly. Because he actually has data from us, he also stole things and did stuff with Sarif's data and was involved in the whole thing. Which made me less inclined to give him a weapon. I think I did it purely for gameplay reasons, but I would have preferred not to have done it.

00:31:44 Interviewer

Ah, okay. So, in terms of the story, it was actually seen more as an enemy, and that's why you said, no, you don't want that, but then it was more that you thought that's what the game expected, or rather, the gameplay expected it, or something.

00:32:00 Rudi

Yes, a little bit, or sometimes you just want to complete the mission, for example. It was more like, "hm, let's do the mission now", and I didn't really know what would happen after that.

00:32:14 Rudi

Although I just gave him a weapon and saw that if he survives, he survives, and if not, he doesn't. Hopefully he'll be nice to us then.

00:32:20 Interviewer

So more like completing it because it was part of finishing the quest, and accordingly you thought, okay, the quest requires that.

00:32:31 Rudi

<p>Yeah, ye, that's right.  00:32:32 Interviewer  And the second time, when you decided to do it, how did you approach the position?  00:32:41 Rudi  Unfortunately, I can't say. That was in my current game, because I am really unsure about the story in the one where I played the first time.  00:32:52 Rudi  Unfortunately, I can't say much about that.  00:32:53 Interviewer  So you don't remember whether you gave him a weapon the first time or not.  00:32:58 Rudi  Yes, exactly.  00:33:01 Interviewer  Ah, OK. So you would be speculating if you thought about it. But that's not the point.  00:33:05 Rudi  Yes, exactly. So that didn't occur to me while I was playing.  00:33:09  Okay.  00:33:12 Interviewer  Yes, those would have been the examples, because we had already talked about the helipad.  00:33:19 Rudi  Yes</p>	
<p>1.7 Interview Rudi 00:33:19 - 00:36:32</p>	<p><i>Chaos System</i></p>
<p>00:33:19 Interviewer  And then there are just a few general things about the two games.  00:33:27 Rudi  Mhm.  00:33:29 Interviewer  First, let's go back to Dishonored for a moment. I'm also interested in how the Chaos System influenced your decision. You said that you played High Chaos at first and then saw Emily on the tower at the end, where she could have fallen, which means you definitely played High Chaos, and I'm interested in how the chaos system influenced your entire playthrough. Or how you took it into account.  00:34:08 Rudi  I mean, in a way, I really have to admit that High Chaos was; for example, on my first playthrough, I found it just a lot easier.  00:34:17 Rudi  It felt a lot calmer. It was just something you started up quickly in the evening, and I thought to myself, actually chaos is something, it's more of a thing, where you can just rush through it quickly, so to speak. So you can quickly go through the game.  00:34:32 Rudi  And everything worked out pretty well.  00:34:35 Rudi  And I was able to save Emily in the end.  00:34:39 Rudi  If you've worked with time stops and stuff like that here.  00:34:43  Mhm.  00:34:46 Rudi</p>	

<p>For me, it's more like, how should I put it, how should I put it, where I found high chaos easy and you could skip all the side missions. I still did some side missions, even those that theoretically belong to Low Chaos, for example in the first mission, where you can save one person from drinking the poisonous wine, I think, or something like that.</p> <p>00:35:19 Rudi You can do that pretty easily even in High Chaos. You can just knock the guy out and carry him away.</p> <p>00:35:29 Rudi That's where I really thought that the mission would be a lot easier if I just played High Chaos.</p> <p>00:35:39 Interviewer Was there anything you took into account regarding the mission objectives in High Chaos? Or Low Chaos?</p> <p>00:35:47 Rudi I don't believe that so strongly. I've still played a lot with stealth and just quickly got rid of the enemies and then had no more problems afterwards; but in the grand scheme of things, I have to admit that I also believe in trying low chaos things. Yeah. But I don't think I always followed through with it, simply because I didn't feel like investing so much time in it. But that was during the first playthrough, so to speak.</p> <p>00:36:19 Interviewer Yes, so during the first playthrough, you didn't take the alternative approaches, but simply killed the mission targets.</p> <p>00:36:28 Rudi Yes, exactly. I just killed everything at first, because it was easy.... just easy.</p>	
<p>1.8 Interview Rudi 00:36:32 - 00:40:04</p>	<p><i>Lady Boyle</i></p>
<p>00:36:32 Interviewer Now I'm specifically interested in how you dealt with the three Boyle sisters.</p> <p>00:36:45 Rudi Oh no. Ohh. No, that's one of those missions. Oh, what was that again?</p> <p>00:37:01 Interviewer It was, you had to infiltrate, so to speak. So it was a mission where you didn't really have to... where you could just go in... run in and didn't necessarily have to kill anyone. I'll be honest, I can explain it briefly. You have to find out which of the three sisters is the mission objective. And of course you could.</p> <p>00:37:23 Rudi Ah yeah, that was it.</p> <p>00:37:25 Interviewer And.</p> <p>00:37:26 Rudi Completely; just now, I forgot that that happened too.</p> <p>00:37:32 Interviewer Ah, okay.</p> <p>00:37:33 Rudi Mhm, I think I tried that, I think. I would first determine who the right person was. So that means I played the side mission there and then I think I only tried to kill the real one or just the one. Or do you have to kill them all? I don't remember exactly. How was it again exactly? Ah, I think that was a mission I ran through quite often, even when I</p>	

<p>was playing stealth. But I mean, theoretically, playing the side missions there was actually quite interesting, because you could be a bit like Sherlock Holmes and find the different books and notes and interact with the characters and stuff that exist there. Which was actually very interesting.</p> <p>00:38:24 Interviewer Yes, but it's not a problem if you don't remember this situation very well, because I would be interested to know what consequences you expected from your actions if you had gone through with it, or why this might have been a conflict for you at that point. But.</p> <p>00:38:48 Rudi Yeah.</p> <p>00:38:49 Rudi I have to admit, when I think back a little, because what is the mission I passed by again?</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes, because for me</p> <p>Rudi: there are other missions that are much more ....</p> <p>00:38:56 Interviewer Yes, hm.</p> <p>00:39:01 Rudi were much more important.</p> <p>00:39:02 Interviewer Because that would be now. So that would just be something because it means you have to take out a specific one. That's more difficult because you're almost forced to go for the stealth option and find out which one is the right one before you even start.</p> <p>00:39:20 Rudi But actually, I found it quite interesting, and obvious, I have to admit, because a bit like Sherlock Holmes, investigating everything a bit. I think I did that even.... in High Chaos, because there search the entire area and find the right person, which I found very interesting in terms of gameplay.</p> <p>00:39:44 Mhm.</p> <p>00:39:46 Interviewer So you basically adjusted your playing style a little bit to at least find out who the target was.</p> <p>00:39:59 Rudi Yes, exactly, even in high chaos, but I mean, in the end, you still have to..... So I was able to finish off that person. Problem solved.</p>	
<p>1.9 Interview Rudi 00:40:04 - 00:47:21</p>	<p><i>Punishment Chaos System?</i></p>
<p>00:40:04 Interviewer Okay. There has been a lot of discussion online about the idea that the chaos system punishes certain play styles. What's your take on that?</p> <p>00:40:14 Rudi Possible. Hm. I now have.... Really punish? Yes, I mean, you could see it that way, that it is true, because for some mission objectives, you have to do a lot more if you want to play Low Chaos in particular if you play High Chaos, where you can just run in and solve everything with a knife without any problems, which makes me think that when I was younger, I didn't invest quite as much time in things like that. I can really imagine that at the time I also started Dishonored two or three times or something like that, always with a month's break in between or something, because I just couldn't find the time for it with school and everything. And then I thought to myself, "oh, let's</p>	

just go through with it”, and then I think I just went through a high chaos, because it feels a lot easier and you also get a few runes very quickly without any problems like at the beginning with the quest from the lady, I mean Granny, whatever.

00:41:38 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:41:40 Rudi

Which is why I just rushed through everything so quickly.

00:41:44 Interviewer

So basically it was a kind of... well, you tried playing low chaos at first, but then you found that low chaos was punishing, or how did you see it?

00:41:58 Rudi

Yes, I found that Low Chaos was often punishing in a way, because in High Chaos, if you do a lot of High Chaos stuff, the environment changes and you have more enemies and stronger enemies in front of you, for example. But the point is, you always had all your tools there. You could always fight with the crossbow or the pistol, you had a lot more options to play High Chaos, in a way, purely in terms of combat, than you had in Low Chaos. So that's the big thing. I would rather say that Low Chaos is restrictive... it's a lot more restrictive in terms of combat and also a bit how like exploration worked in some ways.

And High Chaos is really easy to just jump into and do, even though I've always liked playing stealth, but I always tried to take everyone out stealthily, drag the bodies away, and then move on.

00:43:09 Interviewer

I'm just wondering about what you took into account during your first playthrough. If you say that low chaos punishes you because you have to spend more time on the game, then you said that.

Rudi: Yes.

00:43:28 Interviewer

And that? But you didn't feel demotivated by the story of the dark one, did you? By the story itself, I mean.

00:43:40 Rudi

Not really, I mean me. I found that darker and the whole thing a bit more brutal, so to speak, and I personally found that very interesting, even if you have to say that, purely in terms of the story, you mess up a lot of things in the world.

00:44:03 Rudi

When you look at the end, where Emily takes a hard line in the city and stuff, it was a bit like, “maybe I should have played it more loosely at first”, but that's just how it turned out.

00:44:21 Interviewer

So, the cut scene.

00:44:21 Rudi

At the very end, yeah. At the very end, yes. I mean, in between, I didn't find it all that dramatic, you could say.

00:44:31 Interviewer

But you didn't let yourself get demotivated by playing Chaos, High Chaos? You just took everything and went for it.

00:44:40 Rudi

I'm someone who, how can I put it, doesn't necessarily think it's a bad thing. In other games where you have a lot of options, like... What would be a good example? Mass Effect, for example, where you have this whole system with Paragon or evil and so on, I actually only found it interesting after I had done a good run, to do an evil run,

<p>where you really turn some NPCs against you; so they're not on your side, but then it was more that I was interested in seeing the story behind it, because it doesn't demotivate me to play evil, in a way, sometimes for certain situations, but I'm more interested in how the character develops in the game. For example, playing High Chaos.</p> <p>00:45:39 Interviewer So it actually motivates you more when there are different approaches.</p> <p>Rudi: Yes, exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer: In that respect. So that's more of a motivating factor than a demotivating factor for you.</p> <p>00:45:51 Rudi Yes.</p> <p>00:45:56 Interviewer I'm just trying to find a thought, something I wanted to follow up on. Because it's actually interesting in that regard. I'll be completely honest with you, because you've perceived the online discourse differently, probably because you weren't confronted with it before it was mentioned online. People tended to say that they felt punished by the high chaos setting of the story they experienced.</p> <p>00:46:34 Rudi Yeah, that's more the moral factor, yeah.</p> <p>00:46:38 Interviewer Yes, okay, so that was just very interesting, and there's nothing wrong with that, because that's actually more of a narrative motivation, and you also said that you wouldn't leave some things out of the evil run, for example the woman you noticed at the very beginning (that this mo...), that moment worth mentioning, that you saved her anyway back then, or that you played Corvo more darkly, but not necessarily that he doesn't care about the population.</p> <p>00:47:14 Rudi Yes, exactly.</p>	
<p>1.10 Interview Rudi 00:47:21 – 00:54:30</p>	<p><i>Playstyle Story</i></p>
<p>00:47:21 Interviewer Okay. Were there any moments in Dishonored or Deus Ex where your play style conflicted with the story, or vice versa?</p> <p>00:47:32 Rudi Thinking about it.... I'd rather believe in Deus Ex than in Dishonored, because Dishonored is very much designed for stealth, whereas in Deus Ex, some missions and some areas are a bit restrictive when it comes to playing purely stealthily. For example, there were very narrow corridors where you couldn't defeat someone without killing them, so to speak. It's a bit, how should I put it, very long and time-consuming compared to just knocking someone out in a straightforward manner. Because what do you have there? You have a few boss fights, in a way.</p> <p>Which are actually really difficult to play through with stealth and non-lethal tactics.</p> <p>00:48:40 Rudi And they also made it very easy for me when I started playing again. The same example is also a good one: Malik with the helicopter. If I had been there, I would probably have used a good assault rifle or</p>	

something similar and explosive mines or something like that, and the fight would probably have been over in a few seconds. But not now. I think I would have played like that.

I also think that when I was younger, I definitely wasn't as good at it, to planning ahead. But, yeah, I had some points in Deus Ex that I liked more.

00:49:24 Interviewer

So would you also adjust your playing style in retrospect, so that you are as prepared as possible for every situation and would optimize your game?

00:49:33 Rudi

Yes, exactly.

Interviewer:

Yes, okay.

Rudi

That's the big point, how I see it for example

00:49:40 Interviewer

Did your playing style sometimes contradict the behavior you felt was appropriate for the character? For example, with Corvo, you say that Corvo would have behaved that way, or that Adam behaved more like that and you did something different.

00:49:57 Rudi

Yes, that is the big thing I see as quite interesting for example.

00:50:04 Rudi

In Dishonored, for example, that's actually the case if you play more of a low chaos game. It suits Corvo a lot better in a way.

00:50:15 Rudi

Because, how can I put it? He's more of a good bodyguard, you could almost say, purely in terms of the story, and you read in a few other things in the game and stuff like that, and you also have to say that the whole low chaos ending and stuff from Dishonored, because I watched it again afterwards, on YouTube, just because I didn't quite get there when I only saw the cut scene. It's just a lot nicer, and I also think that what he does for the Empress, Empress?

00:50:55 Interviewer

Yes, it was the Empress.

00:50:57 Rudi

Yes, Empress. For the Empress, I also think that he would have preferred it that way rather than the High Chaos, where Emily actually degenerates quite a bit. Because the girl, well, you could almost say she went a little crazy at the end, when you look at it that way, and very brutal. Yes, and so on. And with Adam in Deus Ex, I have to admit that in certain situations, I think he would handle things a lot more aggressively, purely in terms of the story.

00:51:38 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:51:40 Rudi

I probably would have tried it too, because, for example, in the first mission after the prologue, at the very end, you can persuade the person to release one of Sarif's employees, and then he just takes off. Sometimes I thought that Adam always chooses very harsh words, and I thought that he's actually more of a neutral person, that he's not someone who is purely out to... how should I put it, keep the peace and not so much into chaos, so to speak. So if you look at Dishonored, he's low chaos, high chaos, which is actually more of a person who likes to solve things quickly.

<p>00:52:32 Interviewer Mhm.</p> <p>00:52:34 Rudi Yes. And.</p> <p>00:52:35 Interviewer You've really worked yourself up now.</p> <p>Rudi: 52:37 But he'd better not.</p> <p>00:52:37 Interviewer You just referred back to the first level. That's actually still part of the hostage situation, rescuing Josie, the woman.</p> <p>00:52:48 Rudi Ah yes, that's right.</p> <p>00:52:50 Interviewer Was that still a conflict for you in some way? Even at that point?</p> <p>00:52:55 Rudi I have to admit that I'm struggling to find the right words.</p> <p>00:53:01 Rudi I think my problem would be that sometimes I would have really liked to have thrown a few words at the guy, and I wouldn't have cared about the lady at that point.</p> <p>00:53:14 Interviewer Yes, okay.</p> <p>00:53:14 Rudi But unfortunately, you can't do that, because otherwise you would have to sacrifice the hostages a little...</p> <p>00:53:22 Interviewer So you tried to convince him anyway and de-escalate the situation so as not to endanger the hostages.</p> <p>00:53:29 Rudi Yes, exactly.</p> <p>00:53:30 Interviewer You should have killed him right there. Okay.</p> <p>00:53:32 Rudi Yes, because the guy might actually be listening.</p> <p>00:53:44 Interviewer So you don't completely take on the role of the character, otherwise you're just acting, which I think is how you want to play.</p> <p>00:53:54 Rudi Yes, exactly. I actually really enjoy playing the way I want to play, but I'm still trying to go in one direction within a sufficiently large frame, yeah. That means that if I do decide to go brutal, so to speak, or into high chaos, then I just murder my opponents.</p> <p>00:54:19 Rudi But then I tried to de-escalate certain things that were just a bit, I would almost say, morally important to me.</p> <p>00:54:29 Interviewer Mhm.</p> <p>00:54:30 Rudi Like civilians and stuff.</p>	
<p>1.11 Interview Rudi 00:54:30 – 00:56:04</p>	<p><i>Characters (Characteristics)</i></p>
<p>00:54:30 Interviewer So do you feel more restricted by characters like Corvo and Adam in your actions, or do you perhaps prefer other characters who may not have a backstory?</p> <p>00:54:45 Rudi</p>	

<p>I wouldn't necessarily say that. I find both interesting. From a purely technical point of view, but I also find a character who has grown up in a dystopia, which is what these games are, generally interesting, and I would also find it interesting to see how this person would interact, for example.</p> <p>00:55:13 Rudi</p> <p>And not there. Sometimes, when I hear Adam talk a little, I think that he tends to solve things quickly and easily, and Corvo, too, I really think he's someone who would have liked everything to remain peaceful and quiet.</p> <p>00:55:35 Rudi</p> <p>Which is why it was actually quite interesting to play both sides. Yes, high and low chaos, so to speak, but...</p> <p>00:55:46 Interviewer</p> <p>So the character.</p> <p>00:55:46 Rudi</p> <p>But I don't necessarily think, that it is restrictive, because you can still decide what you want to play. But you have to find your way into it a bit, into the character itself.</p> <p>00:55:57 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, so basically trying out different characterizations of the character?</p> <p>Rudi</p> <p>Yes, exactly.</p>	
<p>1.12 Interview Rudi 00:56:04 -01:02:44</p>	<p><i>Sanderville</i></p>
<p>00:56:04 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay. I think those are pretty much all the examples I wanted to give, but we also talked about a few other things, namely whether we noticed any other personal dilemmas in the two games. Apart from the ones we discussed at the beginning.</p> <p>00:56:21 Rudi</p> <p>I have to think about it again, there was something else that came to mind. Oh, what was it again? Like when I was playing Deus Ex. As another example. If you're good at it, you can get through it pretty quickly. If you're really skilled, you can knock out a lot of enemies very quickly without having to kill them, which I found really interesting. And there were certain areas in the game where I personally thought, okay, quick, quick, I can knock them out quickly. It wasn't played that stealthily, you could say, but it was still non-lethal. And then you have, what was it? Third, fourth, whatever. Where you find the guy from the first level, as long as you haven't killed him or anything, and then he's down in the tunnel with the leader of the rebellion, theoretically. Where I was really thinking, OK, now I can just knock him out again. You could just go in, finish him off quickly, and I actually found that really funny.</p> <p>00:57:42 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:57:42 Rudi</p> <p>But afterwards, I found the conversation with the leader of the rebellion rather interesting, for example, like... names and I don't get along well. You learn that too, for example, the option.</p> <p>00:57:54 Interviewer</p> <p>Sanderville, I think that's his name.</p> <p>00:58:00 Rudi</p> <p>Because you were really good at convincing him. But at the same time, he also had a hard time coming to terms with the fact that what</p>	

he was doing wasn't necessarily the right thing to do. Whereas I always have this bit of a conflict where I sometimes think that some characters in the world should act a lot more logically in a certain way and not be as emotional as some, like him, for example. Adam, for example, is rather pragmatic in his approach. Other NPCs, especially those who always have to convince people, are always so totally caught up in themselves.

00:58:55 Interviewer

So what?

00:58:55 Rudi

And then I always find that.

00:58:57 Interviewer

The social battles were also more of a conflict for you.

00:59:01 Rudi

Yes, exactly, the social battles.

00:59:02 Interviewer

So what made it such a conflict for you? Well.

00:59:05 Rudi

It made me a little upset in a way. Yes, because you try to convince the person and choose the right words and dialogue. But then the person is just completely unreasonable. And that just made me a little more upset personally. I found that a little bit, but I also have to admit that I found it very interesting how the characters defended their points of view. Because when you throw something at them or something like that, they don't just say no. Yes, that's right, but they also tell you a lot about the story. Which was quite interesting in terms of the story, but I personally found it a bit problematic that the person was very stubborn very often throughout the games.

01:00:05 Interviewer

And what did you take into account in terms of gameplay? So what was it about the gameplay that made it seem like a dilemma to you?

01:00:17 Rudi

On the one hand, you could say that it was sometimes difficult to understand that Adam would then naturally say to the NPC, because you're not necessarily in Adam's shoes, but rather you're just choosing the direction he wants to go in based on the dialogue. Which is why I always found it a bit problematic that you also have to understand Adam and how he interacts with the other characters. And that sometimes backfired a bit, you could say, and even though you really want to convince people that you don't have to go around with pointing a gun to their head, so to speak.

01:01:15 Rudi

Where I just found it a bit, how should I put it, a bit of a shame that sometimes the background was a bit too strong or too fast, and that was immediately noticed by the NPCs.

01:01:48 Interviewer

Did you consider anything specific to solve this problem for yourself?

01:01:58 Rudi

I mean, of course, you could also level up Adam so that he understands the discussion better, I think. Yes.

01:02:09 Interviewer

But you didn't want to consider that. So don't use it.

01:02:12 Rudi

But I hadn't levelled up enough at that point, so I thought to myself, I should really use it now or something. I mean, it would make the

<p>gameplay a bit easier, of course, but I found it more interesting to just try it out and accept things, you could say, in a sense, but why? Well.</p> <p>Interviewer: That means that you didn't really think about this decision again in that sense. Did you</p> <p>01:02:41 Rudi Not so much in that sense, because the game is still</p>	
<p>1.13 Interview Rudi 01:02:44 -01:06:49</p>	<p><i>No reloading accept decisions</i></p>
<p>Interviewer: So there is no reload function.</p> <p>01:02:44 Rudi I didn't start it.</p> <p>01:02:49 Interviewer You used the reload function with the hostages and then went back. You saved them, but you didn't do that in the social battles, for example.</p> <p>01:02:57 Rudi I accepted it at first because I thought it would be interesting to see what happened afterwards.</p> <p>01:03:03 Interviewer So, experiencing the consequences of not having resolved the social battle, so to speak, and also accepting those consequences.</p> <p>01:03:18 Interviewer Would you like to add what generally motivates you in such decisions when you are wondering which direction you want to take in a game? What motivates you to make a specific decision?</p> <p>01:03:44 Rudi Should motivate me?</p> <p>01:03:52 Rudi I really believe that the bigger motive is simply to look beyond that, to try to get a story direction across, so to speak, that I sometimes accept things even if I don't like them in that context. Just to experience the story the way I've managed to do, without having to go back and forth too much, so to speak.</p> <p>01:04:19 Interviewer So you don't really let yourself be influenced by other factors such as rewards or feedback from the game. You tend to go through the decision process, and if a quest fails, that's the only thing that might make you reload, right?</p> <p>01:04:40 Rudi Yeah, exactly, of course that's one of those points that really bothers me, then I would probably reload it, but there are certain points where I don't know exactly what the consequences would be and certain characters have already gotten on my nerves a bit, so I'd rather just accept it and try again in a second attempt.</p> <p>01:05:11 Rudi Yeah</p> <p>01:05:12 Interviewer So you would say that you don't really feel like you're in a dilemma in any of these cases?</p> <p>01:05:21 Rudi I mean, there are certain dilemmas, but dilemmas are more of a thing that you think about and go through in retrospect. How you could try again, in my opinion, in retrospect, to avoid something like that. But</p>	

<p>now I'm more involved in the story, how should I put it, than letting the dilemma get to me too much.</p> <p>01:05:55 Interviewer OK. So, first consider all the consequences, let everything sink in, stand by your decisions, and then just enjoy the story.</p> <p>01:06:07 Rudi Yes, exactly.</p> <p>01:06:11 Interviewer Okay. Yes. Is there anything else you would like to add?</p> <p>01:06:18 Rudi I think I've said enough. I can't think of anything else to say.</p> <p>01:06:22 Interviewer Yes, yes, that's why there's been quite a lot already. And I think I've also gained a good understanding of it..</p> <p>01:06:31 Rudi Okay.</p> <p>01:06:32 Interviewer Yes</p> <p>01:06:35 Rudi Anything else you would like to ask?</p> <p>01:06:37 Interviewer No, I've asked all my questions.</p> <p>01:06:44 Rudi Ok. Then.</p> <p>01:06:49 Interviewer Then I would stop recording for now.</p>	
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Transcript 2.	Interviewer Transcript	Motivation / Dilemma / Experience
2.1 Interview Ed	00:00:11 – 00:05:22	
00:00:11 Interviewer	<p>As discussed earlier, I'm interested in moments in Dishonored and Deus Ex Human Revolution where decisions were particularly difficult. Especially when the story and gameplay pulled you in different directions. Before I go into specific moments from the games, please describe one such moment from the games that stood out to you, perhaps because it involved conflicting preferences or interests. Let's start with one moment and then move on to the other game if I follow... if I don't have any further questions, OK.</p> <p>00:00:48 Ed Yes.</p> <p>00:00:49 Interviewer</p>	<p><i>Moment Dishonored: Woman get attacked by guards</i></p> <p>Achievement + NPC (Emotion + Protection), non lethal, time, multifactor</p>

Then you have the floor now.

00:00:52 Ed

OK. Yes, then in the first game, Dishonored,, there was a scene, I mean, it was in the third level, where you have to go to the Golden Cat. There's an alley where a woman who has bought medicine for her boy,, is attacked by two city guards. Because they want the medicine and they're not afraid to kill the woman, and the problem I had there, the conflict I had there, was that on the one hand I wanted to help the woman But also, two achievements in the first playthrough, uh, once you achieve the achievement of not being seen and the clean hands achievement, that was no longer possible in that regard, because if you kill them with the rats, which is what I ended up doing, then you don't get the clean hands achievement, but you aren't seen, but you can help her, and if you want both achievements, then you can't help the woman, because she dies when the guards kill her, just like that, arbitrarily, because they want the elixir, and then there was also, yes, if I want to save her and just stun the enemies, then I'll be seen. So I had to decide on one of the three points that I wouldn't do that?

00:02:35 Interviewer

Ah, so basically.

00:02:36 Ed

Then I decided not to wash my hands, because that way I helped the woman. And yes, those NPCs will definitely not be able to attack another NPC after that.

00:02:55 Interviewer

Ah, okay: So in the story, you thought it made more sense for these two to be completely eliminated?

00:03:04 Ed

Exactly, because you never know if they might turn up again at some point.

00:03:07 Interviewer

So questionable characters, and you wanted to remove them from the story and somehow bring justice to bear, and on the other hand, there were achievements.

Ed:

Yes, exactly.

00:03:24 Interviewer

Ah, and the problem was that you tried to do all three? So how did you deal with that? You said that the woman had been killed by them.

How did you find that out?

00:03:37 Ed

By reloading the game a few times to see what happens. Out of curiosity, to see what kinds of things can happen.

00:03:49 Interviewer

So, weighing up all the consequences at that point.

00:03:54 Ed

Exactly.

00:03:57 Interviewer

That was particularly noteworthy because of the conflict between what you thought was right in the situation and the achievements.

Ed:

Yes, exactly.

Interviewer

Oh, so that's why you wanted to get everything right in your first playthrough.

00:04:16 Ed

Because I mostly play games, play through them once, and then usually leave them alone.

00:04:22 Interviewer

<p>Ah, so you're not going there a second time. Then you had to think about it and, of course, you had to decide that one is out of the question. Mhm. Okay.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>Yes, exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer:</p> <p>And she made that especially for you.</p> <p>00:04:33 Ed</p> <p>Yes, right.</p> <p>00:04:39 Interviewer</p> <p>And how did you weigh that up? I mean, between your preferences, in terms of what was most important to you at the time.</p> <p>00:04:48 Ed</p> <p>I wanted, I definitely wanted to see the woman... I didn't want to see the woman die, and that's why the decision was between not being seen or having clean hands, and I actually found that the achievement of not being seen was much more difficult to achieve than having clean hands. That's why I decided to do it, and also because these people acted very immorally in that regard.</p> <p>00:05:18 Interviewer</p> <p>So compassion and justice, too.</p> <p>00:05:20 Ed</p> <p>And maybe they do. Exactly.</p> <p>00:05:22 Interviewer</p> <p>OK. Good. I see. Yes, the example is very obvious, which was also the problem at that point.</p>	
<p>2.2 Interview Ed 00:05:22 – 00:13:57</p>	
<p>00:05:22 Interviewer</p> <p>Well, then we can move on to the next game, a moment from Deus Ex Human Revolution.</p>	<p><i>Moment Deus Ex: Hostage Situation First Level</i></p>

<p>00:05:45 Ed</p> <p>Mhm. In Deus Ex Human Revolution, the problem was that I started the first level because it was set in the Sarif Industry building, and after a while it was said that the hostages were dead.</p> <p>00:06:04 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:06:06 Ed</p> <p>And I couldn't really explore the level during that time.</p> <p>Interviewer:</p> <p>Uh.</p> <p>00:06:10 Ed</p> <p>Then I just went along with it.</p> <p>00:06:12 Interviewer</p> <p>So now at Sarif Industries, inside the building itself.</p> <p>00:06:17 Ed</p> <p>Exactly. In the Sarif Industries building itself, I couldn't explore without reloading, which was a bit annoying, because you don't know if talking to someone will have an impact on the later course of the game, for example, if someone will recognize you because you talked to them, or...</p> <p>00:06:33 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:06:38 Ed</p> <p>You get some kind of reward afterwards for talking to them. And it was a bit like you had to rush through it.</p> <p>00:06:47 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:06:51 Ed</p> <p>And then I felt that the level, where you only have 30 minutes to rescue the hostages, for example, was really.</p>	<p>Preferent                      Playstyle, exploring, NPC (Rescue)</p>
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Interviewer:

Mhm.

00:07:02 Ed

And that caused stress, so I rushed through the level to the hostages, but after a while it always seemed to me as if the hostages were already dead. And then I found the game too difficult. So I stopped playing for the time being.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

00:07:22Ed

Until a friend told me that it's only in this first part of the Sarif Industries building that you're not allowed to stay too long

00:07:34 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:07:36 Ed

And then I tried again, but playing the game had caused quite a lot of stress at the beginning, because you thought you were constantly under time pressure in this game.

00:07:51 Interviewer

Mhm. So.

00:07:53 Ed

And I would have understood that to mean that you would have to rush through it constantly.

00:07:57 Interviewer

So now, just briefly, I'd be interested to hear how you dealt with this decision and how you came to reevaluate it. You said that you felt time pressure in the Sarif Industries building. How exactly did you notice that you were under time pressure?

00:08:22 Ed

Hmm. Because Sarif always sent some kind of message. "Hurry up, Adam," or something like that, I think he said, and then he said that if you get on the plane, the hostages are dead.

Interviewer: Mhm

00:08:36 Ed

And he always caused so much stress. Yes, and then I just assumed that the game was always like that.

00:08:48 Interviewer

Oh, and you have one too?

00:08:50 Ed

So you always have to work quickly, and that wouldn't have been a game for me to play.

00:08:53 Interviewer

Ah. So you reloaded and reevaluated, and then you also, let's say, explored... So you explored again what you wanted to do in the first level, and then you canceled it?

00:09:08 Ed

Yes.

00:09:08 Interviewer

Okay.

Ed:

Exact.

Interviewer:

And then you went to the normal level, directly, and how did that conflict play out for you? So

00:09:19 Ed

Once I knew that, I rushed through it pretty quickly at first because I was pressed for time, but I never really managed to take out the people, the enemies, properly. Then it was over. After a while, I thought, no, they should be dead by now, and then I reloaded again until at some point a hostage was shot, which you can't prevent, but

that's what I thought at the time. Hm. Now they're dead again. I even saw them being killed.

00:09:53 Interviewer

Ah okay so.

00:09:57 Interviewer

Ed:

Yes. That's it.

Interviewer:

So there was the conflict again, like, how would you normally be, a little later, because you saw that it wasn't the consequence you had interpreted it to be? So you approached it differently then. How would it have been if we had gone through the level normally, because you had some kind of conflict (Ed: I would have ...) at that point. Can you describe the conflict a little bit (Ed: Yes, I did.) so that I know what your conflict was. What you felt on which side.

00:10:18 Ed

Mhm. Well, I would have played the level differently, waiting until I could take one out quietly, then pulling myself out, so to speak, and hiding in the next one, or always taking out the next one and then being able to explore the level in peace, because then you can run through the level without any problems, because everyone is out. They're lying around everywhere, sleeping.

00:10:58 Interviewer

And this conflict, that the hostages could have died too early. That's basically a narrative motivation, but what were the gameplay technical motivations on the other hand that were somewhat suppressed as a result?

00:11:21 Ed

Hmm. That the hostages die after a certain amount of time?

00:11:22 Interviewer

Yes, that was on the one hand, that was the moment of conflict, that you didn't want that, and what motivations prevented you from doing so?

00:11:31 Ed

Yes, because then you couldn't explore there otherwise.

00:11:35 Interviewer

Ah. Okay, then. Let's go.

00:11:38 Ed

That you can take your time to look through the level.

00:11:42 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:11:44 Ed

And see what else is lying around. For example, you might find something like an interesting weapon or some ammunition that you need, or just some rewards that might unlock some achievement for you.

Interviewer:

Mhm

00:12:00 Ed

Because, for example, you found something that many others didn't find, and so on.

Interviewer:

Mhm

With Easter eggs or something like that.

Ed:

Yes.

00:12:11 Interviewer

And then you still tried to give that up in order to rescue the hostages as quickly as possible. But then you said that neither was possible, neither one nor the other.

<p>Ed: Right.</p> <p>00:12:23 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, so you put the game aside for a while and then played it again. Okay. Mhm.</p> <p>00:12:31 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, that was a good example. The first level and the hostage situation, how it was handled, was also something that really interested me, and what consequences were weighed up in that regard, or what motivations were on which side.</p> <p>00:12:54 Interviewer</p> <p>You've explained very well what motivated you, which side you were on, and then the hostage rescue basically meant that neither side was an option for you at that point, so you gave up, OK.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>00:13:17 Interviewer</p> <p>And then, when you realized that you had interpreted the consequence differently than it really was, you just continued playing normally and played the way you wanted to play. Then there was no more conflict at that point, right? Was there still a conflict?</p> <p>00:13:39 Ed</p> <p>Not at that point. But sometimes the game is quite buggy, which can be a bit annoying, but the conflict itself isn't.</p> <p>00:13:42 Interviewer</p> <p>But dadu... , but it was just a conflict where you were torn between two sides, because 2 Asp... because you couldn't achieve what you wanted on either side.</p> <p>00:13:55 Ed</p> <p>Yes.</p>	
<p>2.3 Interview Ed 00:13:57 – 00:19:49</p>	<p><i>Poisoning the distillery</i></p>

	LN demotivation, clear choice
<p>00:13:57 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay. Then I would like to go into a few more examples. First of all, thank you for mentioning your personal examples, the ones that stood out for you personally.</p> <p>00:14:11 Interviewer</p> <p>Um. As I mentioned earlier, I would now like to address the specific situations that occur in the games and that interest me, how you experienced them, or whether you experienced them at all</p> <p>00:14:26 Interviewer</p> <p>I'll start with a moment from Dishonored. You meet an elderly woman, Granny Rags, and can save her from three thugs from the Bottle Street Gang. As a reward, she gives you a rune, and shortly afterwards she asks you to poison the gang's supply of elixir, promising you another rune in return. What did you do at that moment?</p> <p>00:14:48 Ed</p> <p>Well, what I did was, I thought it was a trap, because poisoning a distillery or something like that.</p> <p>00:14:58 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes. It was a distillery.</p> <p>00:15:01 Ed</p> <p>Um. When ordinary citizens buy it, that's not a good thing, because then you're harming the citizens and not the gang itself. Maybe you're harming the gang too, but in the end, you're harming the citizens.</p> <p>00:15:19 Interviewer</p> <p>What is?</p> <p>00:15:21 Interviewer</p> <p>What motivations did you weigh up and what was your initial reaction? What motivation did you weigh up at that point?</p>	

00:15:30 Ed

First, I looked at what I would get if I did it. It was this rune. Uh. But I told myself it wasn't worth a rune for a poisoned distillery, so I said I could do without the rune. I'll get enough ability, I'll definitely get enough runes throughout the levels to level up the abilities I want to the maximum. Just a little later, maybe, but I told myself I wouldn't poison the distillery, because I suspected that would result in weepers appearing, which I then saw in the save files.

00:16:16 Interviewer

Mhm. In what way through the save files seen by those I sent, right?

Ed: Exactly.

Interviewer:

Ah okay.

Ed:

That's when I saw that there were suddenly weepers and stuff in the distillery, which I didn't do because I would have expected such a consequence, even if I poisoned them.

Interviewer:

So not directly to High Chaos, because it was a High Chaos save file.

Ed:

Yes. Right.

Interviewer:

So now bound to chaos or directly to this action, i.e. the consequence?

00:16:45 Ed

Directly to this act... Ak... action.

00:16:46 Interviewer

Ah, okay, so you interpreted the consequence as meaning that this would also be the result. And then, when you saw it later, you felt confirmed in your decision. And then you felt even more confirmed in your decision because of how you made it.

Ed: Yes.

00:17:04 Interviewer

Okay, but you didn't feel a dilemma in that regard, did you?

00:17:11 Ed

No, not really. So.

Interviewer:

More like on the

Ed:

It's just that you don't get a reward, but this reward isn't worth it, uh, it's unnecessary to create weepers.

00:17:24 Interviewer

Mhm. What do you have? So are there any consequences that you had considered or that you acquired, that were significant in the action?

00:17:38 Ed

Hmm. Well, you could already see that Granny Rags talks to rats, and that alone makes her a rather dubious character.

00:17:47 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:17:49 Ed

The plague, that is, the epidemic, also wants to spread because it travels with the rats.

00:17:59 Interviewer

Mhm. So it was quite clear that it wouldn't make sense for you to take this reward away from yourself.

00:18:08 Ed

Yes, especially when you're standing in front of this device, there's the S... uh, what was it called, I think it was epidemic.

00:18:13 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:18:14 Ed

infect or something?

Interviewer:

Ah ok. Mhm.

00:18:20Ed

And that... that's... that's already going in the direction that you shouldn't do that. Even in this building, where you steal from Galvani, that rat, you can already tell that what you're doing isn't really good.

00:18:36 Interviewer

Ah, OK. So, just playfully then. So you said that you, um, you said that you're afraid that more weepers will come later. Is that more playful or more narrative for you?

00:18:55 Ed

Hmm. I would say, from a narrative perspective, because you don't want to have any weepers, because you want as few of these zombies as possible running around, and the other thing is, if you have fewer weepers, then you can explore better. Of course, you can also eliminate them by putting them to sleep.

00:19:19 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:19:20Ed

But. That might be another challenge. But.

00:19:27Ed

Well, I didn't think it was something you should do.

00:19:30 Interviewer

Ah, okay, so both historically and in terms of gameplay, it's kind of a punishment, and you already said that you're being punished in both respects, which is why you didn't take the reward.

00:19:44 Ed

Yes.

<p>00:19:45 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>Right.</p>	
<p>2.4 Interview Ed 00:19:49 – 00:22:48</p>	<p><i>Duell for Pendleton</i></p> <p>Testing, find solution</p>
<p>00:19:49 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, another aspect that interests me is the following: before traveling to the Boyle estate, Lord Pendleton gives Corvo a letter that can be delivered as a side quest, and if this is done, one participates in a pistol duel as Pendleton's representative. So, what did you do in this situation?</p> <p>00:20:10 Ed</p> <p>Hm. At first, I played it normally, but then I remembered something. Wait, I can check if I have another option. I equipped the stun crossbow, which could also be selected in the duel, and then knocked the guy unconscious with a stun arrow.</p> <p>00:20:35Ed</p> <p>And, yes, then he wasn't dead. The guards declared him dead, but he wasn't dead, he was just asleep.</p> <p>00:20:47 Interviewer</p> <p>Ah OK, so basically you got around it by testing it again.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>Mhm. Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer:</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:20:58 Ed</p> <p>You can do all sorts of things. In the duel, you can also summon rats and let them eat them. That's also possible, but we didn't necessarily want to do that.</p>	

Interviewer:

Yes, so you just

Ed:

It may have looked funny, but

Interviewer:

So you experimented at first and reloaded again and again to see what the right approach was for you at that point.

Ed:

Yes..

00:21:08 Interviewer

Ok.

00:21:20Ed

Unfortunately, I didn't test whether I could teleport myself there, but I didn't think that far ahead. It might have been fun to try, but I ended up knocking him out with a tranquilizer dart.

00:21:36 Interviewer

Testing is also something that particularly motivates you, and so.

Ed:

Mhm. Yes

Interviewer:

And, um, how do you decide what the optimal solution is for you or something like that?

00:21:52 Ed

Yes, I look at it, test out what I liked best from the decisions, and what I liked best was the decision to simply knock him out with a tranquilizer dart and let the guards say such stupid, stupid things.

00:22:10 Ed

Hmm. Another death.

Interviewer:

<p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:22:12 Ed</p> <p>He wasn't dead at all.</p> <p>00:22:17 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes. And accordingly, yes.</p> <p>00:22:18 Ed</p> <p>Yes, he was just dead drunk, from the looks of it.</p> <p>00:22:23 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>00:22:28 Interviewer</p> <p>And so there was, um, well, that was, then there was no conflict for you. You just said, okay.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>No..</p> <p>Interviewer:</p> <p>OK, you just tested what still fits your playing style.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:22:43 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay.</p> <p>00:22:44 Ed</p> <p>Right.</p>	
<p>2.5 Interview Ed 00:22:48 – 00:23:53</p>	<p><i>Weapon Arie Deus Ex</i></p> <p>Solution, no dilemma</p>
<p>00:22:48 Interviewer</p>	

Hmm. Now I'd like to talk about a moment from Deus Ex, uh, I mean Human Revolution. We've already discussed the hostage situation. Another scene that interests me is when, after you find the hacker Arie van Bruggen, his location is discovered by Bell Tower troops who want to kill him. He asks you to give him one of your weapons. How did you resolve the situation?

00:23:14 Ed

I just gave him a weapon that wasn't upgraded. Just a normal standard weapon that I had with me.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

Ed:

Well, I always had quite a lot of weapons in my inventory.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

Ed:

That's why it wasn't a problem.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

00:23:29 Ed

If, for example, you had saved one beforehand in such a situation, then you could, if you don't have one in your inventory, add one to your inventory afterwards and then give it to him. So that's not really a problem.

00:23:43 Interviewer

Ah, okay, so again with the save file. Then just figure out the solution if necessary..

Ed:

Mhm.

Interviewer:

<p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:23:51 Ed</p> <p>Yes. Exactly.</p>	
<p>2.6 Interview Ed 00:23:53 – 00:28:48</p>	<p><i>Rescue Malik</i></p> <p>Achievement, rescue NPC, less prepared first time, difficult fight</p>
<p>00:23:53 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes. The last example from Human Revolution that I would like to mention relates to the return to Hengsha. The helipad was shot down, causing Malik and Adam to crash and be surrounded by Bell Tower troops. You are faced with the choice of fleeing or trying to save Malik. How did you proceed here?</p> <p>00:24:16 Ed</p> <p>Hmm. I tried to save them. That was a bit difficult the first time, though, because I always had too many weapons in my inventory. I always thought I might need them again somewhere. I didn't have enough stun grenades and stuff, and then I realized that it's better to take everything with you, more of that kind of stuff instead of unnecessary weapons like rocket launchers or whatever, if you don't want to play deadly. Hm. I tried to save them. That was a bit difficult the first time, though, because I always had too many weapons in my inventory. Because I always thought you might need them again somewhere. I didn't have enough stun grenades and stuff like that, so I realized afterwards that it's better to take everything with you, i.e. to take more of those kinds of things instead of unnecessary weapons like rocket launchers or something if you don't want to play deadly.</p> <p>00:24:54 Ed</p> <p>It was a bit easier when you threw, for example, four of those gas grenades, or whatever they're called, or sleeping grenades, I don't remember what they're called, at the Bell Tower people.</p> <p>00:25:09 Interviewer</p>	

Mhm. So now, uh, that was later on, when you did something with gas grenades again. So.

Ed:

Right.

Interviewer:

In the first round, how did you feel about that?

00:25:22 Ed

It was a bit difficult. I had to load it a few times.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

00:25:31 Ed

I don't remember exactly whether I managed it, whether I stopped then, I don't remember that at all. Uh. But it was a tricky situation. So I tried, if I did it, I definitely tried to knock them all out with the stun gun or with my hands... with these knockouts. But it was really difficult because if I attached the EMP grenade to the robot, you have to, if you don't want to kill anyone, uh, you have to throw all the people away, really quickly, and hope that they don't die in the process.

00:26:17 Interviewer

Ah. So, it's like that again.

Ed:

Yes, it is.

Interviewer:

So, it's a matter of achievement.

Ed:

Mhm.

00:26:23 Interviewer

So, what was the motivation on each of the two sides you weighed up?

00:26:30 Ed

Once. Well, I definitely wanted to save Malik, that was a given, and I also wanted to try not to kill anyone if possible, which is pretty difficult in the game because sometimes people die suddenly.

00:26:34 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:26:48Ed

Where you can't prevent it at all.

Interviewer: 0

Mhm. Ok.

Ed: Which is quite a problem too. Hm. Yes.

00:26:55 Interviewer

But that's how you felt too.

Ed:

And.

Interviewer:

About the achievement, uh, that you just.

Ed:

Yes. Exactly.

Interviewer:

Who gets it in the end. Mhm.

00:27:02 Ed

Exactly. And that you want to save Malik.

00:27:06 Interviewer

Mhm. And that's the conflict, that

Ed:

I have

Interviewer:

that was particularly difficult for you.

00:27:12 Ed

Mhm. Yes, I also heard from a colleague that if Malik isn't rescued, she will die and then, uh, the augmentations will be removed by the harvesters. I didn't want to see that either.

00:27:20 Interviewer

Ah, OK, so you didn't even want to. So you didn't even consider running away, that was out of the question.

00:27:34 Ed

Yes. Exactly. Right. If you play very difficult, then you'll die a few times. If you're not well equipped enough. So I did that at the beginning too. Exactly. I played it on normal mode before, and then I did this battle on easy mode because I wasn't well equipped enough for it.

00:27:55 Interviewer

Ah, okay. And now, when you were refreshing your knowledge, you had prepared yourself for that as well.

00:27:57 Ed

That's exactly where I managed to save her, on the hardest, most difficult level.

Interviewer:

Ah. Okay.

Ed:

No problem, I even managed to take them all out without anyone dying.

00:28:14 Interviewer

Ah, impressive. Yes, so the consequences you weighed up were clear.

Ed:

Mhm.

00:28:32 Interviewer

<p>And you would really consider that a real dilemma for you right now. Again.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>00:28:38 Interviewer</p> <p>Just like in the first level, where you were also a bit torn.</p> <p>00:28:46 Ed</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>Yes.</p>	
<p>2.7 Interview Ed 00:28:48 – 00:32:40</p>	<p><i>High Chaos System</i></p> <p>Playstyle. Hard to get into high chaos.</p>
<p>00:28:48 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, so a few more general questions about the games. Regarding Dishonored, I'm interested in how the chaos system affected your decision.</p> <p>00:29:03 Ed</p> <p>Hmm. I have. So when I found it, I actually thought that there were two different ways to play.</p> <p>Interviewer:</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>Ed:</p> <p>I didn't really think it was a big deal, but the problem I see with it is that if you really want to go for high chaos and keep your play style that way, then, uh, it's going to be difficult, because if you don't score enough points, by saying, yeah, I'll kill him, I'll kill him. So you really have to take out all the guards and take them out in a deadly way, and that's not really what I want to play, so I found it interesting to have these save files, because I'm afraid that if I hadn't had them, I would</p>	

never have seen what you can do in the last level, where you can, for example, Pendleton and samMartin, who are still alive there, you can try not to kill them, and if you have it set to low chaos, then they're dead immediately because they were murdered by Havok with poison or something in their drink.

00:30:19 Interviewer

Mhm. Okay, and how would you describe your motivation in terms of why you didn't really get into High Chaos?

00:30:30 Ed

Hmm. Because I was more into stealth and stuff, and not really into the deadly stuff, because I prefer to explore and stuff. Yes.

00:30:46 Interviewer

Mhm.

So first of all, knock them all out, in that sense.

00:30:50 Ed

Mhm. Exactly, all of them. I just always knocked them all out in the sense that I stunned them and stuff.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Or knocked them out. I even knocked out the dogs, which don't really belong in this chaos factor.

00:31:03 Interviewer

Ah, OK. Hm. So what gameplay motivation did you take into account that makes you say you can't get into high chaos?

00:31:22 Ed

Hm.

Interviewer: Or even nar...

Ed: Because you also get

Interviewer: Yes

Ed: For example, if you indirectly eliminate people,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Which is usually the nicer way.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:31:35Ed

Uh, then you even get chaos points deducted every time

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: And if you don't really, if you eliminate them all like that and then, uh, try to get the chaos points, uh, then you end up with so many points that you don't even get into high chaos.

Interviewer: Ah, OK.

Ed: So.

00:31:54Interviewer

What then?

00:31:54Ed

In terms of playing style, I would then.

00:31:57Interviewer

Hm. Okay, and what do you want then?

00:31:59Ed

I guess from the playing style

Interviewer: Yes.

Ed: Yes, I wouldn't recommend that.

00:32:03Interviewer

How would you describe a playing style then?

00:32:09Ed

Hm. It's just that I have fun taking them out, not with weapons, but with that.

00:32:19Ed

Knocking them out, so to speak, although in this case it was choking them out.

00:32:24Interviewer

<p>Mhm. So first strategically.</p> <p>00:32:25Ed</p> <p>They're asleep then.</p> <p>00:32:28Interviewer</p> <p>Ah, okay, and the other one is too wild, right?</p> <p>Ed: Yes.</p> <p>00:32:35Interviewer</p> <p>Okay.</p>	
<p>2.8 Interview Ed 00:32:40 – 00:44:04</p>	<p><i>Mission from Calista. Save Curnow</i></p> <p>Rescue NPC, missing information</p>
<p>00:32:40 Ed</p> <p>What else comes to mind, in the second level.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:32:45Ed</p> <p>I actually had to play that one a second time.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:32:49Ed</p> <p>Because I accidentally skipped the quest where Calista has to rescue her uncle.</p> <p>00:32:57Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:32:59Ed</p> <p>And then I somehow took the wrong path, so I couldn't get past her.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: I didn't do the quest, and then he was always considered dead, which I found very strange, because I had saved him.</p>	

00:33:05 Interviewer

Mhm. Ah, okay.

00:33:11Ed

And that was also one of those moments where I thought: What just happened?

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:33:19Ed

When I reloaded the level, I got the quest and was then able to save him. Otherwise, if you don't have the quest, he's always considered dead.

00:33:27Interviewer

And what did you weigh up in that situation in that regard?

00:33:32Ed

Yes, actually, I had to replay the entire level again,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: To save him, but I did that because I didn't want to see him die, because he was one of Corvo's loyal followers who had gone to sea with him to look for a cure for the plague.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: And since it was called "plague," I just didn't want to see him die, so I reloaded the level.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:34:07Ed

Funnily enough, I even got better talismans when I reloaded it.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: But yes, that was it. And then...

00:34:16Interviewer

Ah, that was another reason to go to all that trouble in that regard.

Ed: Yes, exactly. It was a bit strange that he suddenly stormed out of the room, because I must have triggered something that made them come out. But yes.

00:34:40Ed

I don't know how that happened either.

00:34:41Interviewer

Mhm.

00:34:45Ed

But at least I was able to save him.

00:34:46Interviewer

Yes, was there anything else related to the mission objectives that you wanted to talk about, um, your chaos system? You just said that you found it more exciting not to kill them and that that would earn you points...

Ed: Exactly.

Interviewer: would deduct, um, chaos points. Um.

00:35:02Ed

Mhm.

00:35:07Interviewer

How do you know that's the case?

00:35:11Ed

Someone told me that once.

00:35:14Interviewer

Mhm. Okay.

00:35:15Interviewer

Did someone probably read some document online or something?

00:35:15Ed

Mhm.

00:35:20Interviewer

So a friend told you that too?

00:35:24Ed

Yes. Exactly.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:35:26Ed

He probably looked into it.

00:35:28Interviewer

Mhm. And that's where you concluded that you can't get into High Chaos because you also

Ed: Right.

Interviewer: and you want that, so why not, um? So why do you always want to choose the alternative method? What motivates you to always do it that way?

00:35:48Ed

Hm. That's a good question. Because that's somehow the more interesting solution, and I would guess that some people suffer a more harmless fate as a result. Others, on the other hand, even if you take the, um, no matter which path you take. They have a difficult fate either way.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Like the head guard, for example, but I didn't like him at all anyway.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: So it wasn't really relevant to me that he ended up as a weeper.

00:36:34Interviewer

Mhm, so you kind of observed the story, um, that they would have a very difficult fate in the end, even in Non Lethal. So that was it.

00:36:50Ed

Yes. So.

00:36:59Interviewer

Yes, but um

Ed: Yes.

Interviewer: You said you'd rather. So you find it more exciting to switch it off differently. Is that more gameplay or also

Ed: Yes, exactly .

Interviewer: Okay. More gameplay. Mhm.

00:37:10Ed

Yes. Those are actually the more interesting methods.

00:37:15Interviewer

Mhm. And um, what exactly do you find so exciting about that?

00:37:22Ed

Hmm. With one, you have to puzzle a bit to figure out how to eliminate them, while with the other, it's a solution you know right away. With the others, you just have to guess what you have to do.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:37:33Ed

For example, at the Boyle estate, you have to guess which one is the right one. Of course, you can also kill all three, but I didn't find that very exciting and it was much more interesting to puzzle out which one is the right one to kidnap.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:37:57Ed

And also because I love exploring.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: The alternative solutions are more interesting, of course, because...

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Yes.

00:38:05Interviewer

And, uh, on the other hand, you would have liked to have ended up in high chaos, where...

Ed: Mhm.

00:38:15Interviewer

Mhm, and what?

00:38:16Ed

Yes, because in the last level on this island, you approach the objectives in a completely different way.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: And that's interesting, what you can do there. Also to find out how Pendleton and Martin react in that regard.

00:38:33Interviewer

Mhm. So basically

Ed: And.

Interviewer: more historical exploration, right?

Ed: Right.

Interviewer: Ah OK. And also, or also, uh, somehow gameplay exploration. How do you see exploration at this point?

00:38:46Ed

Hm. Yes, that you see another story there in that regard and can also see how I can turn them off in High Chaos, because then you theoretically have three.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

Ed:

And in the other one, you only have one target.

Interviewer:

Ah, okay.

Ed:

So to speak.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:38:59 Ed

Because in one, you only have Havok, because **you've** taken out the other two.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Uh, theoretically, you can fight him, or you can take him out, just like normal.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

Ed:

Uh, yeah. You can also take the key and run quickly to the door so you don't have to fight him. He'll sound the alarm, but...

00:39:27 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:39:29 Ed

Or rather, he'll want to fight you, but you can be faster and let Emily out first.

00:39:34 Interviewer

Mhm. You said at the beginning that you tend to only play the games once. Um, did you then

Ed: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: Dishonored häufiger gespielt oder wie hast du das alles erkundet?

00:39:46 Ed

Hm. No, I loaded the save files again, mostly.

Interviewer: Ah, so always at that point

Ed: and the save files you provided.

Interviewer: Yes, well

Ed: Exactly.

Interviewer: And, uh, then you tend to look at the local stuff, what the direct consequences are, and the other stuff

Ed: Yes.

00:40:03Interviewer

you don't stop, you just assume

00:40:04Ed

Exactly.

Interviewer: you just tend to.

00:40:06Ed

Yes, right

Interviewer: okay

Ed: Once he made that decision, I occasionally checked to see what would happen if I did this or that. For example, there is this one mission where you can turn on a spotlight.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Then the Tallboys attack the house. But I didn't want that, so I immediately reloaded.

Interviewer: Ah, and what did you do in the situation with the Tallboys? Uh, what level was that, so I can place it?

00:40:35Ed

Uh, that was the one with the flooded... That was the one with the flooded district.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: There was a house with people in it, survivors or something.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: It gets attacked when you... when you turn on the light there.

Interviewer: And what were you weighing up in terms of motivations at that point to make your decision?

00:41:00Ed

Well, from one point of view, you don't want to see people die,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: and so I thought, I could find some other diversionary tactic for the Tallboys,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: or you could just jump on the train, then they won't see you and you can just get around them.

00:41:20Interviewer

Mhm.

00:41:21Ed

You save the other people, that's a side quest, you just do it and

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:41:27Ed

You leave the rest.

Interviewer: Ah, okay. So. Well, then there was actually a clear decision for you about what you wanted to do in the end.

00:41:42Ed

Yes.

00:41:42Interviewer

OK.

Ed: Right.

00:41:47Interviewer

Well, from one point of view, you don't want to see people die,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: and so I thought, I could find some other diversionary tactic for the Tallboys,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: or you could just jump on the train, then they won't see you and you can just get around them.

00:41:20Interviewer

Mhm.

00:41:21Ed

You save the other people, that's a side quest, you just do it and

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:41:27Ed

You leave the rest.

Interviewer: Ah, okay. So. Well, then there was actually a clear decision for you about what you wanted to do in the end.

00:41:42Ed

Yes.

00:41:42Interviewer

OK.

Ed: Right.

00:42:39Ed

Hm. Well, the thing is, you can't just get into High Chaos as easily as I just said.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:42:48Ed

Uh. But I actually don't think the system really punishes you.

Interviewer: Okay. How else would you see it?

00:42:58Ed

Uh. It's just an alternative, an alternative game, so you can just play with that.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: But yes.

00:43:07Interviewer

But as you said, in terms of playing style, that won't be possible for you. So.

<p>Ed: Yes, that's right.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ah, okay.</p> <p>00:43:20 Interviewer</p> <p>So it's true that you're in conflict because your playing style is at odds with this alternative ending that you want to play?</p> <p>00:43:31 Ed</p> <p>Yes, that's exactly the thing.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: It's difficult to get there.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>00:43:41 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, because online it's actually more like that. The debate tends to be that if you want to play deadly, then there's basically a bad ending. It's often said in the forums</p> <p>Ed: Mhm.</p> <p>Interviewer: and you don't really see that now.</p> <p>00:43:55 Ed:</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Ed: No.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p>	
<p>2.9 Interview Ed 00:44:04 – 00:47:31</p>	<p><i>Police station Deus Ex</i></p> <p>Playstyle, reward, story</p>
<p>00:44:04 Interviewer</p> <p>Were there moments in Dishonored or Deus Ex where your playing style conflicted with the story, or vice versa?</p> <p>00:44:14 Ed</p>	

Hm. Yes, for example, I took out the entire police station for experience because I wanted to gain more experience.

Interviewer: And now in Deus Ex?

00:44:22Ed

And Adam Jensen probably wouldn't have done that, yes. I don't think Adam Jensen would have done that.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: that he turns them all off and that they then lie there and sleep.

Interviewer: Mhm. Which, um...

00:44:35Ed

I would assume so.

00:44:38Interviewer

Mhm. What influenced your actions at that moment?

00:44:43Ed

Hm. Experience

Interviewer: OK

Ed: Well, because I wanted more augmentation, so I got this practice kit, and because I didn't know how much I actually needed until then, I looked for every possible source of experience I could find and used it so that I could gain as much experience as possible until I was really ready for the fights.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: For example, that I can run fast or hack better, so that I can gain even more experience.

00:45:14Interviewer

Mhm. And why did you do that in this regard? So, like... uh, did you expect any consequences from that?

00:45:24Interviewer

Now everyone's at the police station.

Ed: Mhm.

Interviewer: Knocking someone out like that must have some consequences.

00:45:29Ed

Yes. But somehow it didn't. You could never get back into that level, and it didn't really have any effect. Haas would have been fired anyway after letting me in.

00:45:45Interviewer

Mhm.

00:45:47Ed

So. It didn't really have anything to do with the story, whether I did it or not.

00:45:52Interviewer

Ah okay, so would you say that historical moments like that could deter you, if we compare it to, uh, poisoning the distillery?

Ed: Yes.

Interviewer: That moment is very similar to, um, poisoning the distillery.

00:46:10Ed

Mhm. Right.

Interviewer:

So.

00:46:13Ed

It wouldn't be there now. Actually, you would have expected the police to then look for Adam Jensen... to be on the lookout for him, but there was nothing.

00:46:27Interviewer

Ah, OK.

00:46:27Ed

So they weren't looking for him.

00:46:32Interviewer

<p>Okay, so.</p> <p>Ed: searching.</p> <p>Interviewer: Hmm.</p> <p>00:46:39Interviewer</p> <p>Good. Um. Hm.</p> <p>00:46:43Interviewer</p> <p>That would also fit the question, for example, um, if your playing style somehow contradicted the character's behavior, right?</p> <p>00:46:56Ed</p> <p>Mhm. Yes,</p> <p>00:46:58Interviewer</p> <p>How do you determine that?</p> <p>Ed: He probably wouldn't have behaved that way because...</p> <p>00:47:00Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm. How do you determine which actions fit the character?</p> <p>00:47:09Ed</p> <p>Hm. Yes, I look at how he behaves... how he acts...</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: So how they are. How should I put it? How they look, what you would expect them to be like, at least.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:47:22Ed</p> <p>You can't really say for sure, you can't say with 100% certainty that it's really like that, but</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:47:29Ed</p> <p>I guess everyone has their own opinion on that.</p>	
<p>2.10 Interview Ed 00:47:31 – 00:48:20</p>	<p><i>Character prefer</i></p>
<p>00:47:31 Interviewer</p>	

<p>Ah, okay. And what kind of characters do you prefer in games, like Corvo and Adam, or something completely different?</p> <p>00:47:45Ed</p> <p>Hm. Most of the time, I prefer to create them myself.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: The characters. So, to take over the design of the characters myself.</p> <p>00:47:55Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: Yes</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes, so that there can be no conflict between the character's behavior and your... their behavior.</p> <p>00:48:02Ed</p> <p>Exactly.</p> <p>00:48:05Interviewer</p> <p>Okay. So basically, you create an avatar for yourself.</p> <p>Ed: Exactly.</p> <p>00:48:10Interviewer</p> <p>And now it doesn't really play a role anymore.</p> <p>00:48:15Ed</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Ed: Right.</p>	
<p>2.11 Interview Ed 00:48:20 – 00:52:04</p>	<p><i>General Motivation</i></p>
<p>00:48:20 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, that was the specific part about the games. If you would like to add anything else about the games,</p> <p>Ed: Mhm.</p>	

Interviewer: you could do that, or we could just talk in general about what motivates you in games, what rewards, achievements, or consequences you find motivating in that regard.

Ed: Mhm. Yes, let's go with the second option.

Interviewer: So, you've finished the games, and you can't think of anything else to say about Dishonored and

Ed: Yes.

Interviewer: Deus Ex. OK.

Ed: I can't think of anything else off the top of my head.

Interviewer: Mhm, yes, if you want to add anything else about the two games, you're welcome to send it to me again via Discord and then confirm it with me.

Ed: Mhm.

Interviewer: That I can use that. Then I can add it later.

Ed: Yes.

Interviewer: Add it later.

Ed: Yes.

00:49:01Interviewer

Um. Okay, then let's talk about what you generally find motivating or demotivating when making decisions in games.

00:49:23Ed

Mhm. Hm. Yes, mostly a lot of things, like exploring all the levels.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:49:28Ed

So what is where, what can you find where, and so on. So. Get as many rewards as possible.

00:49:40Interviewer

Mhm. So collecting things.

Ed: Yes, collecting things.

00:49:42Interviewer

Or how, what do you see as a reward in that regard?

00:49:46Ed

So collecting things that you can use later. Somewhere for.

00:49:51Interviewer:

Mhm.

00:49:52Ed

That's why I'm not a fan of limiting inventory.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Because I want to collect everything.

00:49:59Interviewer

Mhm. So now, like in Deus Ex, for example.

00:50:06Ed

Exactly. You have a limit on what you can collect.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Was it a bit like that in Dishonored too, but that's just a limit on how much you can take with you. But theoretically, you can take everything with you. You can take x arrows from one. I think it was 30.

Interviewer: Mhm.

So you can also take 30 or so from the others, I don't know, or was it 10 or... I'm not sure anymore.

00:50:29Interviewer

Yes, it's not a big deal. Um, did that ever cause a conflict in one of the games? Like, when you wanted to collect everything, for example in Deus Ex?

00:50:38Ed

Yes, in Deus Ex.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Yes, that was the case in Deus Ex.

00:50:43Ed

I could only get a certain amount, because I only had a certain number of slots. You could upgrade your inventory three times, but it still wasn't enough.

00:51:01Interviewer

Mhm. Okay, and that caused you problems when you didn't know what to take with you next.

00:51:10Ed

Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: Ah, okay.

00:51:13Ed

So then you have to decide what to throw away and stuff.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:51:16Ed

That's also a problem, because the first time I was at Malik's, I didn't have enough of the anesthetic stuff.

00:51:24Interviewer

Ah, so you were also a bit conflicted about what to take with you and what you really needed to

Ed: Right.

Interviewer: solve the problem optimally? Mhm.

00:51:32Ed

Right.

00:51:40Interviewer

Yes. Well, I think I have a few things, but if you can think of any other motivations that I should mention, you can write them down on Discord.

Ed: Mhm.

00:51:53Interviewer

<p>Because otherwise it's been, um, very, um, how should I put it, insightful.</p> <p>Ed: Mhm.</p>	
<p>2.12 Interview Ed 00:52:04 – 00:55:20</p>	<p><i>Rags Vs Slackjaw</i></p>
<p>00:52:04 Interviewer</p> <p>Also many moments mentioned from the games. Very good. Uh. Yes. We theoretically have 8 minutes left of our hour. Theoretically, if you want to add anything else, otherwise we can end the interview now.</p> <p>00:52:24Ed</p> <p>Mhmi. Ch is thinking about it. Were there any other moments?</p> <p>00:52:36Ed</p> <p>What I also found interesting in Dishonored was the battle between Slack..., where you have to choose between Slackjaw and Granny Rags.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: And there you can. Slackjaw suddenly says: You can now kill Granny Rags,</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: if you fight her... fight her, which is the more moral thing to do, instead of putting something in her soup. Um.</p> <p>00:53:08Ed</p> <p>He says you can kill her. I did that at first, out of reflex,</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: then I reloaded it and said, no, I can't kill her either.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: Then I also... uh, with the w...</p> <p>00:53:27Interviewer</p> <p>With the, um...</p> <p>Ed: Um, what's that called again? Choking?</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes, with the, um...</p>	

Ed: Exactly.

Interviewer: A chokehold, basically. Mhm.

00:53:28Ed

Exactly. I used that to knock her out instead of killing her.

00:53:39Interviewer

Mhm. Uh, how did you, um, how did you make that decision? To evaluate what you were doing at that moment.

00:53:52Ed

Hm. Yes, I did. I thought to myself, I don't really want to take people out, and I don't want to kill... kill, necessarily.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: And then I thought to myself: Wait a minute, she's just an old woman now who has no powers left because I destroyed the medallion,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: So she can't command her rats anymore and stuff.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:54:14Ed

So she's not really a threat anymore.

00:54:21Interviewer

Mhm.

Ed: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, and what, um, made that decision stand out, that, um, that decision that you just made, or what conflict did you see on both sides, at least at first?

00:54:34Ed

Hm. Yes, that you, um, actually, if you fight her, you have to take her out, fatally. But

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: That wasn't the case.

<p>00:54:44Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm. Because then you might have considered what it would be like in the future if you played it again. Because you wanted the achievement, you said.</p> <p>00:54:53Ed</p> <p>Exactly. You get an achievement for completing all of Slackjaw's missions.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: Yes, but that one. It wasn't that bad, because you couldn't kill anyone.</p> <p>00:55:09Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm. So you reevaluated it with the save file. So first you, um, reevaluated the decision in retrospect in that regard.</p> <p>00:55:18Ed</p> <p>Yes, exactly.</p>	
<p>2.13 Interview Ed 00:55:20 – 00:59:12</p>	<p><i>Fight against Daud</i></p>
<p>00:55:20 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay. Yes. Hm. Is there anything else, um, that kind of made that moment, um, kind of,</p> <p>Ed: Hm.</p> <p>Interviewer: um, that you evaluated at that point, or was that everything?</p> <p>Ed: I'm thinking about it right now. So what n... I thought, there was also the fight against Daud, um, if you want to do stealth...</p> <p>00:55:58Interviewer</p> <p>So now another moment? Mhm.</p> <p>00:56:00Ed</p> <p>Exactly, if you want to use stealth there, it's a bit boring. There's also less communication when you fight him. I tested that too, and you have a more exciting fight because he slows down time and the whales don't fight anymore.</p>	

00:56:20Ed

And

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: you also have a lot more story content because he tells you a little bit about himself, that he didn't really manage to stop killing, or you eliminated everyone in a different way,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: So you miss that when you're in stealth mode the whole time. I saw that.

Interviewer: Ah, okay, so

Ed: Which is a bit of a shame when you don't get to experience it.

00:56:49Interviewer

Mhm

Ed: Yes.

Interviewer: But then you reloaded, probably to keep your achievement.

Ed: Exactly.

Interviewer: OK

Ed: Right.

Interviewer: So it's more like that, but you could still see for yourself.

Ed: Exactly.

00:57:02Interviewer

Or was there anything else that you would say you would have done differently in the other playthrough, if you were to play it again?

00:57:13Ed

Hm. I don't know right now. I don't think so.

00:57:15Interviewer

OK, so nothing else that you...

00:57:16Ed

But it's still interesting to see.

Interviewer: Okay.

Ed: Yes.

Interviewer: So it's generally interesting to see what options are available?

00:57:23Ed

Yes, exactly, the fight was also interesting, actually against Daud.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:57:28Ed

Yes.

00:57:30Interviewer

How do you decide what to include in your playthrough, which is probably your only playthrough because you don't like to replay games? Um, what...

Ed: Mhm.

00:57:40Interviewer

So the path you take is the one you end up choosing.

00:57:47Ed

I just look at it and then decide what I liked best.

Interviewer: Hm.

00:57:52Ed

Or whether I wanted to achieve something.

00:57:58Interviewer

Mhm. Okay, so if you had already disqualified an achievement beforehand, uh, would you now, for example, have moved on in terms of the story and, uh, if you had been discovered, you would have just said okay, then you fight Daud and because of the achievement

Ed: Mhm.

Interviewer: So you chose the historical sequence, which wasn't so exciting for you.

<p>00:58:21Ed</p> <p>Right, right,</p> <p>Interviewer: Ah, OK.</p> <p>Ed: Because I wanted to achieve</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: not being seen. That's why I couldn't make the decision that would have been more appropriate, the fight between Corvo and Daud.</p> <p>00:58:36 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:58:38Interviewer</p> <p>But for you, it's now basically in your head that that's how it happened.</p> <p>00:58:44Ed</p> <p>Exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ah, okay.</p> <p>00:58:47Ed</p> <p>I would have fought him, but because of the achievement</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>Ed: I couldn't do that. Because of his. Knock him out and then run away.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm, so in the end you basically piece together the story as you would have had it in your head even though you didn't actually play it out that way?</p> <p>00:59:07Ed</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay</p> <p>Ed: Right.</p>	
<p>2.14 Interview Ed 00:59:12 – 01:00:59</p>	

00:59:12 Interviewer

Mhm. And playing through it again... So you don't do that, of course, you said, rarely, but with

Ed: Mhm.

Interviewer: Is this somehow an exception that might motivate you to play through canonically, the way you imagine the story, or maybe

Ed: Yes, it could be interesting, at least up to Dishonored.

Interviewer: Mhm, but something you would never normally do in Dishonored.

Ed: No, not really. No.

Interviewer: OK, precisely because of these specific alternative methods and also because of the chaos system.

00:59:35Ed

Mhm.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ed: Right.

00:59:47Interviewer

But you can't deviate from your playing style.

Ed: No. Not really.

00:59:51Interviewer

Okay, so that makes it

Ed: More difficult.

Interviewer: Okay. But otherwise, if the play style wasn't there, would you still try to get into it?

Ed: Yes.

01:00:02 Interviewer

OK, so there's already a conflict between your play style and, um, everything you want to explore.

01:00:13 Interviewer

<p>Mhm. Yes, a little bit.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>01:00:17 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, well, then uh it's also sch. So now it's really uh correctly interpreted. I uh just don't want any stuff there.</p> <p>Ed: Mhm.</p> <p>01:00:29 Interviewer</p> <p>So you would confirm these interpretations in such a way that you would actually like to explore all the different alternative stories, but there are certain moments, even</p> <p>Ed: Mhm.</p> <p>Interviewer: where you clearly don't want to do that. Like, for example, the woman,</p> <p>Ed: Yes, right.</p> <p>Interviewer: would you not let her die in any run?</p> <p>01:00:50 Ed</p> <p>No, I wouldn't do that either.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay, and you wouldn't poison the distillery either.</p> <p>01:00:57Ed</p> <p>No, that doesn't make sense either.</p> <p>Interviewer: OK.</p> <p>Ed: So, I'll leave that out too.</p> <p>01:00:59 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, good. Yes, thank you for the interview. I'll end the recording now.</p>	
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Transcript 3.	Interviewer Transcript	Motivation / Dilemma / Experience
3.1 Interview Ingo 00:00:03 – 00:15:53		

<p>00:00:03 Interviewer</p> <p>As discussed earlier, I'm interested in the moments in Dishonored and Deus Ex Human Revolution where you found decisions particularly difficult, especially when the stories and gameplay pulled you in different directions. Before I go into specific moments from the games, please describe one such moment from each game that stood out for you, perhaps because it involved conflicting preferences or interests. Let's start with one moment and then move on to the other game when I don't have any more follow-up questions. You have the floor.</p> <p>Ingo: Okay.</p> <p>Interviewer: Good.</p> <p>00:00:40 Ingo:</p> <p>Um. Shall we start with Dishonored then?</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>00:00:48 Ingo</p> <p>Um. Correct me if I'm wrong, because names aren't really my specialty.</p> <p>00:00:54 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay.</p> <p>00:00:55 Ingo</p> <p>Wa... Au... We can also briefly mention that both games are relatively similar, in that they are both role-playing games with a corresponding story.</p>	<p><i>Moment</i>      <i>Dishonored:</i></p> <p><i>Oberaufseher + Allgemeines</i></p> <p><i>zum Spielen des Charakters</i></p>
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00:01:05 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:01:06 Ingo

Uh. Accordingly, my playing style varies, of course.

Depending on the genre you're playing, in this particular case.

00:01:17 Ingo

Let's start with Dishonored, where you basically play the bodyguard of the empress. That's how the game begins, and she gets assassinated right at the start.

00:01:31 Interviewer

Mhm. Yes.

00:01:35 Ingo

Um. Exactly. And um. Then I think there's a skip in the game where you've been in prison for six months or so before you try to break out.

00:01:45 Ingo

And um, during the whole time.

Yes, how should I put it?

Well, depending on how the game is structured, I try to put myself in the shoes of the protagonist you're playing. And, um, Corvo, in this case, is right at the beginning, um...

00:02:13 Ingo

Yeah, he was highlighted a bit as being a good soldier, not just a good soldier, but also a good personality... um...

00:02:22 Ingo

Yeah, how should I put it. Um...

00:02:27 Ingo

I... I wouldn't say corrupt or malicious, but rather, um, appropriate.

00:02:34 Ingo

represents a good character.

00:02:37 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:02:40 Ingo

And, um, I tried to reflect that character accordingly, based on the motto, how would this character, as he was intended for this story, how would he probably act?

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:02:59 Ingo

Hello, and accordingly, um, because it was also emphasized that he is now coming, um, because he is more or less a bodyguard/soldier, I don't know his exact role in the game, um, but it was also emphasized that he is exceptionally good at what he does.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:03:26 Ingo

And then, of course, I tried to create a good character who is military, uh, very strong or very high-quality in his actions, uh, and then, of course, the path quickly becomes clear: either absolute massacre.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:03:44 Ingo

Or stealth. Um, and then, of course, I tried to go the stealth route and not kill anyone if possible, because the initial enemies you encounter are just standard prison guards, and I don't know what they did to me to make me want to slaughter them all.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:04:09 Ingo

And, uh, the moment I started playing that way, I just kept going until the end. I think the first mission was with, I think, what's the bishop called, or the, uh...

00:04:28 Interviewer

Hmm. So I think the first one...

00:04:29 Ingo

Absolutely.

00:04:29 Interviewer

The first mission is actually to break out of prison. Before that, there's the prologue, and

Ingo: Gen..

Interviewer: The second one is the high overseer, right?.

00:04:36 Ingo

Exactly. Exactly the high overseer...

Interviewer: Yes.

00:04:43 Ingo

es, exactly, but I would also add the escape somewhere towards the prologue, because they didn't have the strength yet; they only got it after they escaped and went to, um, I would say this pub, which I think belonged to the admiral who said it was his.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:05:02 Ingo

And then it starts with the high overseer, and I'm really thinking about it now. The head overseer, I think he had some kind of religious touch.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:05:12 Ingo

If I'm not mistaken.

Interviewer: Yes.

00:05:15 Ingo

And, um...

00:05:19 Interviewer

So, just briefly in terms of the mission, um, so that we're all on the same page, um, because this is your first mission.

00:05:19 Ingo

It's right at the beginning...

00:05:27 Interviewer

Because in the game it just...

00:05:28 Ingo

Exactly, that's the first mission.

00:05:30 Interviewer

Okay, so then I'll just have to convert it at the end, because in terms of gameplay, it's considered Mission 2. So purely from the level selection. (Something incomprehensible is said here)

00:05:40 Ingo

Exactly.

Interviewer

Okay, good.

00:05:43 Ingo

Exactly, and, um, I also found it interesting right at the beginning, when you're easily overwhelmed with tasks. So you get clear instructions to get rid of this overseer, um,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ingo: But before you start, you are informed that one of these servants has a relative whom you are also supposed to rescue at the same time.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:06:10 Ingo

Because he is not supposed to be corrupt.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ingo: You've got two mission objectives right away, and, um, on the way there. So you just sneak your way through the entire level, and I mean, you start at the shore and work your way up to the overseer's building.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:06:34 Ingo

And, um, because I went with this stealth router, you have to reload various save files because you try to go one way and then you realize, "Oh, I'm going to get caught there," and some places had more than one enemy and...

Interviewer: Mhm.

Um, well, you can knock them out or take them out of the way with tranquilizer darts. But if there were too many, then you had a lot... maybe you tried, um, and the game offered you an alternative way to reach your goal, and then, um, shortly before the end, before you decided what to do with the overseer, you were informed that you didn't have to kill him, that you could basically, um....

Uh, what was it called this this...?

00:07:34 Interviewer

The mark of the heretic.

00:07:37 Ingo

..give him the mark of the heretic, and, um, in that chain of, because I had already tried not to kill anyone up to that point, I just thought, okay, um, I can get him out of the way now without, um, really eliminating him?

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:07:56 Ingo

And, um, I found it interesting in the game that this option was offered.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:08:03

Um. I'm still thinking because, when

00:08:08 Ingo

The end became relatively, well, at least these missions became relatively rushed, because the moment you gave this overseer, this... this sign, that was around the same time you had to rescue this relative. And, uh, under certain circumstances, or at least I, uh, had to reload the save files several times because somehow I managed to not save the person, who was poisoned, because I messed up the sequence of actions a little bit. Um, yeah, and? But then I found it interesting when I finally managed to do it in that level. Um, both the secondary goal of saving the relative and eliminating the warden without killing him.

00:09:07 Ingo

And what I found very interesting in retrospect about this situation was that the assumption was, yes, I'm not going to kill him now,

Interviewer: Mhm.

But you meet this overseer again later in a level.

00:09:23 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:09:23 Ingo

And the, um... and I had the impression that he had a worse fate, because I gave him this time, because I found him in some ruins...

Interviewer: Mhm.

Among the ones they called the Weeper, I think, those zombie-like creatures.

00:09:41 Interviewer

Mhm. Yes.

00:09:42 Ingo

And the one who was just in between.

00:09:45 Ingo

Right, I have the impression that it might have been more merciful to kill him right away than to give him the item and then find him there again.

Interviewer: Mhm. So

00:09:59 Ingo

That was the interesting thing.

00:10:01 Interviewer

You've described this moment in great detail, from the beginning of the level to the point where you made the decision. So the decision was now basically

Ingo: Exactly.

Interviewer: For you, uh, you poison him, or you brand him, or you kill him in some other way, and...

00:10:20 Ingo

Exactly.

00:10:21 Interviewer

Uh, would you now, uh, roughly, and you reevaluated at the end after you saw the consequences, if I can assess it that way. So, the consequences...

Ingo: That is right.

00:10:30 Interviewer

They only show up in the flooded district, which is already pretty much finished.

00:10:30 Ingo

That's exactly what it is.

Interviewer: Mhm.

That's exactly the third, or fourth, I think. I don't even believe the fourth one.

00:10:41 Interviewer

Well, if you think about it officially, and the mission with the overseer was the second one, then that's

00:10:47 Ingo

Exactly.

Interviewer: Even the sixth, I think. And the sixth level,

00:10:51 Ingo

So relatively at the end, I mean.

Interviewer: No, even the seventh, the seventh level, and accordingly, uh, and then there's also the fact that this section is divided into three categories.

00:11:03 Ingo

Yes.

00:11:04 Interviewer

And then comes the really last level.

00:11:11 Ingo

Exactly. Um. So if I were to refer back to that, whether I would have chosen the other path. I don't think so.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ingo: But that's also more because, um...

00:11:26 Ingo

We... when I choose a style like that and then the information comes relatively late,

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ingo: Because... then I wouldn't jump back to the beginning of the game and say, "Okay, now I'll play it differently."

Interviewer: Yes.

Ingo: There may be people, personalities who do that, but for me, um, because the game now has more of a focus on the story.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:11:48 Ingo

I had more or less created a certain narrative for the character in my head.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ingo: And, uh, in my opinion, he's a good character who, if possible, only really has to kill again if absolutely necessary, and then does so. But if he has the option, uh, he chooses the lesser evil. If the consequence is different much later, then unfortunately that's the way it is. But, oh well, up to that point, he has a clear conscience in my character.

00:12:24 Interviewer

Okay, so at that point, you feel remorse and consider whether, if you could rewind and perhaps play the game again, you would give that character a different fate, considering the consequences.

00:12:38 Ingo

If you were to play it all over again, maybe, but then I would give the character I played now a different story. So, the Corvo I played now, if I had the same Corvo again, then it would always come to the same conclusion, that he just punishes the warden and doesn't poison or kill him or whatever, and, uh, then I would always come to the same result, that shortly before the end I find him in this situation, which is actually much worse, or theoretically it's much worse, because he had to suffer more torment than if I had just made short work of him.

00:13:30 Interviewer

Yes, so you try to completely ignore your previous attempts, because you know the consequences.

00:13:41 Ingo

No, I do reflect on them. That's why I said that, or that's why I come to the conclusion that it's much worse.

Interviewer: Yes ok.

Ingo: It's as if I had chosen the other one, but, um, the character I play, the one who knows, well, that would really be, what's the term for that anyway, foreshadowing, basically, that he knows everything that's going to happen in the future, but then I would be playing a completely different character. So, I'm, and normally I try not to play story-driven games more than two or three times, just one playthrough, maybe then play through again with a different style, but, um, so far I don't think I've ever played a game where I said, I'm going to play the one who knows the entire future and I'm just going to choose the optimal path. Um, because at the time, I said, yes, Corvo.

00:14:48 Interviewer

Yes, that's what I meant.

00:14:50 Ingo

I don't know the consequences.

00:14:52 Interviewer

Yes, that's what I mean by not taking your previous ones into account when you play again, that you just

Ingo: Yes, OK.

Interviewer: put yourself in the situation, then just, um, say you're ignoring previous, um, runs and say the character can't know that. So, um, I'm now playing how the character would behave in that situation.

00:15:11 Ingo

Exactly.

00:15:12 Interviewer

Okay. Yes, so that moment was particularly interesting because you ended up with a completely different result than you expected, in that you actually felt worse for him in the end.

00:15:28 Ingo

<p>Exactly. When when. Exactly when you, I wasn't a complete pacifist in the game, I basically stunned 80 or 90% of the opponents.</p> <p>00:15:44 Ingo</p> <p>But. But, um, I tried to play non-lethally, if possible, meaning not to kill anyone.</p>	
<p>3.2 Interview Ingo 00:15:53 – 00:23:59</p>	
<p>00:15:53 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm. So, let's dive in. In terms of motivation, what did you consider when making these decisions, or rather, when making this decision? How would you describe your motivation right now? What motivated you in terms of gameplay, and what motivated you in terms of the story at that point? I'd be interested to hear your thoughts.</p> <p>00:16:13 Ingo</p> <p>In terms of gameplay, I have to think about it because it's an old game, and when I originally played it, the game mechanics were quite interesting, I would say. Now that I've played it again, these mechanics, but also the story, are more common in newer games, and from today's perspective, if you were to play the game for the first time, you would say, there's not much special about it now. How many years ago did it come out? Almost 10 or so?</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm. Yes.</p> <p>Ingo: I was there 8 or 10 years ago, and back then the game mechanics were pretty basic, but the abilities and what you could do were much more interesting and relatively new, especially here, for example, the abilities, which are more or less like porting or beaming or teleporting, depending on how you want to describe it.</p> <p>00:17:21 Ingo</p> <p>Um. That makes it special, I assume, for players who look at the cards more closely, who naturally try to get the most out of such an ability, to look at every corner of a card and find all the secrets. And then there's another mechanic that I didn't really notice, where, um... Well,</p>	<p><i>Motivation</i></p>

the game spoiled it relatively early on that, depending on how you play, um, more and more rats come out of this world.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:17:56 Ingo

And then there's this special ability to summon swarms of rats. I'm not sure how to summon them, um... Let me think... I think you basically summon them and then use them to eliminate enemies. Um. I didn't notice that at all, but in theory it's a really interesting and new game mechanic. Um, because I'm already thinking about it. I mean, a way to use the environment, especially this ability.

00:18:44 Interviewer

Yes, at this moment, I'm actually more interested in knowing why this moment with the overseer stood out so much and what you were weighing up at that moment when you were looking for a solution for him. You said that you had decided on the style of play? And.

Ingo: Yes, exactly. Um. Well, as I mentioned at the beginning, I didn't want to kill anyone if I didn't have to. Among other things, this has to do with the fact that I assigned this trait to my main character, Corvo, in terms of his personality, but if you look at it more closely, this playing style is also more or less a hindrance for yourself.

00:19:36 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:19:37 Ingo

Because, uh, you can also use these controls right at the beginning. Difficulty level easy, medium, and I think ultra hard, so you can adjust that, but um, no matter which level you choose, it's even more difficult in my opinion, um, if you try not to kill the enemies, um, or to kill them precisely, because then, um, you only need ammunition and you can get through from start to finish. This stealth gameplay was a kind of additional challenge in the game. Especially when you tried not only... there's stealth mode, where you just stop or use non-lethal force, which would be non-lethal mode, i.e. not killing anyone,

to get through. That was one aspect I had here, and the other is really the pure stealth effect. I think they always documented that.

00:20:45 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:20:47 Ingo

Um. That, uh, if you were discovered, that would be noted in the final results, and of course I always tried to play it cool. So that you wouldn't even discover one. And also, if possible, not find any who had been knocked out. 21:07

00:21:08 Ingo

That means I go through the game accordingly, and from my point of view, it's easier or a little harder than if you just hack your way through and then reach the goal.

00:21:21 Interviewer

And in doing so...

Ingo: Above all, that has an effect. Above all, that has an effect because in these story-based games, and especially now in Dishonored. There are books and notes and all kinds of things everywhere, and if you go through stealthily, you see some information and read it.

Interviewer: Mhm.

00:21:48 Ingo

In some cases, you get more detailed information about the objectives themselves, but also about allies or future objectives, and, um, these inscriptions sometimes give you a better idea of the characters involved before you even encounter them.

00:22:15 Interviewer

Mhm. Yes, so for me, the question is still, what was it about that moment with the head overseer that stood out so much for you? That's just you, seeing that as the conflict that really stood out.

00:22:30 Ingo

That the consequences were only mentioned so late.

00:22:35 Interviewer

Ah, I see.

00:22:37 Ingo

I would say that was the most striking thing, because the later you got, the closer you got to the end, the smaller the gap to the final consequences became. That was basically the first boss enemy, I would say, right at the beginning, and you didn't see the result in the next level or the one after that, but only relatively late, at the end.

00:23:10 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:23:11 Ingo

And, um, that stuck in my mind, as you might expect.

00:23:16 Interviewer

Ah and

Ingo: In that particular case.

Interviewer: But the decision itself wasn't difficult at the time; it only stood out because the outcome was so unexpected.

00:23:16 Ingo

How to do it in this particular case.

00:23:25 Ingo

That's right. It was precisely because of the result that it stood out.

00:23:29 Interviewer

And what motivated you more was the style of play, the fact that you wanted to adapt the character and make everything fit together historically as much as possible at that point.

Ingo: Exactly.

00:23:41 Interviewer

And yes, that means that the main aspect was a kind of consistency in the narrative, which is what you decided on in the end.

Ingo: Yes.

<p>00:23:55 Interviewer</p> <p>In that situation. Mhm.</p>	
<p>3.3 Interview Ingo 00:23:59 – 00:28:31</p>	<p><i>Vergiften der Destierie</i></p>
<p>00:23:59 Interviewer</p> <p>So, do you want? Should I go into specific moments from Dishonored now, or would you rather talk about your next personal moment?</p> <p>00:24:05 Ingo</p> <p>Yes, yes, then you could, because otherwise I would just be jumping around in the game.</p> <p>00:24:11 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, so let's do it this way: I'll go into the specific moments from Dishonored and then ask about your general impressions. If there's a question that applies to both games, should we save it for the end or should we ask it now?</p> <p>00:24:32 Ingo</p> <p>We'd better do that at the end.</p> <p>00:24:34 Interviewer</p> <p>OK, good, then now, as I said earlier, I'd like to talk about a few specific situations. I'll start with one from Dishonored. You meet an elderly woman, the Lady Rags, and save her from three thugs from the Bottle Street Gang. As a reward, she gives you a rune, and shortly afterwards she asks you to poison the gang's supply of elixir, promising you another rune in return. What did you do at that moment?</p> <p>00:25:02 Ingo</p> <p>Honestly?</p> <p>00:25:06 Ingo</p> <p>That's an interesting point, because it's exactly what I was talking about earlier with the High Overseer. In the case of the Granny Rags, the consequences only became apparent very late on; in principle, the consequence came immediately after you had finished.</p>	

00:25:23 Interviewer

Hmm. That's the second mission.

00:25:24 Ingo

You saw that. You saw the second mission there. Oh, that character isn't very good.

And because it was so short notice, the consequences were immediately apparent. So I even said, OK, then I'll take the second mission, that's what I wanted.

00:25:46 Interviewer

So, the second mission. What did you take into consideration? Now I'd be interested to know.

00:25:52 Ingo

Yes. Well, the interesting thing about this mission was directly relating to Granny Rags. The first mission wasn't particularly interesting, nothing that you could really reflect afterwards. Only the second mission, you thought, or at least I thought, OK, I'll give it a try. And, um, but that didn't work at all, because she wanted me to wipe out the gang, not just stun them and leave them lying around, and that somehow didn't work, but really wipe them out. And that's why I had to say afterwards, OK, I just couldn't do the second mission, at least not if I wanted to play Corvo's character justice. And, um, I mean, you could just continue without doing the second mission from Granny Rags.

00:27:02 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:27:05 Interviewer

So you completed the first mission easily and then probably just knocked out the three gang members, right?

00:27:12 Ingo

Exactly.

Interviewer: Okay.

Ingo: Yes, Yes.

<p>00:27:15 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm. That was just... That wasn't a difficult decision at that point.</p> <p>00:27:19 Ingo</p> <p>No, the consequence for granny was that in the second mission, you didn't get the reward.</p> <p>00:27:30 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm. And you didn't even consider taking those?</p> <p>00:27:37 Ingo</p> <p>In that specific case, yes. I am also a player who min-maxes whenever possible, but in that case, the reward wasn't that great or relevant to me, so I wouldn't have been able to play through the game staying true to the character. Because it prevented me to stick to it, I decided to forego the reward, which wasn't relevant to me, so I could continue playing.</p> <p>00:28:11 Interviewer</p> <p>So there's no conflict. You clearly stated that characterization is more important to you than the reward for the rune.</p> <p>Ingo: Exactly.</p> <p>00:28:22 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay good.</p> <p>00:28:25 Ingo</p> <p>You always try, but you just can't get them.</p>	
<p>3.4 Interview Ingo 00:28:31– 00:35:30</p>	<p><i>Duell Pendleton</i></p>
<p>00:28:31 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, another moment that interests me in Dishonored, which is a similar case, is the following: Before traveling to the Boyle estate, Lord Pendleton gives Corvo a letter to deliver as a side quest. If you do this, you end up fighting a pistol duel as Pendleton's representative. What did you do there?</p> <p>00:28:54 Ingo</p> <p>Yes, I'm now thinking about how I would have resolved the duel.</p>	

00:29:05 Ingo

Not during the first playthrough, I can't remember that at all. I didn't pay much attention to it during the second playthrough either.

00:29:18

I'd actually need to go back and listen to that sequence again.

00:29:22 Interviewer

Again, specifically. Yes, no problem.

00:29:24 Ingo

I'll have to summarize that briefly because I know I finished it, I know that. I just don't know there was you had to... I think one was able to. You could also do it there. No, I think you had to go the Lethal way there too. It's no use anesthetizing it. Hm. I'm thinking about it now.

00:29:56 Ingo

I think, in this particular case. Did I took him out?

00:30:07 Ingo

I think so. I believe so. In the duel, I think I defeated the opposing nobleman, I believe I defeated him.

00:30:22 Interviewer

Okay. Mhm. But you don't remember exactly how you defeated him at that point?

00:30:30 Ingo

Uh. But then in the duel, I think I just shot him. There are lots of options, even before the duel, but that doesn't make much sense.

00:30:39 Ingo

So you've already acted out the scene, but I don't know if I tried to find a way around it in the first take and still get the reward. I don't remember now.

00:30:54 Interviewer:

Mhm.

00:30:56 Interviewer

Well, I was able to do it. It's entirely possible to use any other weapons against him, but the guards will still say that he's dead in the end.

00:31:06 Ingo

Okay. Yes good.

00:31:09 Interviewer

So.

00:31:09 Ingo

Maybe, I don't know. Well.

00:31:12 Interviewer

But in that respect, you already thought that it would suit Corvo to take part in the duel now. To get the reward from Pendelton at the end.

00:31:21 Ingo

No, I mean it's an official duel. The Corvo, that I, I said, I also thought about the opponents I might potentially kill, most of them were just doing their job. Most of them were just guards, city guards. And, um, I had no reason to kill the city guards. Sure, there are conversations with people in between, then you hear this and that and read certain documents, and you think again, OK, but they're just run-of-the-mill guards who didn't do anything to me, and the duel was special, you wanted to support your, let's say, friend.

00:32:09 Ingo

It was clear that you had fallen into a kind of trap because you ended up in this duel. But you're more or less in favor of that, I'd say you stood up for your friend.

Interviewer: Well, the reward wasn't necessarily the main focus, it was more about characterization.

00:32:30 Ingo

Exactly.

00:32:32 Ingo

And again, to bring up the comparison with the Granny Rags, even there, with the Granny Rags, the people I was supposed to kill were clearly gang members, but they hadn't done anything to me personally, and I didn't try to help anyone close to me either, because the Granny Rags is actually for you. You meet her in the level, and you hear beforehand that she's actually a noblewoman who has fallen from grace, but throughout the game, she has no connection to you whatsoever, whereas Pendleton was there from the beginning and was one of the loyalists, or rather, one of the empress' loyal followers who support you.

00:33:16 Ingo

Sure, he came across as a bit stuck-up throughout the game, but I thought he portrayed a nobleman well.

00:33:26 Interviewer

OK. Good. Yes. Regarding Dishonored, I'd be interested to hear how the chaos system influenced your decisions. You mentioned at the beginning that this was spoiled a little bit.

00:33:43 Ingo

Exactly. Maybe subsequent players picked up on that and implemented it better. In Dishonored, it's clear from the start that the world becomes darker the more blood is shed, and of course, if you play non-lethally until the end, the world becomes darker, but not to the same extent as if you had played lethally. Is the dark mood or the circumstances that existed simply a result of the story, because a disease broke out? This meant that the world simply had to become darker, but the extent to which this happened was spoiled right at the beginning, in that it would be much more extreme if you played a certain way. And it's a good thing I didn't want to play that style for the character anyway, because, as I said, I had a completely different attitude or image of Corvo, which is why I wasn't even tempted to play in the other direction.

00:35:11 Interviewer

<p>Okay. Accordingly, that didn't affect you at all, nor did the chaotic system in that regard, because you had already committed to something else from the outset, and that</p> <p>Ingo: Exactly.</p>	
<p>3.5 Interview Ingo 00:35:30 – 00:37:55</p>	<p><i>Chaos System</i></p>
<p>00:35:30 Interviewer: Okay. There has been a lot of discussion online about the idea that the chaos system punishes certain play styles. What's your take on that?</p> <p>Ingo: Excuse me?</p> <p>00:35:36 Interviewer</p> <p>There has been a lot of discussion online about the idea that the chaos system punishes certain play styles. What's your take on that?</p> <p>00:35:52 Ingo</p> <p>I don't know how to judge the whole thing, because on the one hand I agree, but on the other hand, well, I think it's a bit contradictory, because you can, of course, I can. As I said, I played the non-lethal route.</p> <p>Interviewer: Mhm.</p> <p>None. Of course, there are effects or abilities that are enhanced if you play differently. As I said, right at the beginning, for example, the one with the swarm of rats.</p> <p>00:36:33 Ingo</p> <p>Sure, even in the non-lethal game style, you found corresponding swarms. But then you tried to protect the surrounding people from these natural swarms without the ability itself, which is really purely lethal. So you can't do anything else with it. If you summon these rats with your ability, then the target you unleash them on is dead in the end.</p> <p>00:36:50 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:37:04 Ingo</p>	

<p>And if you don't play a deadly style, then this ability is completely useless because you don't use the runes for it since you doesn't aligns with your goals.</p> <p>00:37:16 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:37:17 Ingo</p> <p>So that's why it's a bit of a mixed bag. That's probably difficult for a character who plays both roles.</p> <p>00:37:25 Ingo</p> <p>If you say, depending on the situation, “Now I'll kill him, and now I won't kill him.” And in the end, he gets what he gets, I don't know. So for my playing style, when I played Corvo, it wasn't contradictory. I just didn't use that ability.</p>	
<p>3.6 Interview Ingo 00:37:55 – 00:49:21</p>	<p><i>Daud is not Corvo</i></p>
<p>00:37:55 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes. So, the question is whether we should now use your example from Deus Ex Human Revolution.</p> <p>00:38:01 Ingo</p> <p>h, no, well</p> <p>Interviewer: Or whether I should now</p> <p>Ingo: We can briefly discuss this extension</p> <p>Interviewer: In general</p> <p>Ingo: Because that's exactly where</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh, I see, um, okay</p> <p>00:38:08 Ingo</p> <p>I had that problem later on.</p> <p>00:38:11 Interviewer</p> <p>Ah, a specific problem with that?</p> <p>00:38:12 Ingo</p>	

Because. Exactly, because I had just explained, um, how I imagined Corvo to be.

Interviewer: Ah, yes, that, um...

Ingo: And when I...

Interviewer: Okay, um. So then... Corvo would have been a good fit for a question I wanted to ask about both games, so there's still one left about Dishonored. Were there moments in Dishonored where your playing style conflicted with the story, or vice versa?

00:38:40 Ingo

Exactly, that's where we have a problem right now, because with Dishonored, there are also two expansions, and with most games, I try to play through the main game first, because these expansions were separate stories where you play independent characters, and with these independent characters, there was a story with a witch that I would have played after I finished, um, what was the name of that assassin?

00:39:12 Interviewer

The assassin's name is Daud.

00:39:15 Ingo

Exactly, Daud, and the interesting thing about Daud is that throughout the story, you keep finding snippets about him, which helps you build up a picture of his character. And in the expansion, where you actually play Daud, I really came into conflict because he was presented as a cold-blooded assassin. Sure, towards the end, as soon as you got into the mission where you had the chance to take Daud out yourself, you got a few hints that he had doubts about his approach. But that was just it, a certain amount of time had passed before this change of heart, so to speak, could emerge. So, when you played the expansion, you were Daud. Exactly where you had played Daud, as a character, you naturally had a certain idea of how this character would act.

00:40:29 Ingo

And of course, there was a conflict there, because I wanted to play him similarly to Corvo, not deadly, which was completely contrary to my idea of his character, because he was imagined as a completely different kind of assassin, and I mean, from the time period, you play right after the assassination of the Empress, and when you play him, these snippets you got with Corvo, a certain amount of time has passed where he had this change of heart and so on. But as soon as you played Daud in this DLC, you made the change immediately.

00:41:18 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:41:19 Ingo

And that's how the people around him perceived it too, and that's where I found, of course, that Daud's abilities were geared towards being an assassin; in my view, he had more abilities that were suited to this deadly path. And if you didn't want to go down this deadly path, a) you had significantly fewer skills, and um, that's what I found interesting, that the developers took that into account through the comments made by, I think, Boar. I don't know about Daud, but he had a right-hand woman who commented directly on that, saying that the way Daud acted, right after the empress, suddenly he wasn't killing the targets anymore.

00:42:22 Ingo

Unfortunately, I didn't continue playing it. I got to the point where I realized that the character I had in mind, which I was trying to play like Corvo, was too much of a departure from the original.

00:42:44 Interviewer

Mhm. So you saw your playing style as the priority at that point?

00:42:51 Interviewer

So you chose the character based on the playing style, right?

00:42:57 Ingo

No, no, what I find interesting in general with story-based games, or in most cases when you play story-based games or role-playing games, is that you either have a character who is clearly good or a

neutral character who tends towards good or evil, depending on how you want to play. So with Daud, he's actually just as you would expect him to be from the main game before you played the DLC. But he was clearly assigned to the evil side. And now, of course, I could have played him as directly evil. But because I had just finished the main game, I was still a bit caught up in Corvo's style of play, where I didn't kill everything to make it a bit more difficult for myself, but it works for Corvo's character. The game ends with Corvo, and right after that I played Daud, and there I could, or I would have, if I had stayed true to the character, in this case Daud and no longer Corvo.

00:44:13 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:44:15 Ingo

I would have had to play completely differently, but because I continued to play like Corvo, I ended up in a kind of conflict, where I eventually stopped playing the game and didn't even play the second DLC with the witches later on, because I was completely done with the game at that point.

00:44:37 Interviewer

Ah, okay, I see.

00:44:38 Ingo

For me, it was basically...

00:44:41 Interviewer

Mhm. Yes.

00:44:42 Ingo

For me, it was basically that after Corvo was over and the first few hours I spent with Daud, it was like it didn't exist.

Interviewer: Ah, okay.

Ingo: Because it was such an extreme conflict for me.

00:44:54 Interviewer

Mhm. So basically the opposite of what would happen if someone tried to play Corvo as a deadly character and then suddenly said, yeah,

the story doesn't work anymore. That's not who Corvo is, just the opposite, exactly the opposite.

00:45:12 Ingo

No, I said that most of the characters you play tend toward good. With Corvo, I also had the impression that he definitely leaned more toward good, but at the very beginning, you could have played him as evil, even deadly. That option was still open at the very beginning.

Interviewer: Ah okay.

00:45:35 Ingo

We only got tiny snippets from empress or the head warden or whoever.

00:45:43 Ingo

We also had the information that Corvo was away for a month or so on a trip to gather information about this plague from other islands, as a kind of support. That's a time skip of a month, so he could have changed. Yes, but. But you accompanied Corvo from the beginning, and then you were able to interpret his alignment in one direction or the other. Yes, and if I had played Corvo as a deadly character from the beginning, then maybe I would have had less conflict with Daud, because I would have played him right after and continued the same playing style.

00:46:31 Interviewer

Yes. So for me, it's a bit about understanding your playing style. What motivated you to continue playing Daud the way you did and then deviate from the character... uh, your previous motivations for characterizing the character, you could say.

00:46:54 Ingo

Me. So, my playing style, the problem with the whole story is that, um, I just played the main story because I didn't start the game when it first came out. I got it as a bundle, which included the DLCs. So I didn't have any time between the main story and the DLC to take a break from the game and readjust for Daud, to say, okay, this is how the character is, I'll play him like this now. I just continued in one go

and, after finishing the main story with Corvo, I couldn't make that drastic switch to Daud. I couldn't do it right after that.

00:47:46 Interviewer

So you just couldn't adapt your playing style that quickly. Right.

00:47:50 Ingo

Exactly, I couldn't adapt it right away, which led to a drastic conflict from my point of view.

00:47:56 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:47:58 Ingo

Because, as I said, I ended up quitting the game.

00:48:01 Interviewer

Ah, okay, I see.

00:48:02 Ingo

And I'm not done with Daud yet, because now that more time has passed, it's worth considering. Of course, now I have the conflict again, but I can let a little time pass and then start the games again. I could play Daud again with a different play style if I let a little time pass, because I recently did that again. I recently replayed the main story, so I'm basically back where I started.

00:48:40 Interviewer

Yes.

00:48:43 Ingo

In this... this swing. Corvo, where it's not deathly. So if I went straight back now, I'd end up in the same conflict as before, if I took a little time, of course, and said after a week or two that I'd take another look at the DLC. Maybe then I wouldn't have that conflict anymore, because I took a little time to let the main story sink in and then basically start the game from scratch.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

<p>00:49:20 Ingo</p> <p>Exactly.</p>	
<p>3.7 Interview Ingo 00:49:21 – 00:51:30</p>	<p><i>Moment Deus Ex, nothing stood out</i></p>
<p>00:49:21 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, then I'd switch to Deus Ex Human Revolution. Can you think of a moment off the top of your head, one from Deus Ex Human Revolution, where you found a decision particularly difficult, especially when you had to choose between the story and the gameplay?</p> <p>00:49:49 Ingo</p> <p>No, not in that particular case with that game.</p> <p>00:49:53 Interviewer</p> <p>So nothing specific stood out to you.</p> <p>00:49:57 Ingo</p> <p>No, exactly, because...</p> <p>Interviewer: OK.</p> <p>Ingo: I have to say, that's theoretical, I think it's actually the second game in the series. I mean, there was a previous installment, but I didn't play it at all, so I have no idea what this one is like, or rather, what</p> <p>00:50:12 Ingo</p> <p>Deus Ex is like. What's it called?</p> <p>00:50:13 Interviewer</p> <p>Human Revolution?</p> <p>00:50:15 Ingo</p> <p>No, that's the name of the game. I mean the main character.</p> <p>00:50:19 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, but you play him in the first game, so you don't play him in Deus Ex.</p>	

00:50:26 Ingo

Oh, you didn't play him there?

00:50:27 Interviewer

No, chronologically speaking, Deus Ex Human Revolution is the first game, well, no, Deus Ex Human Revolution is the third game, but it's the first in chronological order.

00:50:34 Ingo

Ah. Okay.

00:50:41 Interviewer

And Deus Ex is set in the future. So it's a prequel and...

00:50:47 Ingo

Yes.

00:50:48 Interviewer

After Deus Ex Human Revolution came Mankind Divided.

Ingo: Ah, okay.

00:50:53 Interviewer

It's not that. Well this is about Deus Ex: Human Revolution, so there's no confusion there.

00:51:00 Ingo

Yes, exactly, there are several parts to Dishonored, it's easier there, you have Dishonored, then you have part 2 and I think part 3 is out now.

00:51:07 Interviewer

I think there are. Are you still working on it?

00:51:12 Ingo

I'm not entirely sure if they're still working on it.

00:51:14 Interviewer

I'm not sure if that came across at all. But okay, yes.

00:51:18 Interviewer

<p>Then.</p> <p>00:51:19 Ingo</p> <p>But it's easier to follow the chronology with the numbers.</p> <p>00:51:23 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, it's completely chronological.</p> <p>Ingo: Because with Deus Ex there. Exactly.</p>	
<p>3.8 Interview Ingo 00:51:30 – 00:59:30</p>	<p><i>Geiselsituation</i></p>
<p>00:51:30 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, then I would now just go into the examples that came to mind or that I would like to discuss.</p> <p>00:51:39 Interviewer</p> <p>First of all, I'm interested in how you experienced the start of the game, when Adam is called in after a new terrorist attack on Sarif Industries. How did the hostage situation affect your experience, how did you deal with it? That's the first level after he's been augmented.</p> <p>00:51:59 Ingo</p> <p>That's exactly what I wanted to talk about, because before that level, there's a prologue where the lab is raided before you're augmented and basically end up in this factory story. And basically, after a short time, there's a second attack. The interesting thing was that before you could enter the level, you were in... What's it called?</p> <p>00:52:35 Interviewer</p> <p>Sarif Industries?</p> <p>00:52:37 Ingo</p> <p>That's exactly where you were at first, at headquarters, and I felt like they were pushing you a bit because you had been given your mission. You argued, go up to your boss, and then I said, I'm thinking, before you go to your boss, go to the technician, that was the sequence, because at the technician's you should get your visuals adjusted, there was some argument there that you should have something readjusted, then you should go to the boss, because the announcement had already come that that the factory was under attack or there was a</p>	

hostage situation or something like that, but you're basically just starting the game and you're in this headquarters, and the first thing that comes to mind with my playing style is: I want to scout everything out first, see what I can take with me. What does the house look like, and then you're being pushed and then the announcements come. What's the name of the protagonist again?

Interviewer: Adam.

Ingo: Exactly, Adam, because here you get calls all the time on this com and they say, "Adam, where are you?" Not the hostages, who are escalating the situation, and I mean at the beginning. I think they even say that the next level of escalation has already been reached, that something has already happened to the hostages.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Ingo: And then I restarted right at the beginning at that point.

00:54:18 Ingo

And I went straight to the technician and straight to the boss and then straight into the level.

00:54:23 Interviewer

Mhm. What motivated you to explore at the beginning and?

00:54:27 Ingo

I think it's the same for a lot of people when they're somewhere new, that they first take a look around, especially a prologue, where you walk in a straight line and in this headquarters, you could go left or right, you could open something, there was a combination lock, you opened a computer and got a code, and then you wanted to find out which door that code belonged to so you could get in. And it was interrupted all the time with these announcements and then they said that something had happened to the hostages, so I said to myself, okay, there's a time pressure and I'll probably come back here, so I can explore it in more detail on my next visit, which is what I did. Personally, I would have found it more annoying, or I would have found it worse, if I hadn't been able to return to the building afterwards, because you always get the impression that if you rush through the main story quest, you'll miss various things on the left

and right. And in story-driven games, a lot of what you can miss is the story, because there's information everywhere, like emails you could read or data packs with information that colleagues had written to each other so that you could understand the world you're playing in a little better, because it's set in the future and you're basically playing in a kind of... office. It's hard to say. But in a company like that.

00:56:32 Ingo

And then rushing into the mission. That's my playing style, so it's a bit contradictory.

00:56:46 Interviewer

What was it that attracted you? So when you wanted to explore or find items, you wanted to learn more about the story.

00:56:58 Ingo

First and foremost, gather information, because you're relatively new to the game and you didn't learn much about the game world in the prologue. You know there's a lab that was raided and many people died. So, then you naturally expect that now you're in this headquarters, there were, I think, one or two characters besides the technician and the boss, where you could have more conversations. And learn more about the raid from the first, I mean the first raid, before moving on to the second one.

00:57:39 Interviewer

So you still have a little time left.

00:57:40 Ingo

And just to get into the game world in the first place, it was more about searching through all these things, not for the items, but because there were lots of computers with relevant emails or these whole things. What are they called? PDAs or something? Anyway, these Portable Data Archives, I don't know, in any case, they contained a lot of information about the world and...

00:58:17 Interviewer

<p>So there were two narrative motivations in conflict at that point? Get to the hostages quickly, but also explore at the same time?</p> <p>00:58:24 Ingo</p> <p>Exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Ingo: Exactly. So I solved that by taking my time the first time around, looking at everything until I got the information I needed. Yeah. It takes way too long to reload right at the beginning, because then I had the information I needed to follow the main mission straight away.</p> <p>00:58:49 Interviewer</p> <p>But you didn't listen to the conversations again at the points you thought were important, you just went straight ahead?</p> <p>00:58:55 Ingo</p> <p>Exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Ingo: Exactly. So I solved that by taking my time the first time around, looking at everything until I got the information I needed. Yeah. It takes way too long to reload right at the beginning, because then I had the information I needed to follow the main mission straight away.</p>	
<p>3.9 Interview Ingo 00:59:30 – 01:04:31</p>	<p><i>Ari van Bruggen</i></p> <p><i>Min-Maxing despite Player-Mask</i></p>
<p>00:59:30 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes. Yes, there are just two more moments from Deus Ex Human Revolution that I wanted to discuss, but we're already close to an hour. So I would maybe ask about that again, if you don't mind.</p> <p>00:59:51 Ingo</p> <p>Yes, we can ask.</p> <p>00:59:51 Interviewer</p>	

But then we'd definitely be over an hour.

00:59:57 Ingo

Yes.

Interviewer: But we also have...

00:59:57 Ingo

Very briefly, the question, I'll try to keep it short this time.

01:00:01 Interviewer

Okay. So I have a second scene from Deus Ex Human Revolution. After you find the hacker Ari von Bruggen, his location is discovered by Bell Tower troops who want to kill him. He asks you to give him a weapon. How did you react in this situation?

01:00:24 Ingo

I think I gave him a weapon.

01:00:27 Interviewer

What did you weigh up in that situation? I mean, what did you think?

Ingo: In that case, it was just that my inventory was always full. If I was allowed to throw anything away, I threw it away. So that was the problem with Deus Ex. You had certain skills that required certain points, and when choosing skills, I weighed up what would give me more experience points so that I could get those skill points faster, and right at the bottom was life and more inventory space. So, right at the beginning, I got something really expensive. It was something to do with conversations, I think it cost two or three points, and then later I upgraded my hacking skills, and that was it. So anyone who watched me playing probably wondered what I was doing, going through the levels twice or three times. For example, I went through the shafts where I knew I would end up at exactly the same destination I had already reached. But here I can collect another 100 XP.

01:01:47 Interviewer

So at that point, it wasn't so important anymore whether it was illogical with Adam Jensen's behavior.

01:01:53 Ingo

Exactly, exactly, because I only figured that out later in the game. You could also sell weapons. That way, you could earn a lot of money, because at the very beginning, you could go to a clinic and buy these skill things right away, and if you play normally.

You collect the weapon and move on. And if you collect the weapon more often, i.e. you already have it in your inventory, you only get ammunition at the end. But you understood that if you sell the weapon, the weapon you pick up off the floor, you get a new weapon in your inventory, and that's much more lucrative. If you constantly sell these individual pistols instead of collecting ammunition. Yes, at the beginning I tried to get as many experience points as possible to get these skill points because I didn't have any money. And later I realized how easy it was to get them.

01:02:55 Interviewer

Yes, so again, this character optimization that you mentioned earlier.

01:02:59 Ingo

That's exactly where I was really min-maxing.

01:03:02 Interviewer

Okay, but it wasn't like you were in conflict with Adam's behavior at some point?

01:03:10 Ingo

No, well, you could knock out or stun pretty much every enemy, that was possible with pretty much everyone, except for the boss enemies, I think you always had to kill them.

So there were, I think, three mercenaries who were introduced at the very beginning. In the prologue, there was this tank-like guy who you had to fight in the first mission, then there was this stealth woman who I think you had to fight in the second mission, and then there was this boss of the mercenaries who I think you had to kill third. But I mean, with every one of them, maybe I didn't look far enough, but I think you had to kill every one of them, more or less. It's possible. With the woman, at least in the cut scene, I had the impression that

<p>you could maybe try to save her, but then a cut scene started. And Adam didn't seem to care.</p> <p>01:04:17 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, well, the situation with Ari von Bruggen wasn't really a dilemma in that sense, because you already had a weapon.</p> <p>01:04:25 Ingo</p> <p>Yes. Enough.</p> <p>01:04:26 Interviewer</p> <p>More than enough, OK.</p>	
<p>3.10 Interview Ingo 01:04:31 – 01:11:54</p>	<p><i>Malik (reload game)</i></p>
<p>01:04:31 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, the last example from Human Revolution that I would like to mention relates to the return to Hengsha. The helipad has been shot down, causing Malik and Adam to crash and be surrounded by Bell Tower troops.</p> <p>You are given the choice to flee or try to save Malik. How did you proceed?</p> <p>01:04:49 Ingo</p> <p>I saved Malik. She's the pilot who accompanied you the whole time. Yes, she flew you to the mission objective and back.</p> <p>01:04:58 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>01:05:00 Ingo</p> <p>But if I had the option, which was what caused the conflict, if you tried to save them and at the same time not kill your opponents, it took a lot of time. And I mentioned Deus Ex at the beginning, they incorporated time as a relevant factor in their game. So when I tried to help Malik, I had to do it quickly. Yes, exactly. Of course, you can see that as an additional challenge if you want to play that way. But I find it a bit difficult when you're being rushed in the game, personally.</p> <p>01:05:57 Interviewer</p>	

Mhm. So how did you solve that with Malik? How did you save her?  
I mean, you didn't necessarily try to save everyone, or did you try to kill... I mean, not kill them.

01:06:08 Ingo

I tried not to kill them, because up to that point you had the necessary skills, and I made sure that my inventory contained almost exclusively non-lethal items. For lethal items, I think I had the standard machine gun, which I think I had upgraded to the highest level to make it as effective as possible so that I didn't have to collect something like a rocket launcher or something.

01:06:38 Ingo

Mhm.

01:06:40 Ingo

But even then, with the appropriate grenades. You could collect fragmentation, stun, and EMP grenades. I didn't need the fragmentation grenades because they weren't lethal, and the stun grenades had to be used appropriately, because they didn't actually stun the enemy, they just blinded them, more or less, but then you could rush in quickly. And then you could take them out in close combat or with the stun gun, for example. And then you tried to combine these things to get through as quickly as possible, or for long-range fighters, you had these stun guns, there was also a rifle with stun arrows, which you used for longer distances. But that was just min-maxing with the non-lethal weapons and getting as much ammunition and upgrades as possible, along with all the lethal stuff. At the very beginning, I threw all my excess stuff into Adam's apartment, and towards the end, because you had changed levels, I just left it there. You ended up on a completely different map, where you didn't have access to your apartment, so I said, OK, I'll just leave all the stuff I don't need there.

01:07:55 Interviewer

Mhm. Yes, so you've prepared yourself well enough for moments that may not require lethal attacks en masse.

01:08:08 Ingo

Exactly, so you could compensate for that by collecting weapons and ammunition in a targeted manner and then use them for those boss enemies where you realized, oh, I have to use lethal weapons, although even in the second level with the stealth woman, you could poison her, so you didn't need a weapon at all. Exactly.

01:08:35 Interviewer

Yes, so you mainly tried to save Malik because that would have been the right thing to do.

01:08:44 Ingo

Yes. If I can save someone, that's kind of my playing style. If there's a chance, I try to save someone.

01:08:53 Interviewer

Yes, and accordingly, elsewhere, where you haven't taken anything else into account. Just that you can do it or that you can't do it in that regard.

01:09:10 Ingo

Exactly.

01:09:11 Interviewer

And that you can do it in the corresponding amount of time. Under time pressure.

Ingo: Exactly. Exactly.

01:09:18 Interviewer

Yes. Did you also consider what would happen if you didn't manage to rescue them quickly enough?

01:09:29 Ingo

That's the interesting thing about Deus Ex. You can start the level right at the beginning of the chapter. Yes, well, I always told myself that if I really couldn't do it, then I had taken too much time somewhere, but that meant a lot of saving and loading in terms of playing style.

01:09:52 Interviewer

<p>Yes, okay, so.</p> <p>01:09:52 Ingo</p> <p>And then several save points so that you can see where you took too long to get to the next steps for optimizing the speed.</p> <p>01:10:04 Interviewer</p> <p>So you just reloaded more often with Malik and tried to get around the problem that way. Right.</p> <p>01:10:10 Ingo</p> <p>Yes. I... I'd say the best example is hacking. If you know the code for the door, which is usually a numerical code, and you know it and you're through, then you have a lot more time because the time has probably been ticking away passively in the background. You noticed that best at the police station, where you tried to hack and all the police officers immediately became aggressive and shot you, even though you were still in the hacking process. And if you knew the code because you had tried the spot several times. Or you had gone through it once before. And you had obtained this information in advance. The second time, you tried to do it quickly, then you had the codes written down somewhere and didn't have to go through the hassle of getting them, or passwords for doors, yes, you always needed these number coordinators... because most of the things you needed were on a computer where a word password was stored.</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes.</p> <p>01:11:30 Ingo</p> <p>Ingo: And most of the number combinations were used more often in a level. So if you had two or three things, you could use them almost exclusively, you just had to know where to use them, and that saved a lot of time. So that was also min-maxing. I would say it was a completely simpler style of play.</p>	
<p>3.11 Interview Ingo 01:11:54 – 01:16:15</p>	<p><i>Min-Maxing ?</i></p>
<p>01:11:54 Interviewer</p>	

Yes. So, our interview is already a bit over. I would like to offer you the opportunity to write me on Discord if you think of anything else you would like to add to the interview. I.

01:12:13 Interviewer

For example, if you think of anything else about your general motivation or if you've thought of any other dilemmas, you can send them to me.

01:12:24 Interviewer

Because, in terms of motivation, I was just wondering about that. So, you mentioned characterization and min-maxing a bit... So, if you can think of anything else, but min-maxing and characterization are some of your main motivating factors, right?

01:12:46 Ingo

No, min-maxing comes more or less from the abilities that the game gives you.

Interviewer: Ah, okay.

01:12:52 Ingo

In many games, you see right at the beginning which skills are available to you, and you realize relatively early on that some skills give you more experience, that you can level up relatively quickly and then choose a new skill, and in Deus Ex, that all worked together. You always got the results very quickly, so you got the info in the same level: Oh, you were too slow, and at the end, it wasn't like in Deus Ex, where you only got the info 5 or 6 chapters later: Here, you were too slow or you did something wrong. In Deus Ex, you got that relatively early, and in Dishonored, there were also skills that gave you more if you chose them. For example, with teleporting, there was also a level 2. The earlier you got that, the better, of course, because then you could get rats. And you don't use that skill at all.

01:14:03 Interviewer

Ah, okay, so min-maxing is actually more of a means to an end, so you can get through better.

Ingo: Exactly.

Interviewer: But that doesn't really motivate you, you're just trying it as a means to an end so you can play the game the way you want, right?

01:14:16 Ingo

Exactly, because in many games the points are limited.

So most of the time there's a limit to how much you can get, but in special cases, at least in Deus Ex, you didn't realize at the beginning how to get these skill points. At the very beginning, you only got experience points and leveled up, and that gave you a point, and later you got the information that you could also buy certain points directly for a lot of money.

01:14:49 Interviewer

Mhm.

01:14:50 Ingo

But that was the rarer option, where you could get it with money. Most of the time, you got it either through experience points or through skills that you unlocked specifically by, for example, taking a detour through an alley or an apartment and then accidentally finding this upgrade, which costs a lot of money in practice.

01:15:22 Interviewer

Ah, okay, I see. Then it's good that we've clarified once again that this is by no means a main motivating factor, but rather that the characterization of the characters is the main point, i.e., an important point.

Ingo: Yes.

Interviewer: OK, so the focus tends to always be on that when you have to make decisions.

01:15:41 Ingo

Exactly, usually. Normally, I focus on the character, but if the game mechanics tell me, "Okay, to get your character much better, you'll have to do this and that first," then I try to do that as quickly as possible so I can get back to focusing on the character.

<p>01:16:08 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, good. Yes, if you think of anything else, just send me a message on Discord. Okay, I...</p> <p>Ingo: Yes.</p> <p>01:16:15 Interviewer</p> <p>Then I'll end the recording now.</p> <p>"During the interview, I used affirmative sounds such as 'hm' or 'yes' to signal that I was following the conversation. These utterances have been omitted from the transcript unless they were relevant to the content or served to reinforce the interviewee's statements."</p> <p>The audio file was automatically transcribed in Word and then edited to remove errors and reflect the interview as accurately as possible.</p>	
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Transcript 4.	Interviewer Transcript	Motivation / Dilemma / Experience
4.1 Interview Simens 00:00:05 – 00:11:57		
00:00:05 Interviewer	<p>As discussed earlier.</p> <p>I'm interested in the moments in Dishonored and Deus Ex Human Revolution where you found the decision particularly difficult, especially when the story and gameplay pulled you in different directions, as intended. Let's start with Dishonored first.</p> <p>00:00:19 Interviewer</p> <p>Before I go into specific moments from Dishonored, please describe a moment from Dishonored that particularly struck you.</p> <p>00:00:27 Interviewer</p> <p>Something that stuck in your mind or stood out to you. Perhaps because it conflicted with your preferences or interests.</p> <p>00:00:36 Simens</p> <p>Yes, in Dishonored, one situation that comes to mind is the one with the Ragged Countess where she...</p>	<p><i>Moment Dishonored: Vergiften der Destillerie</i></p>

00:00:49 Simens

Asks the player or Corvo to poison the bandits' distillery. And in return, you get a rune.

0:00:59 Simens

Yes

00:01:00 Simens

That's what made me accept this mission, where I now find myself in a moral dilemma.

00:01:07 Simens

Seen.

00:01:09 Simens

I would have bigger problems if, let's say, more civilians were harmed, let's say a well was poisoned or something like that. But since it's a distillery run by some bandits, I didn't have any major moral qualms and accepted the mission.

00:01:20 Simens

some bandits, I didn't have any major moral difficulties and then I accepted it in order to get some peace and quiet, which is very attractive and also...

00:01:28 Simens

I accepted it so that I could have some peace and quiet, which is very appealing and also.

00:01:35 Simens

Because I didn't see a more peaceful alternative to getting this rune. If there had been a peaceful alternative, I probably would have chosen it, but it wasn't immediately obvious.

00:01:47 Simens

Maybe there isn't one, I'm not sure. That's why I immediately said I'd do what the Rag Countess said, and yes, exactly.

00:01:57 Interviewer

Which playthrough was that in?

00:02:01 Simens

Definitely in the second one. I think it was the same in the first one, but that was a while ago. The first time I played through, I did that.

00:02:10 Simens

The first time I played through, I was a bit more aggressive overall, but now, compared to the second time, I wanted to be more methodical and peaceful, like Batman, killing as little as possible.

00:02:25 Simens

I didn't want to be discovered much during the first playthrough.

00:02:29 Simens

If I was discovered, then I was discovered, and then I fought.

00:02:35 Simens

So I didn't take much care. And yes, because on my second playthrough, I definitely wanted to achieve low chaos.

00:02:45 Simens

Which surprised me, because I didn't have a higher chaos level on my first playthrough either.

00:02:53 Simens

I guess I didn't act aggressively enough there.

00:02:59 Simens

And I noticed that I ended up with low chaos in both playthroughs.

00:03:06

I did.

00:03:07 Interviewer

So, back to the approach.

00:03:10 Interviewer

So what really motivated you? On the one hand, it was the fact that you wanted the rune, and on the other hand, you said that it wouldn't be a problem, so there was no demotivation.

00:03:28 Simens

Yes, maybe that contributed to it, the fact that those bandits were standing in front of the Ragged Countess's door. And I thought to myself, they want the poor old woman.

00:03:41 Simens

To harass her, and then I got them too. I don't remember if I killed them or not, but I did take them out.

00:03:51 Simens

Stunned.

00:03:51 Interviewer

So now in the second playthrough, not fatally.

00:03:54 Simens

Exactly, I don't remember that part in the first one. Maybe I killed them in the first playthrough, but in the second one it definitely wasn't lethal because I wanted to keep the chaos level low, but I didn't like them anymore, so I didn't want to act peacefully, which is why I agreed to poison the distillery.

00:04:14 Interviewer

So you mentioned the rune in terms of gameplay. What consequences did you expect in terms of narrative?

00:04:26 Simens

That the bandits.

00:04:32 Simens

In the game, as the game progresses.

00:04:35 Simens

Appearing less, so they don't cause as much trouble, like when they stood in front of the door of the Rag Countess and wanted to break into the house.

00:04:50 Simens

And then I thought to myself, it's no loss if there are a few less bandits running around. That was more what came to mind first.

00:05:02 Simens

And yes, what came later as well.

00:05:06 Simens

Was mir auch erst später in den Sinn kam, ist ja auch.

00:05:08 Simens

That they.

00:05:08 Simens

That they then sell this elixir to civilians. I didn't think about that at the beginning, that it would be like that. I didn't have such far-reaching consequences in mind.

00:05:18 Interviewer

So you're referring to the third level, where you re-enter the distillery.

00:05:29 Simens

Exactly, that's when I noticed that there were still a lot of bandits alive when you re-entered.

00:05:39 Simens

I would have expected fewer. I don't know what it would have been like if they hadn't done that, to compare. As I said, I poisoned the distillery both times.

00:05:51 Interviewer

Mhm. Were there any other things in the distillery that stood out to you in terms of your decision?

00:06:02 Simens

So, first of all, the wines that were locked up in the area where there weren't any before, when they came to poison the distillery, were behind the bars, that's on the left, to the left of the door where you enter the distillery, where later I think there's a rune or a bone artifact,

I don't remember, there weren't any wines there before, but later there were.

00:06:27 Simens

And then later there were still some running around. I think when I left the distillery after talking to Slackjaw, some others came and I think they fought with the other bandits, or maybe the bandits were defending the distillery.

00:06:42 Simens

If I remember correctly, at least that's what I noticed.

00:06:49 Interviewer

Did that make you rethink your approach?

00:06:55 Simens

Yes, because I realized that the Weiner are civilians, so it could probably come from the elixir they sold, but that wasn't clear at first. Later, I thought about it again and wondered if there wasn't a peaceful way to get the rune without poisoning the distillery.

00:07:13 Simens

One.

00:07:14 Simens

A peaceful way to get this rune without poisoning the distillery, but.

00:07:20 Simens

That wasn't immediately obvious either. There was no quest marker A or B, so if there was a way, it was probably hidden, and I didn't take the time to look for it. Maybe I should have dug a little deeper and checked if there was another way to do it, this third round, I think it was the third in this level.

00:07:41 Simens

In that area, and yes, I really wanted it.

00:07:46 Interviewer

So if you were to play through that part again, how would you rate it now? I can tell you that those Weiner only appear if you poison the

distillery. It has nothing to do with high chaos or low chaos. It's just a prescribed event when you...

00:08:03 Interviewer

Now that you have this information.

00:08:07 Interviewer

So how would you reevaluate that at this point?

00:08:12 Simens

Yes, I probably would if I played through it again, because as you said, it has nothing to do with the chaos. I played much more peacefully the second time around, and they were still there, which is why you can tell that it has to do with the elixir and not with the chaos.

00:08:27 Simens

I might have tried again to find an alternative way to get through this round.

00:08:35 Simens

But without looking it up on the internet, because I don't like looking for solutions online, I might explore a little more myself or take my time with the decision or see what happens if you turn down the Ragged Countess. I haven't tried that yet.

00:08:54 Simens

Or is she stunned or something, which I didn't try either, where you can get the rune.

00:09:01 Simens

I might try that again next time. Mhm.

00:09:08 Interviewer

But the conflict has become stronger at the end. Now that you have the new size.

00:09:13 Simens

Yes.

00:09:15 Simens

I think so. Well, I didn't think about it that much at first, I just thought of them as thugs standing outside the door and bandits, oh well.

00:09:23 Simens

Am I poisoning their stuff here? They could drink the poisoned stuff.

00:09:29 Simens

But then I realized that they were selling it, probably to the civilians, who were later the ones crying. So I guess I would have attributed that to the chaos at the beginning, right?

00:09:42 Simens

And then they were there a second time.

00:09:46 Simens

When I played through it the first time, I was much more aggressive, and I would have thought that might be where it came from.

00:09:51 Simens

But it turned out that it had nothing to do with the chaos.

00:09:57 Interviewer

OK. So in this conflict now.

00:10:01 Interviewer

How would you handle it now? You said you were looking for an alternative solution. If you don't find an alternative solution, or if you decide that it takes too much time to look for one, what would you do then? What would your conflict be at that point, because you said you really wanted the rune. you said you really wanted the rune.

00:10:26 Simens

Yes, I would probably let it go with a heavy heart, or I would first see what happens if you turn down granny rags. Maybe an alternative avenue would open up, I don't know at this point whether there's anything, whether she'll say anything or maybe a clue will emerge about how to get the rune without poisoning the distillery or lying to her or something like that.

00:10:57 Interviewer

<p>But that's just something to think about for the future playthrough.</p> <p>00:11:02 Simens</p> <p>Yes, then I'll go back and try again.</p> <p>00:11:04 Interviewer</p> <p>Then I won't go into this situation any further and won't give any more information, because I don't want to spoil your gaming experience in the future.</p> <p>00:11:14 Interviewer</p> <p>But you consider rather strongly what you could do there and ponder further what the best solution could've been?</p> <p>00:11:24 Simens</p> <p>Yes, precisely, that directly crossed my mind.</p> <p>00:11:27 Interviewer</p> <p>Yeah. But you still try to optimize to get both</p> <p>00:11:33 Simens</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>00:11:38 Interviewer</p> <p>OK. Good</p> <p>That would've been exactly the first example I liked to talk about relating to Granny Rags. And that she offers this decision.</p> <p>00:11:50 Interviewer</p> <p>That is why I'll now directly move over to the second specific moment from Dishonored.</p>	
<p>4.2 Interview Simens 00:11:57 – 00:17:45</p>	<p><i>Duell Pendleton</i></p>
<p>00:11:57 Interviewer</p> <p>Another moment that interests me is the following: before traveling to the Boyle estate, Lord Pendleton gives Corvo a letter to deliver as a side quest. Once this is done, you take part in a pistol duel as Pendleton's deputy.</p>	

00:12:11 Interviewer

How did you respond?

00:12:16 Simens

I accepted because there was also, I think, a prize to be won, although I can't remember what it was. I think it was a rune.

00:12:28 Simens

Mhm, yes, I did, I accepted that.

00:12:34 Simens

But I didn't really feel any emotional connection or anything like that towards this nobleman.

00:12:49 Simens

Maybe because he was wearing a mask.

00:12:52 Simens

I don't know, I wasn't wearing an ugly mask. Maybe that also has something to do with the fact that I had fewer moral qualms about simply shooting him.

00:13:01 Simens

Although I didn't check what would happen if you used poison, poison arrows, or tranquilizer arrows instead of the pistol. I used the pistol because when the one opened the box, there were two pistols there and

00:13:17 Simens

I indirectly assumed that it would have failed immediately or that the mission would have failed.

00:13:26 Interviewer

You hadn't tested that yet. That was great.

00:13:29 Simens

No, I just fired the pistol, as someone who wanted to, who was basically, he wasn't an innocent person,

00:13:36 Simens

begging for his life or anything. And he had also thought, let's get it over with, I'll shoot this idiot or whatever he says, and then we'll go back in. He says, "No, I thought, no, I'll shoot you first. Then I'll go in."

00:13:53 Interviewer

Yes.

00:13:55 Interviewer

That's how it was then. Lord Pendleton didn't say what you would get for it. He kind of took you by surprise and just handed you the letter.

00:14:05 Simens

Yes, as far as I know, no one knew beforehand.

00:14:11 Simens

And then I just handed him the letter. No, we didn't know beforehand. When Lord Shawn read it out, that's when we found out it was a duel.

00:14:25 Simens

Interviewer

Mhm.

Simens

And yes.

00:14:27 Simens

Then, because he agreed again.

00:14:30 Simens

Hab ich das dann noch einfach gemacht?

00:14:35

Interviewer

OK.

Yes, so there you have it, you're kind of assuming that you'll get a reward from Lord Pendleton for doing that.

00:14:41 Simens

And I would just add that I probably wouldn't do that if I were playing the game with the goal of getting zero deaths.

00:14:53 Simens

Then I would probably ignore it, even after he read it out. Yes, now I know what it is. I can just do that, I can just not go to Lord Shawn.

00:15:05 Simens

Or try to stun him again.

00:15:10 Simens

And whether you should maybe give the bone artifact to Lord Shawn, I mean, relic, I think that's what it was.

00:15:16 Simens

Whatever you got there, you definitely got a reward.

00:15:20

Interviewer

Mhm

But then you tend to always try to get the reward.

00:15:24 Simens

Yes, I would tend to do it peacefully, and if that didn't work, then I would do it violently.

00:15:33 Interviewer

And you've never considered doing the non-lethal run before, in terms of achievement?

00:15:45 Simens

Yes, for something like that, would I need to plan more time?

00:15:52 Simens

I didn't have enough time, but if I had a lot of time on my hands, I would really do it as a challenge, so to speak, to get the achievement.

00:16:03 Simens

I'd be interested in doing that too, but it would take a long time. Yes, I'd have to adjust everything.

<p>00:16:07 Interviewer</p> <p>So, you don't collect achievements very often.</p> <p>00:16:14 Simens</p> <p>No, because I don't actively hunt for them, but sometimes I flip through and if I see an interesting one, I'll give it a try, but I'm not a 100% achievement hunter.</p> <p>00:16:30 Interviewer</p> <p>So more like at the end, when you think it's a good challenge, but not in the first playthrough, only later on.</p> <p>00:16:38 Simens</p> <p>Yes, exactly, in the first one I just let it come to me without constantly reloading. Yes, exactly, I also did that with reloading, yes, the first time I did it less often, now I do it more often because I wanted to go through the whole thing more peacefully, and the first time, when I played through it for the first time, I always tended not to want to be seen, But when I was discovered, I responded aggressively, and here I reloaded more often, but sometimes I also responded aggressively. But this time it was much more peaceful overall, a more peaceful run than the first time, which was years ago. But in both cases, I ended up with low chaos. What surprised me was that I thought I would end up somewhere in the middle range the first time, if there is such a thing.</p> <p>00:17:29 Simens</p> <p>As far as I know, there is high chaos and low chaos. But I don't know if there is a middle ground.</p> <p>00:17:35 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, since you just mentioned the chaos system, I'd like to move on to the next point, because that's already quite clear at this point.</p>	
<p>4.3 Interview Simens 00:17:45 – 00:25:59</p>	<p><i>Chaos System</i></p>
<p>00:17:45 Interviewer</p> <p>What interests me about Dishonored is how the chaos system affected decisions.</p>	

00:17:52 Interviewer

So, the decisions.

00:17:56 Simens

Exactly.

00:17:58 Simens

As I found out later, I don't think that was the case when I first played through the game.

00:18:05 Simens

Because I was on low chaos the whole time. But I heard somewhere, either in the video or from a friend, that when you play on high chaos, there are more rats.

00:18:17 Simens

And more weepers, too.

00:18:19 Simens

So the game world changes accordingly. I didn't know that the first time.

00:18:26 Simens

And the second time, I deliberately left it low because I knew about it this time. The first time, it was more by chance that I was still in the low chaos room. I think I also didn't kill the nobles, because I tend not to kill them when I play through the game for the first time, not all of them, but I was still in the low chaos area. Nevertheless, this time I didn't kill any of the targets.

00:18:54 Simens

And even the normal enemies aren't usually deadly. Sometimes I got caught up in combat.

00:19:02 Simens

But this time I did it on purpose.

00:19:06 Simens

So that I could play through it without too many rats, so that it wouldn't be full of rats and whiners, which it already is.

00:19:18 Interviewer

Yes, when you play games in general, there are sometimes UI tool tips. Do you usually read them?

00:19:30 Simens

Can you give me an example of a UI tool tip so I can better understand what that is?

00:19:36 Interviewer

When you enter a level, something sometimes pops up.

00:19:40 Interviewer

Or when you enter an area, sometimes in the user interface, i.e. what you see, the control unit sometimes pops up with a message saying "Attention."

00:19:53 Interviewer

If you don't sneak, you'll get caught, or if you stand still.

00:19:57 Interviewer

controls, you duck, and then there's the general instruction, and then there's usually a picture to go with it.

00:20:05 Interviewer

And underneath, there's an explanation of the advantages or disadvantages. When you can duck and when you can't.

00:20:13 Interviewer

And in Dishonored, for example, let's say you're discovered. There are these three bars above your head that flash and gradually fill up, and you're only discovered when they're full.

00:20:27 Interviewer

That something like that is explained at some point.

00:20:32 Simens

But I always read that stuff. Yes, definitely, because I want to know everything. I want all the information... I mean, I know people who go into something like this blind and just shoot away, they're not interested in stealth, but I want to know all the mechanics and the

things, the possibilities that the developers have given me, and then decide whether I want to play aggressively or not, because some people don't even look at that stuff or read it. And yeah, here, the main thing is to just shoot or stab.

00:21:04 Interviewer

Was it different the first time you played, or is that just with the newer version?

00:21:11 Simens

Mhm, no, I have to say that.

00:21:14 Simens

I didn't pay much attention to it before. A little bit, yes. A little more, it didn't completely pass me by, because the first time I played Dishonored, I knew that you could sneak around and didn't always have to fight, that was already clear, but now I use it more because for me the gangs there somehow...

00:21:28 Interviewer

Yes.

00:21:34 Interviewer

Yes, in Dishonored there's that.

00:21:35 Simens...

not running around undetected.

00:21:37 Interviewer

So in Dishonored, there's this factor where you have the explanation at the top, then there's a picture in the middle, and then at the very bottom there's additional text that explains the mechanics of the situation again. But it also says that, for example, chaos, because we explain the chaos system to them in such a way that the more you kill, the more weapons there are.

00:21:48 Simens

Oh, yes, that.

00:22:00 Interviewer

You may have overlooked it at the bottom because it was further down. That's why I asked again.

00:22:05 Simens

Ah, that could be. Yes.

00:22:07 Interviewer

Mhm, yes, then that was probably the case.

00:22:09 Simens

That's what I usually read too.

00:22:12 Interviewer

Yes, the interruption caused by the image could be the reason, it's quite possible. I just wanted to check.

00:22:18 Simens

Mhm.

00:22:19

00:22:20 Interviewer

Mhm

Was there anything else you thought about with the mission objectives because of the chaos system? Because you said you didn't kill any of them and...

00:22:31 Simens

I actually never killed the nobles, but I usually killed the Weiner. Mhm, because for me there was no moral aspect to it. For me, they were basically lost, like zombies.

00:22:50 Simens

That's why I didn't take any prisoners and killed rats with my sword most of the time, or explosively, with explosive arrows. Exactly.

00:22:59 Interviewer

Yes, the mission objectives, you simply found it more morally acceptable to just knock them out. So, no, not to kill them, and that's

why in your first playthrough, or was it more strategy-based why you did that?

00:23:17 Simens

No, in the first playthrough, it was more by chance, just how I felt at the time.

The second time, I actually wanted to let them live out of mercy, but in the end, you think about what happens to them and it's sometimes worse than death. That's why, in the end, it was morally rather so-so, because one of them is a supervisor who was branded at the beginning, right?

00:23:43 Interviewer

Mhm. Yes.

00:23:46 Simens

As a branded person, you're basically at the bottom of the pile. There's no life worth living there, or where Lady Boyle is, I think. Or what's her name, Lady Boyle, and then she's basically kidnapped by a lord.

00:24:09 Simens

And you don't know what he's doing to her.

00:24:14 Simens

Keeping her locked up, so you think that maybe sometimes killing her would have been the more merciful decision.

00:24:28 Simens

But I think that would have caused even more chaos.

00:24:31 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:24:32 Interviewer

And you don't want a lot of chaos in the game? So what do you want to avoid?

00:24:37 Simens

Exactly, I definitely wanted to avoid that when playing through the second time. The first time, I wasn't so sure, but I definitely wanted

<p>to avoid it the second time because I like games that are balanced, like Metal Gear Solid or Splinter Cell, for example, where you can go both ways.</p> <p>00:24:54 Simens</p> <p>Although in other games, the other way is much more difficult. In Dishonored, I found the fights fun on the one hand.</p> <p>00:25:04 Simens</p> <p>On the other hand, they were also achievable. It wasn't just one way, it wasn't harder than the other, I think.</p> <p>00:25:12 Simens</p> <p>It wasn't easy to avoid being discovered the whole time.</p> <p>00:25:16 Simens</p> <p>Unless you already know all the ways to get around the guards.</p> <p>00:25:22 Simens</p> <p>And so on.</p> <p>00:25:24 Interviewer</p> <p>So, generally speaking, you didn't want to end up in high chaos, or are you interested in that anyway?</p> <p>00:25:32 Simens</p> <p>Yes, I'm more the type of person who wants to see the good ending in games. And then I immediately thought that with High Chaos, there's probably another ending, because Dishonored is a game where it was clear from the beginning that there are multiple endings.</p> <p>00:25:52 Simens</p> <p>And the fact that the game has an impact on the ending means that it doesn't always end the same way.</p>	
<p>4.4 Interview Simens 00:25:59 – 00:28:45</p>	<p><i>Punishment Chaos System?</i></p>
<p>00:25:59 Interviewer</p> <p>This was often discussed online, the idea that the chaos system would punish certain playing styles. How do you see that?</p>	

00:26:09 Simens

Yes, punish, in the sense that, yes, I mentioned at the beginning that it was also a motivation for me, so that I don't have even more enemies to deal with.

00:26:22 Simens

In that sense, I think it would also make the game more difficult.

00:26:28 Simens

If you have a lot of chaos, because then there are even more rats and cryers, and that would make the whole playthrough more difficult, and then I said, I already had enough enemies, and that was also a motivation not to slaughter everyone, and yes, with the moral motivation, it's just more merciful to put someone to sleep instead of killing them.

00:26:58 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:26:58 Interviewer

So would you say that if you want to take a combative approach, that would also be a punishment?

00:27:07 Simens

Yes, it gets more and more difficult, well, at the beginning, I think that's the only punishment, apart from the not so nice ending, I mean, why does it end like that?

00:27:19 Interviewer

Generally feeling demotivated (they), to go, so both narratively, you didn't want it, and in terms of gameplay, you didn't want it either.

00:27:30 Simens

Mhm.

00:27:31 Interviewer

Just so we understand each other correctly. So.

00:27:34 Simens

<p>Yes, with Splinter. Yes, I'll make the comparison with Splinter Cell again, where fighting is much more difficult than sneaking. So you notice that it requires a certain playing style.</p> <p>00:27:46 Simens</p> <p>In Dishonored, it's fighting, and it's fun and easier, but then the number of enemies just keeps increasing. I think that also has to do with the fact that, yes, the fights get harder (the more) enemies there are, then that part gets harder, but as far as I know, sneaking doesn't get harder.</p> <p>00:28:06 Interviewer</p> <p>So that's it.</p> <p>00:28:07 Simens</p> <p>There aren't any more surveillance systems or anything like that?</p> <p>00:28:09 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, so it's basically a conflict, but not a conflict in that sense for you, if you just say, "No, I'm not interested in high chaos at all."</p> <p>00:28:18 Interviewer</p> <p>That's why.</p> <p>00:28:20 Interviewer</p> <p>Because there are too many demotivating aspects. There's no waste.</p> <p>00:28:23 Simens</p> <p>Yes, exactly, that doesn't suit my playing style, which, as I said, is the same in other games. And I wanted it to be the same here because you go through it.</p> <p>00:28:39 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>00:28:43 Interviewer</p> <p>Good.</p>	
<p>4.5 Interview Simens 00:28:45 – 00:33:14</p>	<p><i>Gameplay vs Story</i></p>
<p>00:28:45 Interviewer</p>	

Were there moments in Dishonored where the gameplay conflicted with the story, or vice versa?

00:28:59 Simens

There were gameplay conflicts with the story.

00:29:04 Simen

Yes, I can't think of anything off the top of my head, except for one encounter.

00:29:06 Interviewer

Yes, you don't have to think of anything right away.

00:29:10 Interviewer

The one with the rag queen. Or another one.

00:29:16 Simens

There's an encounter in the sewers with the one who mentions that you're the one who kills all the noble people, I think he says, even though I haven't killed any of them, even though he hasn't killed any, some of them have just disappeared, because there's no evidence for him that he knows that I, well, I killed the first ones, they're not dead, some have also disappeared, some have been ostracized, so that's where none of the branches were incorporated that influence the story, what this person says in the sewer?

00:29:51 Interviewer

Ah, okay, so it was more like you thought at that point that what he was saying didn't really fit with what you had done.

00:29:59 Simens

Mhm, exactly, yes, and since you mentioned the rag queen, who you later meet in the same place, out of the sewers. -

00:30:07 Simens

After you meet this person, you go to the Ragged Countess, where Shawn is also being held captive, and you realize that she's a witch. And then the sympathy I had for her at the beginning, and the fact that I accepted the task of poisoning the distillery, was gone, because

you realized that she was actually up to something, and that's why I fought her.

00:30:36 Simens

Slackjaw was freed as a result, but I only knocked her out. So she was finished, and when I took away her magical powers, I then incapacitated her with a stun dart and then freed Slackjaw.

00:30:57 Interviewer

Yes.

00:30:58 Interviewer

Although it's also true that you said you actually wanted the Low Chaos ending and thought that you didn't get Low Chaos at first, but that you did get it this time. But in both cases, you got Low Chaos, and your play style was such that you still said you wanted to go stealth and be quiet and not kill, and accordingly, you don't get into conflict where you want to kill and therefore want to fight better, and that's why you have the problem.

00:31:33 Interviewer

What's the saying? Then in the end, you get the ending you don't want because you have...

00:31:38 Interviewer

You already said that you were motivated by Low Chaos. That's the good story you want to play.00:31:45 Simens

Exactly.

00:31:46 Simens

And since the rag countess, yes, I took away her magical powers and then knocked her out. That means that at some point she'll wake up again, but without her magical powers, but you don't encounter her again later. So the game didn't react to the fact that she survived, but that's understandable.

00:32:06 Interviewer

Yes, it would have been more at the end.

00:32:07 Simens

<p>Yes, yes, exactly, that was more at the end, and it was understandable that they didn't include another branch where she still exists.</p> <p>00:32:19 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, I actually wanted to ask more about the chaos system, which, as you said, is more about the people, or rather that you can't be punished by the chaos system because you wanted to take the low-chaos route anyway, because that's your playing style.</p> <p>00:32:37 Simens</p> <p>Exactly.</p> <p>00:32:38 Interviewer</p> <p>That means there's was no conflict between the character or story and your own play style, because what you want from the story...</p> <p>00:32:47 Simens</p> <p>That makes sense, because I was thinking about those Batman Arkham games, where you really can't kill anyone, I mean, you don't kill anyone in those games, and I wanted to play a Batman game like that, but I didn't quite manage it, but that was more my intention, because that's how I generally play.</p>	
<p>4.6 Interview Simens 00:33:14 – 00:41:59</p>	<p><i>Moment Deus Ex: Rescue Malik</i></p>
<p>00:33:14 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, then I'd say we're done with Dishonored. Shall we move on to Deus Ex: Human Revolution?</p> <p>00:33:22 Simens</p> <p>Yes, let's do that.</p> <p>00:33:24 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay.</p> <p>00:33:25 Interviewer</p> <p>Before I go back to specific moments from the game, please describe a moment from Deus Ex Human Revolution that particularly stuck with you. Perhaps because it involved conflicting preferences and</p>	

interests, as we discussed at the beginning, I'm interested in moments from the games where you found decisions particularly difficult, especially when the story and gameplay pulled you in different directions.

00:33:50 Simens

Yes, because there was a memorable moment in Deus Ex where you crash in Hengsha and the pilot Faridah tells you to get out while she's under heavy fire, with enemies attacking in droves, and when I first played it, I just ran through it, which was years ago now, and got into the elevator.

00:34:20 Simens

Which was certain death for her, because I thought it was scripted that way, but the second time around, I realized that you can actually get through this part, even though it's difficult. After several attempts, about five or six attempts or so, I finally managed it recently, and then I realized that you can actually get through this part by saving her.

00:34:49 Interviewer

So can you describe the moment in more detail, how you experienced it the first time? What you took into account there.

00:34:58 Simens

I reacted immediately to your instruction to run away, so to speak. Then I sneaked past all the soldiers and got into the elevator.

00:35:10 Interviewer

Okay, so you followed her instructions exactly, you didn't even try anything else.

00:35:18 Simens

No, I didn't even try. I only tried that when I played through it again recently.

00:35:27 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:35:29 Interviewer

So that was your second run, this time. Or were you planning to do another one?

00:35:33 Simens

I think I started again at some point, but basically I can only remember one older run and now the new one, the most recent one.

00:35:47 Interviewer

Ah, OK, good.

00:35:50 Interviewer

And then when you saw her die, you reconsidered the situation.

00:36:01 Simens

Yes, that was already there, it happened while the elevator was going up, and I thought to myself, yes, there must be another way, and that's why I did it again, because the way I know Deus Ex, there are always different ways to solve a situation, like at the beginning with the hostages. You can either save them or not.

00:36:22 Simens

Then the whole world reacts to it, I mean the other people, and then I thought to myself that it was worth a try, so I just gave it a go and then tried a few more times, which was demotivating at first because I had already failed five times. I thought to myself, well, it's scripted, either the time is up or I've been killed, right? Exactly.

00:36:48 Simens

Sometimes I thought for a while that there were an infinite number of enemies. Maybe.

00:36:54 Interviewer

Yes, well.

00:36:56 Interviewer

So there was an inner conflict because you actually wanted to save them, but you also thought that it wasn't technically possible in terms of gameplay.

00:37:03 Simens

I think the quest marker only points to the elevator, and there's also the quest marker, which, if I remember correctly, just says that you have to disappear.

00:37:17 Simens

And it doesn't say either fight or get in the elevator.

00:37:24 Simens

That's why it wasn't immediately obvious that you could save her.

00:37:33 Interviewer

Mhm.

So you just didn't try any further, you just said, OK, so in that respect it's not really a conflict anymore, because you...

00:37:44 Simens

Yes, no conflict the first time, but when I played through it the first time, there was this moment of regret, where you think, oh, that's really stupid. It turned out badly, a disappointing moment where you thought, maybe it would work.

00:37:58 Simens

And that's why it motivated me to take a closer look when I played through it again and to make several attempts so that I could come out of the situation a little more heroically, because the first time I didn't feel particularly heroic afterwards, and when it finally worked, it was really quite good.

00:38:19 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:38:20 Simens

Good feeling.

00:38:25 Interviewer

Yes

00:38:29 Interviewer

You have, you also say that you generally don't reload during the first run to test what the right way is, yes.

00:38:37 Simens

Yes

00:38:39 Simens

That's exactly what I do, I tend to do that when I go through it the next time, to try to do some things better, and just like with Dishonored, it's been uneven, or with other games, it's always like that the first time. I just let it happen, the first ones on the first try.

00:38:57 Simens

And after that, I'll already know the game. Basically, I'll know where to go and what to do. Then I'll see if there are other ways to do things, because then you get something new out of the game, right? The first time you play through, everything is new to you.

00:39:16 Simens

The second time around, the only thing that's new is what you didn't see the first time through, so you have to look more closely and take more time, and that's the case with both games, as well as with many other games I play.

00:39:32 Simens

What happens that's similar?

00:39:35 Interviewer

Yes, so the moment was actually more that your narrative interest was in saving her on the one hand, and on the other hand, the game basically told you to go to the elevator and...

00:39:51 Simens

Yes, at that point I also thought it was scripted. But when I played through it for the second time, I tried it anyway, let's say, maybe I said, yes, maybe there is something to be done after all.

00:40:04 Simens

And because the game has so much in store for you, always offering many paths, I thought that with Deus Ex, it's probably possible to influence the outcome.

00:40:14 Interviewer

But then there was also the clearly preferred outcome at that point. It was also more narratively motivated, in that you wanted to achieve it in terms of the story, or partly just in the sense that you wanted to overcome the challenge.

00:40:36 Interviewer

How would you see it?

00:40:37 Simens

Yes, we wanted to rise to the challenge and emerge from this situation as heroes, which motivated us to keep fighting, even after more than one or two attempts, even beyond the point where you would normally say, "Oh, never mind," but we thought it would be interesting. Later, you see Malik's body lying there on one of those operating tables.

00:40:51 Interviewer

OK.

00:41:01 Simens

And I wanted to know if she would still be lying there once you'd done it, and whether you might interact with her later or not.

00:41:12 Simens

But as far as I know, there's no further interaction later on.

00:41:19 Simens

I'm not entirely sure about that.

00:41:21 Interviewer

I'm not sure either, or whether that's a change from the director's cut and the original, because I've got different information about what happens when you rescue her. But I was really motivated to see how the story changes if you manage to do it.

00:41:40 Simens

Yes, exactly, but as far as I know, all you see is that she's not on the operating table and that you have the satisfaction of having heroically rescued her from the situation.

4.7 Interview Simens 00:41:59 – 00:46:51	<i>Ari van Bruggen</i>
<p>00:41:59 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm. I have a second scene of interest from Deus Ex Revolution.</p> <p>00:42:04 Interviewer</p> <p>After you find the hacker Arie van Bruggen, his location is discovered by Bell Tower troops who want to kill him. He asks you to give him one of your weapons. How does he react in this situation?</p> <p>00:42:20 Simens</p> <p>Well, that was also the case when I played through the game for the first time, I didn't give him the weapon. I left it up to him because he wanted my fully loaded pistol and I didn't want to give it to him or any other weapon, so I left it there when I played through again later. I then packed a second weapon, which I basically considered junk, because there's never really anything to defend yourself with, but I already knew the situation, and the first time I played, I had put way too much into that one weapon, so I didn't want to just leave it there.</p> <p>00:43:00 Interviewer</p> <p>What do you have? ...</p> <p>00:43:00 Simens</p> <p>Something like that.</p> <p>00:43:02 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, what did you consider in terms of gameplay when making that decision? What was the general idea?</p> <p>00:43:12 Simens</p> <p>Yes, because I used that weapon a lot in the first playthrough, and the second time I didn't play so lethally, but the first time with the upgraded pistol, that was the one that was important to me for the fight.</p> <p>00:43:30 Simens</p>	

That would have been more difficult. I would have had a weaker pistol again, and if I had given it to him, it would have been more difficult.

00:43:39 Interviewer

Yes, OK.

00:43:44 Interviewer

In general, you try to make the game as manageable as possible for yourself, because I think you mentioned in Dishonored that you didn't want to kill too many people, because otherwise it would have been more difficult. And also in Deus Ex Human Revolution, you didn't want to give up the weapon because it would have made it more difficult. So that's not really the case.

00:44:13 Simens

So there weren't any enemies left, but the ones that were there would have been harder to eliminate because I would have given away my fully upgraded weapon.

00:44:23 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:44:28 Interviewer

Okay, and narratively speaking, you changed your mind the second time around and prepared yourself so that you could give him a weapon. What did you consider doing? The first time, you considered that it wasn't worth it for you when you thought about it again. How did you weigh it up in general?

00:44:45

Mhm

00:44:54 Simens

Yes, the second time, you wanted to help him survive.

00:44:57

Mhm

00:44:58 Simens

Because he's not a soldier, he's just a civilian. They wanted to give him at least a small chance to survive. And that's why I decided to hand over this weapon, which I had carried with me especially for that purpose.

00:45:15 Interviewer

So it was purely for narrative reasons. Or were you perhaps hoping for a reward?

00:45:21 Simens

Yes, maybe, maybe I was hoping for something a little later. But I didn't really expect it.

00:45:29 Interviewer

Mhm, OK.

00:45:30 Interviewer

But in the beginning, it wasn't a conflict for you when you were supposed to hand over the gun and you said, "No, the gun is much more important to me." There was no conflict.

00:45:42 Simens

No, I didn't really care about that as much then as I do now.

00:45:51 Interviewer

Okay.

00:45:53 Simens

Then we can take a short break and pause for a moment.

00:45:57 Interviewer

Let's pause for a moment. I need to check something.

00:46:02 Interviewer

Before we interrupted the recording, we were talking about Arie von Bruggen. But we had already clarified that it wasn't really a conflict because you had clear preferences in that regard.

Simens

Exactly.

<p>00:46:19 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, so. The point was that the first time around, you considered your weapon more important, and the next time, you simply thought, OK, I can easily bring a weapon and give it to him, and then that's it, the dilemma is resolved, both narratively and in terms of gameplay. So there's no more conflict.</p> <p>00:46:45 Simens</p> <p>That's exactly what I thought, yes.</p> <p>00:46:49 Interviewer</p> <p>Okay, good.</p>	
<p>4.8 Interview Simens 00:46:51 – 00:52:35</p>	<p><i>Geiselsituation</i></p>
<p>00:46:51 Interviewer</p> <p>Now I'd like to move on to the next example. I was a little confused just now, because I actually wanted to start with the first example, but I skipped it. The first example, because I actually had the example with Farida as the third example.</p> <p>00:47:08 Interviewer</p> <p>And the first example, or rather the last example I would like to mention now, would be the introduction to the game. How did you feel when Adam was called in because there was a new terrorist attack on Sarif Industries, where there was also this hostage situation that you had to respond to? I think you mentioned this briefly at the beginning.</p> <p>00:47:30 Simens</p> <p>Hmm.</p> <p>00:47:33 Simens</p> <p>Yes, that's right, I think it was the production facility that was attacked by the Purity First followers, and now that I've played through it for the first time, which was quite a while ago, I don't remember exactly whether I knew at the time that there was a time limit for rescuing the hostages, or that you you don't have unlimited time to dawdle around or explore, so I didn't really try to read any</p>	

emails or PDAs and wanted to get through it faster, thinking I could still manage it.

00:48:22 Simens

00:48:23 Simens

Die Geiseln zu finden. Aber dann bin ich in den nächsten Bereich geraten und da war von der Missionsmarker der optionale die Geiseln zu retten weg.

00:48:33 Simens

Und da wusste ich, That's actually it. Well, I couldn't find them.

00:48:35 Interviewer

Okay, fine.

00:48:36 Simens

I only tried once, also because I didn't have much time. Normally, if I'd had more time, I would have started the level again from the beginning.

00:48:47 Simens

I would have looked more carefully, because it was a shame that you couldn't...

00:48:49 Interviewer

Was that the first one or later?

00:48:53 Simens

... I don't remember what happened in the first playthrough, it's been too long, but in the current one, that's what I actually wanted to find. There was no quest marker pointing there, so that's why there was a description of it and the police officers at the beginning, where I'm not sure anymore where that was, who said where they were.

00:49:20 Simens

But because there was time pressure, I ran through it quickly. And then I missed the quest, so to speak, and then it was already over.

00:49:30 Simens

The quest marker was gone and then I knew there was no chance, I think that's after you find the hacker who then shoots himself.

00:49:40 Simens

The one who's being remote-controlled.

00:49:43 Simens

Exactly there.

00:49:44 Simens

The next time I play through, I would definitely try to find all the hostages. And if I failed because of the time limit, I would reload the game.

00:49:57 Interviewer

So you're assuming that it's a time-based thing with all of them.

00:50:04 Simens

And because I also played non-lethal. I took the (long-range) tranquilizer gun and I wanted to sneak past the Security First followers, but that took time. I think it would have been faster to shoot my way through and get to the hostages right away, but then I could hear the clock ticking, so I went somewhere else. There were quite a lot of doors and offices, and I looked into some of them on the way, but I didn't search everything.

00:50:43 Simens

And then at some point I crossed the point where you basically don't have time, where you can't do it anymore, the quest marker was gone.

00:50:52 Simens

Although, it's not a position marker, it was just an entry in the journal, Optional, save the hostages, and the police officer had announced a location, but I didn't know where it was.

00:51:02 Interviewer

Mhm, so that was during the mission itself, not in the self-industry, where you

00:51:10 Simens

<p>in the mission, in the mission itself, in the facility, in the production facility.</p> <p>00:51:15 Interviewer</p> <p>So I was thinking, what did you generally take into account for the situation?</p> <p>00:51:24 Simens</p> <p>You mean for the hostage?</p> <p>00:51:26 Interviewer</p> <p>For the hostage, yes. When you heard about them, what clues led you to believe that they were under time pressure?</p> <p>00:05:43 Simens</p> <p>I did.</p> <p>00:51:46 Simens</p> <p>Either I saw it in a video at some point, but I don't think I've experienced it myself. Not that I know of, or I don't remember from the first playthrough, it could also be that I failed because of the time limit? I can't remember it well enough now, as it was a few years ago, but I'm aware that it's a time-limited thing and that I can't search for it forever, and because I sneaked through it, which took a long time, I have to wait until the right positions are taken, I didn't know how long the time limit was, I didn't specify it, and that's why I decided not to read emails or PDAs.</p>	
<p>4.9 Interview Simens 00:52:35 – 00:57:00</p>	<p><i>Motivation (Deus Ex)</i></p>
<p>00:52:35 Interviewer</p> <p>And what motivated you in that regard? You actually wanted to save her, so what happened here...</p> <p>00:52:41 Simens</p> <p>That's why I quickly looked right and left, went into some offices here and there so that I wouldn't accidentally find it on the way, and then I wasn't immediately aware of whether you first had to go to this quest marker, the one that indicates the position where you have to go, whether you can do that afterwards or only before. I wasn't aware that</p>	

if you crossed this marker, the mission would be gone, that option would be gone, so to speak.

00:07:12 Simens

Yes.

00:53:12 Simens

It wasn't very clear, and the building is huge, so I thought, no, I'll go to this quest marker first and see what happens, maybe they'll come at the end, but no, they were somewhere before that, in one of the rooms.

00:53:29 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:53:30 Interviewer

Was there anything else that influenced your approach, or what motivated or demotivated you to do this? I think you said that time pressure was one thing, that you didn't have enough time yourself and wanted to hurry up, right?

00:53:49 Simens

Yes, the motivation to do it in the first place is that you come out of the situation as a hero and also, I don't know if it's Pritchard or someone else who said beforehand, maybe you'll manage to save someone this time, along the lines of, he wants to provoke you, and then you have that extra motivation to show him, of course, apart from the fact that you don't want to let the hostages die in cold blood.

00:54:24 Simens

And that was exactly the motivation behind it, on the one hand the provocation, and on the other hand, that you also have to do the right thing, even if you said beforehand that the typhoon was the priority and you basically ignored your instructions by taking the extra time for the detour.

00:54:50 Interviewer

So it was more of a narrative motivation for you? From a purely historical perspective.

00:54:56 Simens

Yes, as someone who sees Adam Jensen as the kind of guy who, if this were a movie or something where you couldn't influence anything, would have done the same thing. I'm pretty sure he's not that cold-hearted.

00:55:09 Interviewer

Mhm.

00:55:12 Simens

That he would have abandoned them there.

00:55:15 Interviewer

Mhm, so you were thinking more about how the character would behave and not somehow...

00:55:22 Simens

Yes, me, like myself. I mean, I don't know what I would have done if he had a different personality, like the one he has in the cutscenes and in the dialogues.

00:55:38 Simens

Although you can portray him as quite rude in the dialogues, you can actually paint your own picture of him, but my impression of him from the beginning was more that he was a noble guy, not a bully.

00:55:54 Simens

Because he has a certain personality from the beginning, even in the first cutscene before you can decide how he responds or what he does. Maybe you guys have, maybe you could argue that this involuntary augmentation and those six months in the hospital and after this process, this operation, that he might have changed there, become a little colder or something, that could also explain why he's suddenly more rude.

00:56:23 Interviewer

So you pay attention to cutscenes and try to portray the character that way.

00:56:31 Simens

<p>Yes, I tend to try to portray him the way he comes across to me, the way I see him.</p> <p>00:56:39 Interviewer</p> <p>Ah, okay.</p> <p>00:56:42 Simens</p> <p>But at the same time, I also have my own motivation that I bring into the role, where I always tend to portray them in a good light, even if I'm playing a bad character.</p>	
<p>4.10 Interview Simens 00:57:00 – 01:03:05</p>	<p><i>Bevorzugter Charakter</i></p>
<p>00:57:00 Interviewer</p> <p>So what kind of characters do you prefer in games, ones that have a previous character, right?</p> <p>00:57:11 Simens</p> <p>Yes, I mean, when you start out, when you have a role-playing game or something where you can create your character from scratch without anything happening beforehand or cutscenes, I tend to always play on the good side. And so, I don't know.</p> <p>00:57:32 Interviewer</p> <p>So just like you yourself.</p> <p>00:57:34 Simens</p> <p>Exactly how I would react myself.</p> <p>00:57:34 Interviewer</p> <p>OK, mhm.</p> <p>00:57:36 Simens</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>00:57:38 Interviewer</p> <p>OK, good. Then we're done with the examples. I would also say that if you can think of any other personal dilemmas from games, you could mention them now.</p> <p>00:57:58 Simens</p>	

Yes, as I said, those. In Dishonored, it would be killing the nobles, where I later thought that killing them sounds worse at first than letting them live.

But the fate that befalls them is even more cruel than death. I would even go so far as to say that killing them is more merciful, but at the same time it causes more chaos. I don't know how I would do it differently next time.

00:58:30 Interviewer

So that would be a conflict. It would be more of a conflict because you don't want to go into high chaos, nor do you want to play it narratively, which you see as the more merciful method.

00:58:43 Simens

Yes, or you can stay in Low Chaos, even though you kill all the nobles, by keeping the Chaos down in other ways.

00:58:56 Simens

Maybe in the scenes where you save the other person. And there's more than that. I think it happens several times.

00:59:03 Simens

I don't know if it contributes to the chaos system when you kill the soldier who is threatening the woman. I don't remember why, but you have the choice and then she thanks you. I don't know if killing him would increase the chaos, but I don't know if saving her would reduce the chaos, I'm not sure about that.

00:59:28 Interviewer

So for you it's more like that. The only dilemma you might really see in the games right now is that you don't know how the chaos system really works.

00:59:40 Simens

Exactly. Because.

00:59:42 Interviewer

And you actually want to play the story the way you want to see it. You don't want to leave Lady Boyle to her stalker.

00:59:50 Simens

Yes, I think that's the worse ending for Lady Boyle.

00:59:59 Simens

But overall, it's the better ending for the game. No, if you choose low chaos and then end up in high chaos, the ending is different.

01:00:10 Interviewer

So you're trying to strike a balance between high chaos and, or rather, between low chaos and still doing what you think is right in the end, where you say...

01:00:22 Simens

Exactly, yes.

01:00:23 Interviewer

OK.

01:00:24 Interviewer

But that would be more from a purely narrative point of view, right?

01:00:29 Simens

Yes.

01:00:34 Interviewer

It's not about your playing style.

01:00:37 Simens

Yes, more narrative. Yes, what the story tells us, right? What it paints as a picture of Corvo as a whole, regardless of the chaos system.

01:00:50 Simens

What he may have been aware of, but Corvo himself knows that his decision to let them live is, under the circumstances, the more cruel fate.

01:01:02 Simens

Maybe you have to think of it as part of his personality, which you partly create yourself; you paint his personality yourself. I think the... Does he even speak? I don't think he speaks at all, as far as I know,

not in a way that you can hear him. There are dialogues, but you don't hear what he says, you don't hear his voice. And you don't see his face either.

01:01:32 Simens

Well, it's hard to tell what kind of person he is, except that she's... What is she? A duchess? And her daughter Emily are happy to see him.

01:01:50 Simens

He's their bodyguard, and he was definitely popular with them. That's been clear from the beginning.

01:01:56 Interviewer

Mhm.

01:01:58 Simens

And then? Then you think, well, he's just a loyal, good ally of the empress.

01:02:11 Interviewer

Mhm. OK.

01:02:12 Interviewer

So you take that into account. So you tend to take into account his own moral code, how the story should end?

01:02:21 Simens

Yes, I tend to, if it conflicts with mine.

00:16:25 Simens

If this were a game where that was a completely evil character, I think I would actually play it well, probably like that. Knowing myself.

01:02:41

Hm.

01:02:44 Simens

I think it would be more narrative in that case.

01:02:49 Simens

<p>If that were the case, if that were the case in a game, I don't know which one, I can't think of any examples right now. For a game where that's the case. With Batman, it's the same, where I sometimes thought, "Wow, I'd like to kill him right now," but you can't. In Batman, in the Batman Arkham games, you can't kill anyone.</p>	
<p>4.11 Interview Simens 01:03:05 – 01:09:27</p>	<p><i>Motivation</i>    <i>Demotivation</i> <i>Faktoren</i></p>
<p>01:03:05 Interviewer</p> <p>What are some general demotivating or motivating factors that you consider when making decisions?</p> <p>01:03:15 Interviewer</p> <p>So we already know your own moral code and that you (some of you...) want to incorporate your own morals, but also weigh up the characters a bit to see what they're really like. But what else would you say?</p> <p>01:03:34 Simens</p> <p>Yes, compared to real life, I would say that sometimes I abandon my principles, my moral principles in games when the reward is too high. So when it's too good.</p> <p>01:03:47 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>01:03:49 Simens</p> <p>For example, that would be different from what I would do in real life. For example, when poisoning the distillery, I wouldn't have done that in real life for that kind of reward, but in Dishonored, a relic like that is quite attractive.</p> <p>01:04:06 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, well.</p> <p>01:04:06 Simens</p> <p>You think to yourself: Oh well. Never mind.</p> <p>01:04:09 Interviewer</p>	

Then there are these points... they're more important when you have a really high reward, then you really weigh it up. You'd be more likely to say that you're in conflict.

01:04:20 Simens

Yes.

01:04:20 Interviewer

But in most cases, that's not how it is. That's what makes it rewarding in that sense.

01:04:28 Simens

No, that's just how it is in some places, but yes. Maybe I wouldn't have taken out Lord Shaw if there hadn't been a reward or a potential reward.

01:04:42 Interviewer

If it was just a... yes, if it had just been an ambush by Lord Pendleton, who wouldn't have given you a reward at the end, then it might have been completely uninteresting the second time around.

01:04:56 Simens

Yes, if it didn't get me anywhere, I would have ignored it. And yes.

01:04:59 Interviewer

Theoretically, in terms of gameplay, if it had a narrative consequence, of course, that Pendleton would have died because he would then have had to fight a duel. But that's just hypothetical.

01:05:13 Simens

Then I would be. I think I would be for Pendleton, because he's an ally and a friend in that case, and because I don't know how good he is with a gun. So I would have thought it highly likely that he would lose.

01:05:24 Interviewer

Mhm. OK, so...

01:05:30 Simens

Then I would have stepped in for him.

01:05:31 Interviewer

So there are moments when you would say that narrative and gameplay are in conflict for you, or that your motivation is sometimes at odds with itself.

01:05:42 Simens

Yes, I would say so.

01:05:43 Interviewer

But the reward has to be big enough. The case with the distillery was close enough, and the first time you really had no other option, although maybe you can answer that first. Because of the distillery.

01:06:01 Simens

Yes.

01:06:03 Simens

I would say either when the reward is big enough or when progress becomes too difficult. I would incorporate both of these aspects.

00:20:18 Interviewer

Mhm.

01:06:18 Simens

Exactly, if, let's say, a part is much too difficult to get through, I would also go through it aggressively if that's much easier.

01:06:29 Simens

But that has to be extreme.

01:06:33 Simens

OK, so time would tend to cause you a conflict if it took longer?

01:06:41 Simens

Yes, if it takes too long. Normally, I do take my time, but if it doesn't work after many attempts, then I leave it and take the easier route instead of the one that I think is morally better.

01:06:57 Interviewer

But then you're also conflicted in that regard?

01:07:01 Simens

Yes, actually, I am.

01:07:03 Interviewer

And the example with Ari von Bruggen and the gun? There, the first time, you really had no other option but to give him a good gun. Right?

01:07:15 Simens

There was the reward. That was like a negative reward for me. I don't get anything, but I lose something.

01:07:24 Interviewer

Yes, a punishment.

01:07:15 Simens

That's why... punishment, exactly, negative reward. Punishment.

01:07:30 Simens

Yes, the punishment had the same effect as a good reward.

01:07:37 Simens

If the reward I would have received for giving him the gun had been good enough, I might have done it even with the upgraded gun

01:07:48 Simens

But I had no idea what to expect. It could be that he would give me something, or later on, that I would get something valuable, or that it would have some kind of effect. But I had the impression that this would not be the case, that I would simply lose my weapon and...

01:08:04 Interviewer

Okay, so if the punishment is too high, then you would also say that it's not worth it to you right now. Continue.

01:08:11 Simens

No. Yes, exactly, you could say that a high punishment or a high reward influences that and whether the difficulty changes significantly and the time required changes significantly.

01:08:25 Interviewer

Yes

01:08:26 Interviewer

Okay, so in Ari von Bruggen's case, if you couldn't get around the dilemma in the second playthrough by getting a second weapon, if he had always demanded the best weapon, then it would have been a bit more critical, for example.

01:08:41 Simens

Yes, yes, as I said, I already knew that during the second playthrough. Then I did that, but I can't remember now whether it helped me later or whether it would have helped if you had met him later or not.

01:08:55 Interviewer

Mhm.

01:08:55 Simens

I'm not aware of any at the moment.

01:08:58 Interviewer

Yes.

01:09:01 Interviewer

Yes, OK, then I know what the general motivational factors are that I should take into account in the evaluation.

01:09:12 Simens

Yes.

01:09:12 Simens

Good.

01:09:12 Interviewer

Yes, I think that's everything, isn't it?

01:09:16 Interviewer

I'm thinking about it again, because this is the first time I've really actively worked with my new questionnaire.

01:09:25 Simens

Ah.	
4.12 Interview Simens 01:09:27 – 01:10:31	<i>Playing Style conflicted with story</i>
<p>01:09:27 Interviewer</p> <p>Were there moments in Deus Ex Human Revolution where your playing style conflicted with the story, or vice versa? I think I forgot that, but I don't think it was really like that.</p> <p>01:09:42 Simens</p> <p>A conflict between your playing style and the story?</p> <p>01:09:45 Interviewer</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>01:09:48 Simens</p> <p>Not off the top of my head. Yes, that would be the case if I did something.</p> <p>01:09:56 Simens</p> <p>Because of my style, but then it's portrayed differently in the story. No, I can't think of any examples. In Deus Ex, the NPCs around the world react appropriately to your decisions, I think, most of the time. I don't know, I can't think of any place where that wasn't the case, where it felt illogical or inappropriate to me. I can't think of any place right now.</p> <p>01:10:20</p> <p>Mhm.</p> <p>00:24:28 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, OK. Good.</p> <p>01:10:31 Interviewer</p> <p>Yes, if there's anything else you'd like to add, you can write it on Discord. As I said, I'll get your consent again afterwards, and if you write something on Discord, it's best to add that too. I'll cut now.</p>	

## Appendix. DCD – Dishonored Chaos Doc

### The Dishonored Chaos Doc (Omland & Walther, 2025)

#### Source:

Omland, R. J., & Walther, A. B. (2025, February 8). *Dishonored movement compendium* [Google Document].

[https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1ps4b0ATJzWhTJHeauC\\_ienst\\_ZdpMgne64Iv7gMmXlRY/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1ps4b0ATJzWhTJHeauC_ienst_ZdpMgne64Iv7gMmXlRY/mobilebasic) Accessed April 14, 2025. \*first image removed

#### THE DISHONORED CHAOS DOC

A document about the chaos system in Dishonored (2012)

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By Candle, lurven and Som1Lse

#### CHAOS, IN THE MAIN GAME, IN GENERAL

1. Chaos goes up and down in increments of 6, beginning at Prison.
2. There are several factions of NPCs: Civilians, Thugs, Guards, Tallboys, Weepers and Assassins. The factions are not tied to how they show up on the End of Mission screens.
3. Killing a Civilian gives you 6 chaos.
4. Every 4th Thug, Guard, Tallboy, Weeper or Assassin you kill will give you 6 chaos. Note that these are tracked individually, so killing a guard and three thugs will not give you any chaos.
5. Completing the Non-Lethal action for a mission target will remove 20 chaos.
6. Triggering 5 alarms or having 5 bodies discovered gives you 6 chaos. Again, these are tracked individually.
7. River Crusts, Fish and Dogs give no chaos when killed.
8. Being Spotted gives no Chaos.
9. Forced Area Reloaded (FAR) NPCs give the same chaos as their original versions. (Allowing for infinite chaos generation).

Sparing a target removes 20 chaos.

- For Daud this is done on the next screen.
- For all other targets the chaos is removed at the end of the mission.
- **MISSION SPECIFICS**

## Prison

High Chaos threshold at the end of Prison: 12

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## High Overseer Campbell

High Chaos threshold at the end of Campbell: 48

Killing Campbell gives no Chaos and he counts as a Guard, NOT an overseer.

- This is true for all overseers inside the building.

Killing Campbell after branding him, gives 6 chaos and he counts as a guard.

Saving Curnow after receiving the quest to do so from Callista will remove 6 chaos

- If you do not talk to Callista at the Hound Pits before starting High Overseer Campbell, you will not lose chaos for saving Curnow.

Granny Rags gives no Chaos and is not a member of any faction.

Poisoning the distillery for Granny Rags in Campbell, will give you 6 chaos.

Saving the Overseer (Berthold) and his sister (Elsa) in the Campbell Backyard will remove 6 Chaos, after Berthold reveals the safe code.

- If Elsa escapes after Berthold is killed, you get no chaos.
- Choking Elsa gives 12 chaos, killing her gives 18 (30 total.)
- Choking or killing Berthold gives 12 chaos.
  - After starting his thank you speech, Berthold only gives 6 chaos.

Killing Griff gives 6 Chaos.

Saving & Freeing Griff will remove 6 Chaos.

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## House of Pleasure

High Chaos threshold at the end of House of Pleasure: 72 (you get alternate Samuel dialogue at 48.)

Killing Slackjaw gives 6 Chaos, and he counts as a thug.

Granny Rags gives no Chaos and is not a member of any faction.

Killing the Civilian being robbed for elixir gives 12 chaos.

- Saving her will remove 6 chaos.
- Letting the guards kill her gives 6 chaos.

The Art Dealer counts as a civilian but gives 12 chaos if you kill him before electrocuting him.

- Completing the electrocution (where he is unconscious, but still alive) gives 6 chaos.
- Killing him after electrocution gives an additional 12 chaos.

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### The Royal Physician

High Chaos threshold at the end of Royal Physician: 96

Killing the Civilian trapped by rats will award 0 chaos.

Killing Test Subject 312 awards 0 chaos.

Killing Sokolov awards 6 chaos- but will trigger a game over.

Freeing Sokolov's test subjects and having them survive, will take away 6 chaos.

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### Lady Boyle's Last Party

High Chaos threshold at the end of Lady Boyle's Last Party: 114

Lord Shaw gives 0 Chaos and he is a Guard.

Lord Brisby awards 12 chaos while he is at the party, he awards 0 chaos while he is in his boat.

---

### Return to the Tower

High Chaos threshold at the end of Return to the Tower: 138

General Tobias gives 0 Chaos and is a Guard.

Killing the Royal Executioner, Morgan Sullivan gives 0 Chaos and he is not a member of any faction.

Killing Hiram Burrows gives 0 Chaos and he is a Guard.

Killing the Maintenance Engineer gives 6 Chaos.

Killing the Propaganda Officer gives 6 Chaos.

## The Flooded District

High Chaos threshold at the end of Flooded District (FD): 162

Killing Daud gives 6 Chaos.

Killing Slackjaw gives no Chaos in FD and he counts as a Thug.

Killing Granny Rags gives 6 Chaos and is a member of all factions.



Killing the plague victim holding the dying plague victim gives 6 Chaos.

Killing the plague victim being held gives 12 Chaos.

Note: Killing the plague victim holding the dying plague victim does not give kill credit for the victim being held.

Killing the looters gives 6 chaos each.

Completing the “Creating a Safe Haven” Objective removes 6 Chaos.

- The Plague Victims, Blake and Blake’s Sister all give 6 chaos each.
- The Plague Victims, Blake and Blake’s Sister still give the same chaos after completing the objective.
- The Loyalists

High Chaos threshold at the end of Loyalists: 168

Cecilia gives no Chaos if killed.

Callista gives no Chaos if killed.

Piero and Sokolov in The Loyalists will only give 6 Chaos each, if they are alerted.

Using the Arc Pylon in The Loyalists with “Burn them All, Piero” will kill a maximum of 19 hostiles and give you the chaos associated (approx. 54.)

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### The Light at the End

High Chaos threshold at the end of Light at the End: 168

Threshold for really High Chaos (Samuel alerting the guards): 390

Samuel gives no Chaos if killed.

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### Memory Values relating to Chaos

#### **Steam Version 1.2**

Chaos	4 Bytes	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+FCCBDC]+A8C]+38]
HostilesKilled	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+FCCBDC]+B74]+4]
CivilliansKilled	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+FCCBDC]+B74]+10]
AlarmsRung	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+FCCBDC]+B74]+1C]
BodiesDiscovered	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+FCCBDC]+B74]+28]
TimesDetected	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+FCCBDC]+B74]+34]

#### **Steam Version 1.4**

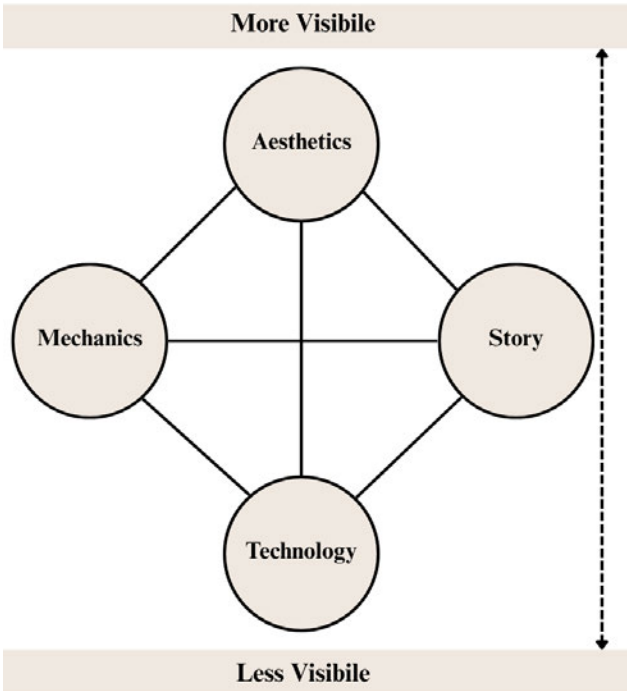
Chaos	4 Bytes	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+1052DE8]+A94]+38]
HostilesKilled	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+1052DE8]+B7C]+4]
CivilliansKilled	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+1052DE8]+B7C]+10]
AlarmsRung	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+1052DE8]+B7C]+1C]
BodiesDiscovered	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+1052DE8]+B7C]+28]
TimesDetected	Float	=	[[[Dishonored.exe+1052DE8]+B7C]+34]

Source: Omland & Walther (2025) / Candle, Lurven, & Som1Lse (2024)

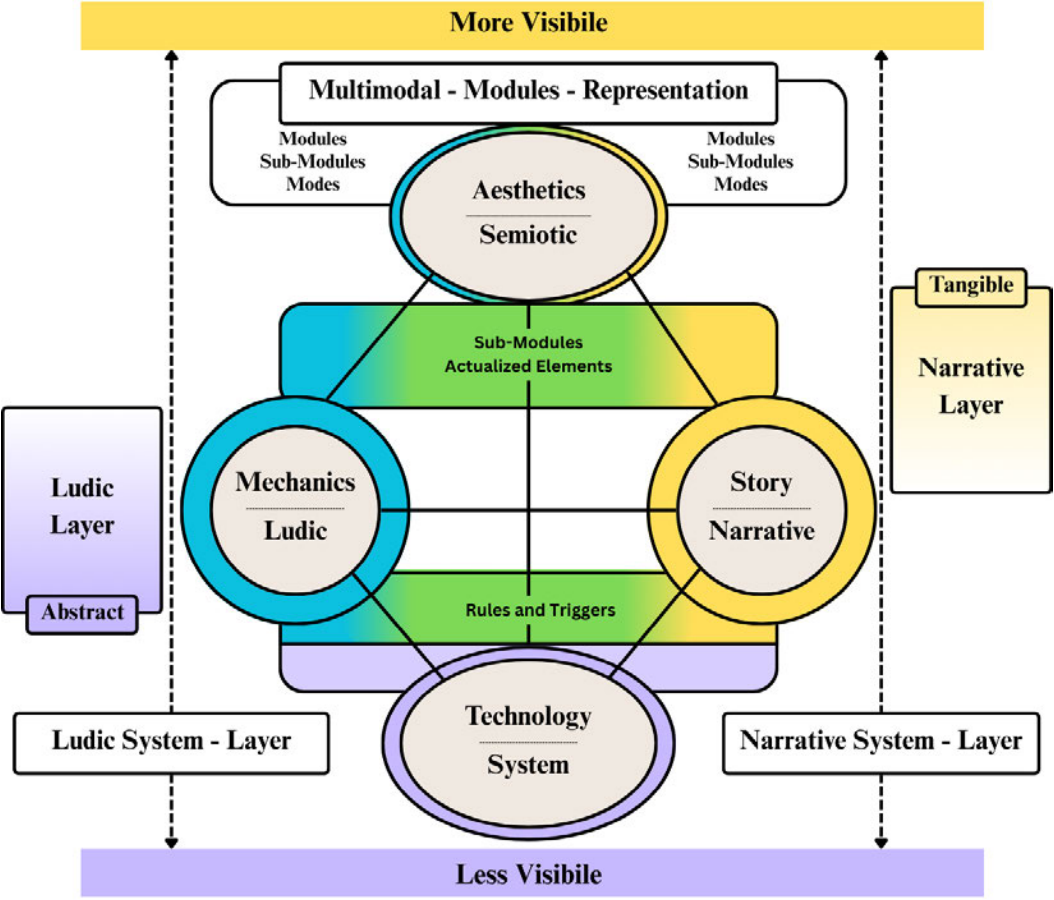
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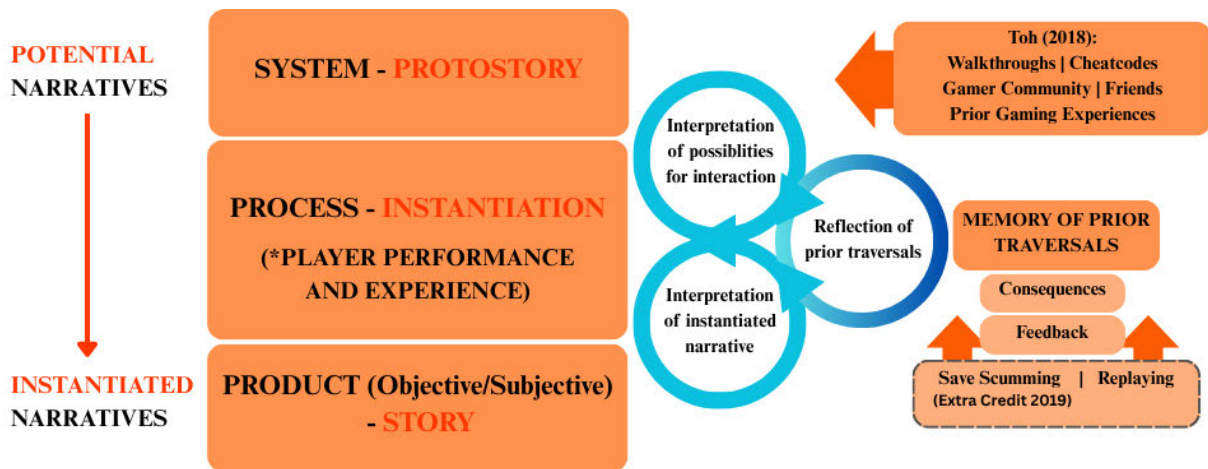
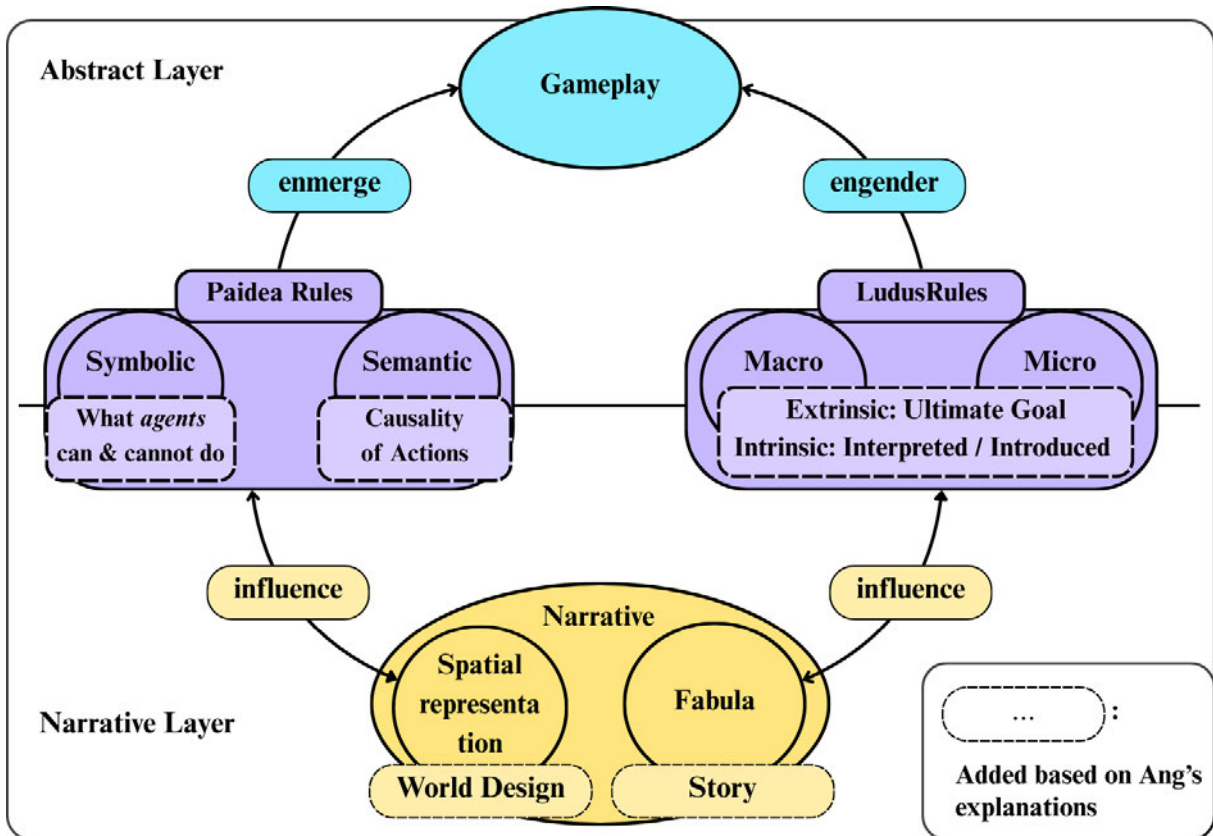
# Figures

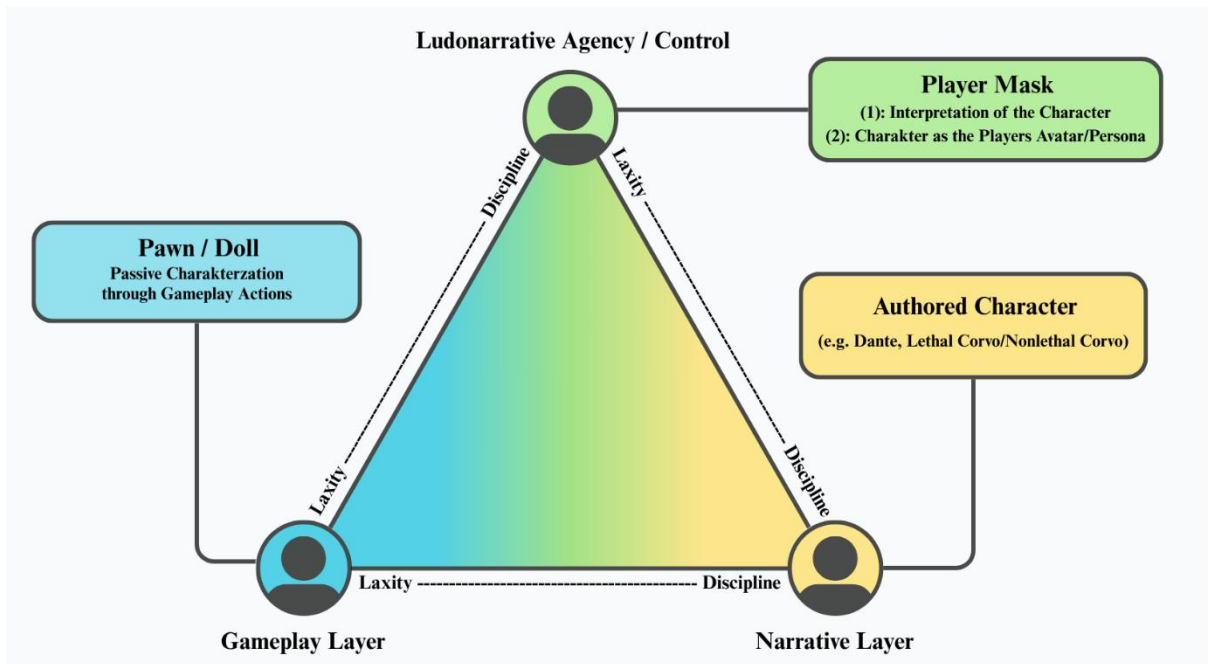
Own graphics were created using *canva.com*. This section provides a higher resolution (see USB).



Elemental Tetrad reconstructed. Source: Schell (2008)














<b>Player Traits (Tondello et al.)</b>				
 <b>Challenge Orientation</b> ___% ...	 <b>Goal Orientation</b> ___% ...	 <b>NonLudic - NonNarrative</b> <b>Social Orientation</b> ▲ Social Experience   Solitary Experience ▼ ...    ___%    ...	 <b>Aesthetic Orientation</b> ___% ...	 <b>Narrative Orientation</b> ___% ...
<b>Gameplay Based</b>		<b>Preferences / Motivation / Interests</b>	<b>Narrative Based</b>	
Ludic Victory (I) (E)	Avoiding Ludonarrative Dissonance (I) (E)		Narrative Victory (I) (E)	
Achievements (I) (E)	Exploration (I) Creative / Curiosity Mechanics   Spatial   Narrative		Narrative Completion (I) (E)	
Challenges (I) Bragging   Excitement	Simulative Immersive Experience (I) Fear   Excitement   Happiness   Survival		Narrative (Global Agency) (I)	
Loot / Items (Rewards) (E)	World Agency Destruction (I)		Narrative Consistency (E)	
Resource Gathering (E)			Aesthetic Appreciation (I)	
Score (E)			Moral Gameplay (I) (E)	
Prefered Playstyle (I) Action   Strategy			Sticking to Player Mask (I) (E) Characterization (Local Agency) (I) Chosen Player Mask: ___ (I) (E)	
...	...	...	Emotional Investment (NPCs) (I) (E)	
...		...	...	
...		<b>Additional Factors &amp; Interests</b>		
<b>Legend:</b> ★ = Highest Trait / Priority    ☆ = High Priority (E) = External Motivation    (I) = Internal Motivation [Dashed Box] = Action Related [Solid Box] = Consequence Related		Available Time   Skill Level   Chosen Difficultly Own Morals / Ethics   ... (non) Social Orientation Based: Social Experienc   Solitary Experience Bragging   Sharing / Retelling Experience   ...		
		 <b>The Player</b>		

# Helping Resources

## Resource 1

5 Player Traits (HCI Games)				
 <b>Challenge Orientation</b> ___ % ...	 <b>Goal Orientation</b> ___ % ...	 <u>NonLudic - NonNarrative</u> <u>Social Orientation</u> ▲ Social Experience   Solitary Experience ▼ ... -- % ...	 <b>Aesthetic Orientation</b> ___ % ...	 <b>Narrative Orientation</b> ___ % ...
<u>Gameplay Based</u>	<u>Preferences / Motivation / Interests</u>		<u>Narrative Based</u>	
<b>Legend:</b> ☆ = Highest Trait / Priority   ★ = High Priority (E) = Extrinsic Motivated   (I) = Intrinsic Motivated ----- = Action Related _____ = Consequence Related			<u>Additional Factors &amp; Interests</u>	
				

## Eigenständigkeitserklärung

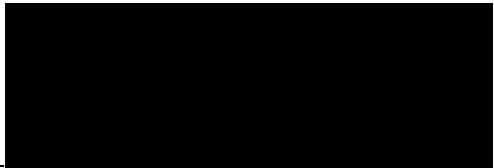
Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Bachelorarbeit mit dem Titel:

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selbständig und nur mit den angegebenen Hilfsmitteln verfasst habe. Alle Passagen, die ich wörtlich aus der Literatur oder aus anderen Quellen wie z. B. Internetseiten übernommen habe, habe ich deutlich als Zitat mit Angabe der Quelle kenntlich gemacht.

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Datum

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Unterschrift