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## **EVE Online**

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## Is Betrayal in EVE Online Unethical?

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### Abstract

Betrayal is common in *EVE Online*. While not all gameplay based on deception is wrong, betraying a genuine friendship is wrong in any context. While some neo-Aristotelians have argued that perfect friendship is impossible online, it is possible for imperfect people to become Aristotelian character-friends even across imperfect communications channels. Good people are disposed to form friendships when they spend large amounts of time with others; people who make a hobby of feigning friendship are displaying bad character. While the possibility of betrayal does make EVE more interesting as a test of social skills for all players, that does not justify the actions of those who choose to betray.

## 1. Is Betrayal in EVE Online Unethical?

Betrayal is generally considered one of the worst forms of wrongdoing. We cannot betray mere strangers or acquaintances; on Avishai Margalit's account, "betrayal undermines thick relations" such as those that bind friends and family (Margalit, 2017, p. 11). People who have been betrayed characteristically express shock and horror, not merely at having been harmed or deceived but also at the previously unthinkable fact that someone close to them has turned against them. This paper argues that it is possible for one person to betray another while playing a video game, that betraying another player is morally wrong, and that a good person would not betray people for fun.

I will focus on EVE Online since it is notorious for being a game where betrayal is a pervasive threat. Marcus Carter argues that in the context of the rules and culture of the game player betrayal "bears no immoral, subversive, transgressive, or anti-social qualities" (Carter, 2015, p. 205). After all, EVE is often described as a game where "the number one rule hammered into each new player is 'DON'T TRUST ANYONE.'" (Carter, 2015, p. 191) This slogan is useful to new players as a warning about the dangers they will face, but it can be misleading. While it is true that players must quickly learn that anyone could betray them, most players do come to trust a group of other players. EVE is a Hobbesian game; players have every reason to distrust each other but are forced to organize for mutual protection and support. I will argue that the fact that EVE players typically form long-term trusting relationships is what makes betrayal possible, and what makes it wrong.

My claim that betrayal in a video game is wrong faces three main objections. First, it might seem that players who log on to a game which is famous for betrayal are consenting to be betrayed. Second, it has been argued that players who betray each other are doing so in character, or that actions taken during a game do not reflect what a person is really like, or that betrayers are displaying virtues that make them good stewards of the game's rules; in short, the objection here is that betrayal is not wrong if it is in some sense just part of the game. To these two objections, I will reply that betrayal exploits the victim's emotions in a way that breaks the frame of gameplay and circumvents consent. The third objection I must address is the claim that it is not possible to form thick relationships while playing an online video game. It would follow that it is impossible to betray a friend in an online game, for players do not have any friends to betray. Defending the possibility of forming online friendships is a primary goal of this paper. Online games are interesting in part because of the interpersonal relationships that can be formed there, and discussing betrayal is a way of showing that such relationships should be taken seriously.

## 2. Ruthlessness, Deceit, and Betrayal in EVE Online

EVE Online is a science-fiction-themed massively multiplayer online (MMO) spaceship game. It is a single-shard game, meaning that its hundreds of thousands of subscribers from around the world all play in the same persistent gamespace. Players band together to pursue large-scale and long-term goals; corporations, alliances, and coalitions are organizations which can consist of tens of thousands of players and which can persist for many years. In part because there is only one gamespace for all players, interactions between players are often involuntary. Players with peaceful intentions can be approached by stealth and ambushed even in the safest parts of the gamespace, and hostile players cannot be avoided by switching to a different server.

EVE is a ruthless game. As defined by Carter, a ruthless game is one where "players are lawfully afforded the opportunity to act in ways that have great, negative consequences on other players" (Carter, 2015, p. 192). What one player can build with hundreds of hours of effort, another can destroy or steal in an afternoon. While it is possible to play EVE without harming other players, any combat between players involves irretrievably destroying the assets of other players. This is not necessarily malevolent; some corporations negotiate with each other to arrange battles, fair fights intended to provide mutual enjoyment. However, combat typically involves attacking an outgunned

enemy who is caught unawares and trying to escape. In this respect EVE resembles ruthless gambling games like poker, where the player attempts through skill to gain an advantage over their opponent and inflict a lasting financial loss.

EVE is famous for betrayal on a grand scale. Players spend months creating false identities so that they can join rival alliances, earn the trust of their members, spy on their activities and steal their assets. This is an organized activity. Keith Harrison, spymaster for the Goonswarm Alliance, describes managing a network of dozens of agents, each of whom is “putting in the hours and hard work” to gain the trust of their victims (Harrison, 2016, p. 118). Similarly, financial fraud in EVE can be as complex as creating a financial institution that offers in-game-currency checking accounts to thousands of customers, then embezzling from that institution after years as its CEO (Ocampo, 2009). Large-scale activities depend on networks of interpersonal trust, the violation of which can harm thousands of victims at once.

To focus only on what is happening in large alliances would be to unjustifiably overlook the experiences of the many players who never seek combat with other players (Bergstrom, 2016, p. 155-158). Even peacefully inclined corporations have reason to fear betrayal. By way of example, Paul Clavet has published a guide to infiltrating and looting small industrialist corporations. He emphasizes building a relationship with corporation members before applying, displaying selfless helpfulness to build trust, and forming friendships. This “can take a few days, and it can take months. It depends on your effort, and ability to manipulate people” (Clavet, 2010). Even the smallest groups of players need to exercise caution before working together because con-artists like Clavet specifically target the weak and poorly organized.

New players who do not fully understand the game mechanics and who are not yet wary enough of fraud are particularly likely to fall victim. Carter observes that new players are more likely to report strong negative feelings when victimized, “being unfamiliar with this style of PvP” (Carter, 2015, p. 205). This is true in part because the in-game tutorial leaves out important information (Bergstrom, 2016, p. 152). In fairness to the developers, there might be no way to automate enculturating the well-justified paranoia needed to survive in EVE.

Learning corporations are entities that exist to educate and train new players, but they themselves are not immune to attack. Here I can speak from my own experience as a player and as a teacher with player corporation EVE University (E-UNI). E-UNI is an in-game charitable organization that runs combat fleets as teaching tools, hosts a wiki that provides all players with information about the game, and offers a syllabus of classes that are open to the public. Learning corporations are one of the most common ways that players engage with EVE; in fact, over the past ten years E-UNI has been EVE’s most active corporation (CCP Fozzie, 2017). Despite the fact that E-UNI is politically neutral and has relatively few valuable assets it is constantly under attack from predatory experienced players who hope that novice players will be easy to kill. Consequently, E-UNI needed to create a Personnel Department whose responsibilities include counterintelligence. Its volunteer staff gathers a wide variety of information about applicants and collates that information using out-of-game custom software. They have a rather lengthy training manual. Counterintelligence work is work (Carter et. al., 2015, pp. 10-12), and it can be tedious, but it is necessary for the survival of the organization.

It is not coincidental that betrayal is pervasive throughout EVE, for it is explicitly permitted and encouraged by the game’s developers. There was a time when the developers were merely silent about whether such behavior was permitted (Craft, 2007, p. 212), but in recent years the game developers have explicitly promoted it, saying that “scamming and unethical behavior...is not only allowed, it is encouraged and rewarded by the game mechanics.” (CCP Phantom, 2016). This presents us with a paradox: if unethical behavior is permitted, why should it be considered unethical?



### 3. Is Betrayal Just Part of the Game?

In the tradition of Johan Huizinga (1949), games are thought to take place within a “magic circle” that demarcates the space of play (p. 10). Jaakko Stenros sees this idea of a magic circle as an ambiguous metaphor for several ways we establish boundaries around games. Notably, Stenros claims that play often involves an implicit social contract that we should not pass judgment on people for what they do as players in a game (Stenros, 2014, p. 176). To argue that in-game betrayal is morally wrong, I must show that in-game actions do not deserve blanket immunity from our out-of-game moral standards.

Trivially, I should make it clear that betrayal in EVE is not simulated betrayal. Much of the literature on the ethics of video games deals with simulated wrongdoing. For example, Matt McCormick makes an Aristotelian argument that violently dismembering other players in a first-person shooter might be bad for a person’s character (McCormick, 2001). Even though no one is actually being shot with a rocket launcher, the experience of witnessing or participating in a simulation of that act might be harmful. That literature is not germane to this paper, for I take it to be obvious that when players make and betray promises, the exchange of words between them is not simulated. Two people are actually communicating through the medium of the game; the interesting question is the normative significance of their words in the context of the game.

Roleplaying can justify in-game behavior that would otherwise be morally bad, but only if it is known to all players that roleplaying is taking place. A player of Dungeons and Dragons who pretends to be a barbarian and pretends to fly into a murderous rage is not demonstrating anger management issues, and they do nothing wrong by shouting at the other players if there is agreement about the kind of game being played. However, following Ashley John Craft (2007), I must point out that players of EVE are, in a sense, not playing the same game, for players who roleplay and players who do not roleplay do not agree on where the boundaries of the game ought to be drawn. Craft claims that in this ambiguous situation players who are sincerely roleplaying have an obligation to warn prospective victims that their overtures of friendship should be interpreted as friendship-in-character, and by warning them reach agreement about the kind of game they will be playing (Craft, 2007, pp. 214-215). EVE is not a game where players share a tacit understanding that everything said in-game is said in-character, so roleplaying cannot, in general, justify betrayal.

Although not all games involve roleplay, there is another sense in which players are not themselves while playing games. Miguel Sicart argues that becoming a player means creating a player-self, “a subidentity created during the play experience” (Sicart, 2009, p. 79). The rules of a game reward some behaviors and punish others. Learning to play well involves coming to adopt a perspective and a set of values in response to the rules of the game. It might be thought that since EVE’s rules reward betrayal, and since the player community has some degree of respect for betrayal as a mode of competition, betrayal is something a good player would do. However, it is for my purposes interesting that Sicart finds there to be “a fundamental tension between our values and our values as player-subjects” (Sicart, 2009, p. 79). If the tension between what the game rewards and what a person values when she is not a player grows sufficiently extreme, the person may quit the game in disgust (Sicart, 2009, p. 76; p. 89). If, as I will argue, there is good reason to think that in-game betrayal is incompatible with the overall goodness of a person’s life, a good person would not allow a player-self capable of betrayal to exist as part of themselves.

### 4. Not All In-Game Deception is Morally Wrong

Not all in-game deception is wrong, and not all in-game deception is betrayal. In certain games, ruthless deception can be good for the person who is being deceived. C. Thi Nguyen and José Zagal go so far as to claim that all oppositional play is in a sense violent and morally wrong, but that competitive games can be good for those who play them on two conditions: the players must consent

to play, and attacks on a player must be compatible with the “desirable experience of struggling” that the victim is seeking. (Nguyen and Zagal, 2016, pp. 4-5). Quite a lot of ruthlessly deceptive play in EVE meets Nguyen and Zagal’s two tests. EVE players consent to attempts at deception. Players know or should know that any financial agreement offered to them by a stranger is probably fraudulent. Players know or should know that any ship they see in space is potentially hostile; the possibility of ambush or unorthodox play should not be a surprise. EVE creates an experience of never feeling entirely safe, and that is something that draws players to the game.

In some games which meet Nguyen and Zagal’s two tests players do not have a duty to tell each other the truth. On Thomas Carson’s account of bluffing in poker (Carson et al., 1982), deception is not morally wrong in the context of a game where attempts to deceive are commonplace and permitted by the game’s rules (p. 19). Indeed, Carson argues that we should not even say that a player who makes deceptive false statements has told a lie, for a lie is breaking a kind of promise to tell the truth, and in the context of this sort of game “each party consents to renouncing the ordinary warranty of truth” (Carson, 1993, p. 323). On this account of deception, good bluffers are not morally bad people, and we could even go so far as to say that it is impossible for a poker player to lie about the cards they have while sitting at the table, for in that context nothing anyone says comes with an implicit guarantee of truth. Poker does not put friendships at risk, for poker players do not, as friends, promise to be truthful.

One way that betrayal is different from other forms of deception is that one cannot consent to be betrayed. More strictly speaking, one cannot be consenting to betrayal at the moment one is betrayed. As Margalit points, one of the most prominent features of the phenomenology of betrayal is the unthinkableness of it (Margalit, 2017, pp. 107-108). If one is not shocked speechless at deception, one has not been betrayed. The question then is how anyone could be so foolish as to be surprised that a seeming-friend would harm them while playing EVE.

## 5. Two Standards for Evaluating In-Game Betrayal

Sicart has an account of game virtues leads to the conclusion that victims of betrayal in EVE are foolish, foolish to such an extent that they might be considered morally bad. Sicart claims that an Aristotelian virtue ethics analysis can be applied to a player-subject, and that habits of perceiving, reasoning and acting which constitute good stewardship of the game should be considered virtuous in the context of the game. Paranoia is not praiseworthy when directed toward one’s friends and family, but, by Sicart’s standards, an appropriately high degree of suspicion and mistrust is virtuous in a player-subject of EVE. In the context of EVE, a player who has the “virtue of socialization” (Sicart, 2009, p. 96) will make a plan for counterespionage before they begin building a community. I take this to be why the betrayers interviewed by Carter sometimes displayed contempt for their victims, because being a victim of betrayal really does demonstrate a lack of game knowledge and social skill. By the standard set by the virtuous player-subject, the victim is a bad player-subject.

Sicart’s model of virtues does not map well onto an Aristotelian account of friendship, for Aristotelian friendship is holistic. Sicart’s model of human experience is fragmented. While Sicart does describe the “player-subject and the other subjectivities present in our daily life” as being in dialogue with each other (Sicart, 2009, p. 73), the picture he paints implies a certain degree of compartmentalization. In Aristotle’s idealized case, friends would want to share every aspect of their lives with each other. Friendship is contagious across subjectivities. Openness to friendship can be seen as a virtue only from the perspective of the whole person.

In-game betrayal aims to stop the victim from thinking like an EVE player-subject and start thinking like a domain-nonspecific friend. Consider the case of a mole, someone who attempts to gain a stranger’s trust so as to later betray them and their corporation. A skillful mole has the social skills to identify and mimic the character traits their victim would want in a friend. Over time, the

mole establishes a pattern of reliably helpful behavior, or perhaps presents themselves as someone who needs help, someone the victim can mentor. A typical victim comes to enjoy the perpetrator's company and develops some degree of respect for them. The victim's feelings for the person they think of as a friend make them blind to danger or willing to take risks to be helpful, while the perpetrator lacks feelings that could hold them back from harming their victim. The key to this procedure is that the prospective mole must avoid becoming a friend to the victim. To successfully betray, a mole *qua* person must have an unusually low level of openness to friendship; they must be able to do the things that friends do, convincingly, over time, while remaining cold, and engaging only the EVE player-subject side of themselves. Evaluated by the standard of the role of friendship in human life as a whole, the player-self of the betrayer is one facet of a person who is bad.

Betraying someone because of the pleasure the perpetrator gets from exercising their skills at deception is not defensible. Betraying someone for fun is particularly alarming from an Aristotelian point of view because neo-Aristotelians see the sorts of things a person takes pleasure in as indicators of their character. Someone who makes a hobby of deliberately creating the impression of friendship without becoming friends is demonstrating a chronic lack of goodwill toward others. I can't dispute that manipulating someone's emotions so successfully that they leave themselves vulnerable to harm is an impressive feat of skill, but not every feat of skill is praiseworthy.

## 6. Is Ideal Friendship Possible in EVE Online?

My argument above is that betrayal in EVE is wrong because feigning friendship is wrong, but my argument assumes it is possible for people to form genuine friendships with strangers online. In 2012, a special issue of *Ethics and Information Technology* was dedicated to proving that this is impossible. The authors made a variety of neo-Aristotelian arguments that it is difficult or impossible to form genuine friendships online. If that is true, victims of betrayal have no one to blame but themselves for their delusion that their betrayer was a friend, for strangers who meet in EVE cannot really become friends.

Neo-Aristotelian skepticism about online friendship stems from the recognition that not all friendships are created equal. Someone might have hundreds of Facebook friends but lack any close and meaningful relationships (Cocking, van den Hoven, & Timmermans, 2012, p. 179). Friendship is an ambiguous word, but we can pick apart its different meanings by looking at what motives bring people together. On Aristotle's account, people are attracted to what is useful to us, to what brings us pleasure, and to what is good (Aristotle, NE 1155b19). It follows that there are different kinds of friendship, friendships that have different aims in mind. To the extent that I would call the relationship I have with my barber a friendship, it is a friendship based on our usefulness to each other; we spend time together because he gets cash and I get shorter hair. When people spend time together because of the pleasure they get from each others' company, they have a friendship based on pleasure. However, both of those kinds of friendship are fungible. If I can get the same amount of usefulness or pleasure out of someone else, I lose nothing by replacing my friend. If I want to be loved for who I am, I need to form a different kind of friendship, a friendship based on character (NE 1156a18). Character-friendships are friendships based on mutual respect, friendships motivated by attraction to the goodness that the friends see in each other. In a sense, perfect friendship is possible only between perfectly virtuous people, and only among people who spend enough time together to get to know each other. These two conditions for perfect friendship, perfect character and perfect awareness of each others' character, are the basis for neo-Aristotelian denials that genuine online friendship is possible. If online friendship is impossible, nothing EVE players do should be condemned as betrayal.



## 6.1. Even Imperfect People Tend to Become Friends

While debating interpretations of Aristotle would be wandering rather far from the purpose of this paper, it is worth mentioning that the critics' claim that character-friendship is extraordinarily rare is controversial as an interpretation of Aristotle and implausible as an account of what we mean by genuine friendship in ordinary language. Aristotle has a well-developed theory of how people who are not morally perfect can form genuine friendships. For him, a person who is only virtuous to a limited extent is only character-lovable to the extent that they are virtuous (NE 1158b26), but he does think it is possible to form lasting friendships on the basis of character between people who are not equally virtuous (NE 1163b12-23). Pursuing this point further would require discussion of what Aristotle might have meant in these passages, since this is in tension with what he says elsewhere about the unity of virtue, but we don't need to go in that direction to make the simpler point that the critics' extreme claims about the exclusivity of friendship are at odds with ordinary usage. Recall that the critics are saying that only the best of people can form friendships at all, and that even those best people find few people to befriend. Robert Sharp doubts that any of his students have any friends (Sharp, 2012, p. 236). On his account it is reasonable to assume that you, the person reading this paper, have no friends, online or offline. This is implausibly extreme. While we might agree that the most virtuous people are more capable than other people of forming friendships based on mutual respect, it's wrong to think that imperfect people are incapable of finding anything in each other that is worthy of respect.

Part of what it means to be a good person is to be a person of goodwill who seeks friendships with others. John Cooper tells us that, for Aristotle, good people who are not currently friends tend to be friendly with each other and disposed to become friends (Cooper, 1977/1980, p. 303). When good people spend a lot of time together they learn about each other's character and come to respect each other; they may have initially gotten acquainted because they could benefit each other or because they had fun together, but over time they become character-friends. This raises the question of how two people could spend large amounts of time together without developing character-friendship.

To reiterate, betrayal in EVE indicates that the betrayer is a bad person in the sense that they lack appropriate openness to friendship. It might be the case that a would-be betrayer is careful to choose victims who are so morally bad as to be totally unworthy of friendship. Aristotle thinks that there are such people (NE 1158b34-36), and perhaps there would be nothing wrong with betraying entirely horrible people. However, if a victim is at least an imperfectly good person, if there is something about their character that is worthy of respect, then betrayal is wrong. Winning over a victim's trust requires the sort of long, close contact that naturally leads to friendship among good people. Betrayers are not just harming others without their consent (which would be wrong on Kantian grounds) but also demonstrating that they are not good people.

## 6.2. Playing EVE Provides Adequate Information for Character-Friendship

Perhaps time spent together playing an online spaceship game isn't an adequate basis for friendship. Neo-Aristotelian critics of online friendship have made three lines of argument to that effect. First, online contact might not provide a sufficiently wide range of experiences for people to get to know each other's character. Second, people make choices about what they reveal about themselves online, and that selectivity of self-presentation allows people to hide their character flaws. Third, even people who intend to be entirely open with each other will unconsciously filter their online self-presentation.

A reply can begin by observing that throughout our lives, almost all of our friendships are formed under what Aristotle would consider non-ideal circumstances. Developing his ideal sort of friendship requires living together and sharing all of life's experiences together. In reality, this is rarely achieved. It's rare for even a romantic partner to share all aspects of a person's life, for if

partners do not share a workplace they do not see those aspects of character that express on the job. The question then should be whether online experience provides opportunities for friendship that are comparable to the sorts of experiences we have when we make friends in offline life.

It would be a mistake to talk about online experiences without specifying what kind of online experience we are talking about. Many critics of online friendship, for example Sharp, are thinking of text-based online interaction, which has limitations such as “lack of tone, gesture, cadence and similar linguistic features” (Sharp, 2012, p. 234). Michael McFall focusses on Skype, arguing that two people who interact only through online video chat will not see how their partner interacts with other people (McFall, 2012, p. 225). Johnny Søraker acknowledges that new technologies might escape his criticisms of online friendship by enabling new ways of interacting online (Søraker, 2012, p. 215). So, Sofia Kaliarnta is surely right in saying that we should avoid “broad generalizations about online friendship that do not necessarily apply for all the vast array of communications platforms online” (Kaliarnta, 2016, p. 67). To argue that forming genuine friendships is possible in EVE we must look at how players interact in that game specifically.

People who meet through EVE are missing out on some important features of face-to-face interaction. Players know each other by pseudonym, and typically know little biographical information about each other. It is unusual for players to share photographs of themselves with each other; player profile pictures are computer-generated cartoons. Gesture, even simulated gesture, is entirely absent since what players can see of each other's actions is exterior shots of faceless spaceships. While some players travel to meet in person at conferences, for the most part players never physically interact, and Shannon Vallor (2012) is right that touch is crucially important for experiencing a friend's emotions (p. 193). In these ways, communication in EVE is severely limited compared to face-to-face interaction. Nevertheless, the avenues of communication that are open to players allow them to get to know each other's character.

EVE lacks some of the opportunities for self-censorship that other online media have. Unlike interactions over Facebook (Sharp, 2012, p. 238), what other players see of you is not confined to self-report. Movements of ships are visible to anyone nearby, and because the results of battles are publicly reported on “killboards”, a player does not have complete control of his or her reputation. Unlike communication over Skype (McFall, 2012, p. 225), players are able to interact in groups and see how they treat each other.

Voice chat is one common way that players get to know each other. In McFall's (2012) terminology, voice chat in fleets is “single-filtered communication” which can be neither consciously nor unconsciously censored (p. 224). Vocal communication in EVE includes conversations under extremely stressful circumstances, and vocal communication makes emotion is difficult to conceal. Fleets depend on voice communication because typing isn't fast enough to convey information in fights where seconds matter. Frustration, elation, anger, hesitation, and panic are all audible. Stress is a test of character, and fleetmates quickly learn what sort of people they are flying with.

To a limited extent, members of a corporation in EVE meet Barbro Fröding and Martin Peterson's (2012) demand that genuine friendships can form only in circumstances where people “stumble on situations that are both novel and unexpected and... have to deal with them impromptu” (p. 204). While players lack shared embodied experience, there is an important sense in which they do live together. Members of a corporation typically have an in-game home that they must maintain and protect. Threats to that home are typically unexpected and often unprecedented, as the rules of the game change slowly over time and opponents are creative. Players in a corporation are not entirely free to choose what activities they share with others, nor free to avoid each other when they would prefer peace and quiet; they are stuck living with each other and had best learn to enjoy it.

Because EVE grants its players an unusually large amount of freedom to play as they please, players share an unusually wide range of activities with each other. For example, in the past year I did some work on an E-UNI syllabus redesign project. I wrote PowerPoint presentations and edited them subject to peer review. I freely admit that this is a bizarre thing to do for fun, and certainly not an activity that the game developers anticipated. Activities like E-UNI course design and writing propaganda for large corporations can best be described as writing emitext. Emitext is writing that “shapes a player’s experience of the game and gives new meanings to acts of play... [writing] that emerges from within the game as part of gameplay” (Carter, 2014, p. 313 & 331). If communications between players were restricted to what can be done through the game engine then there might be reason to doubt that it is possible for players to get to know each other well enough to develop mutual respect, but the boundaries of EVE gameplay are so indeterminate that any online communications channel can be recruited to expand interplayer communications.

So, it is possible for imperfect people to form friendships over the communications channels available to EVE players, and, if those channels seem inadequate, players can find new emitextual ways of communicating. Given that, players will naturally develop character-friendship type respect for each other over time, if they are good people.

## **7. The Social Game of Wary Trust in EVE Online**

EVE is in part a social game where players are forced to decide who to trust. The possibility of betrayal and the need to defend against betrayal are part of what makes EVE unique as a game, and provide a large part of its appeal. Carter describes this social game from the perspective of the betrayer and sees it as a stage for displaying social skills in competition (Carter, 2015, p. 197), but the possibility of betrayal can also be a social game for potential targets of betrayal. While being betrayed can feel like a painful defeat, exercising the vigilance required to trust without being betrayed can be pleasurable, and is, in its own way, a display of skill. However, neither the consent of victims to play in an environment where betrayal is permitted nor the pleasure the victims get from this social game provides justification for betrayal. The process of betrayal, which requires manipulating long-term partners into believing they are friends, is not a game that good people would play. EVE would be a much more boring game if it had no bad people in it, but that fact does not make the bad people good.

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