LESSON
MORALITY AND EVIL IN THE WITCHER 3

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MORALITY AND EVIL IN THE WITHCER 3

Using the Witcher 3 and its universe as a way to discuss and nuance the concept of evil and morality

Subject and level

Psychology B-levels, but could also be used in other subjects such as religion, english, philosophy etc.

Connection to curriculum

A popular theme in psychology is the understanding of humans capacity for being evil. This exercise is connected to the Norwegian philosopher Lars Svendsens philosophy of evil. It can also be supplemented with other psychological theories such as cognitive dissonance, moral justification and conformity.

Didactic and pedagogic considerations

A fundamental rule in the study of psychology is that it is based on the studies of normal function real world humans. So when dealing with fictional characters it is very important to clarify to the students that you can't obtain knowledge about humans through the study of fictional characters, but you can use fictional characters to understand the theory.

The advantage of using fictional characters and gaming as a medium is mostly that it can help them with realising how the concept of evil and morality can be ambiguous as the characters and choices often are in the Witcher universe.

Time estimate

2-4 hours

Group size

2

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Overall introduction to exercise
In the assignment the pairs can chose between one of the tasks below:

Exercise as presented to the students
Option 1:
Go online and find information on the characters from the game below (E.g online wikis or Youtube walkthroughs of quest lines with the characters) and try to judge if the characters are acting evil and if that is the case what type of evil they are doing.

Characters:

- Geralt of Rivia (The player character who through the game makes choices in different quests where there often isn't a morally "correct" choice)
- Emhyr van Emreis (Emperor of the Nilfgardian Empire)
- Letho of Gulet (A Witcher that tried to save his Witcher school by becoming a hired assassin and kingslayer)
- Caleb Menge (Leader of the Witch Hunters who hunts and tortures witches, mages and other magical beings because of religious beliefs)
- Whoreson Junior (A sadistic gang leader and murderer)

Option 2:
Play the following questline and try to answer the related questions.

"Where the cat and wolf play"

- Is Gaetan evil and if so, what type of evil does he exhibit?
- Were the townspeople evil and if so what type of evil did they exhibit?
- What ending to the questline did you choose and why?
- Which of the endings to the quest do you think is the lesser evil?

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