



Far Cry 5 and Far Cry: New Dawn

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Introduction

The Project at Eden's Gate (The Project) is the name of a fictionalized apocalyptic 'cult' fuelled by millenarian ideologies featured throughout the video games *Far Cry 5* (2018) and *Far Cry: New Dawn* (2019). Based in Hope County, a fictional region of Montana in the United States, this apocalyptic millenarian group is presented as a White American Christian community. Their belief dictates that God will punish humankind for their sins and wipe the slate clean through the total destruction of the earth. In the opening of his memoirs, called *The Book of Joseph*—a few copies of which were published in physical form [1]—Joseph Seed, the founder and leader of The Project, declares: 'I am the messenger. I am the one who must warn you of the ending of this world and gather the chosen ones who will build the next world' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 5). Their Hope County compound functions as their safe haven, wherein the First and Last Family will await the End of Days 'to live in the Garden of Eden' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 21) promised to them by God.

Development, Leadership, and Identity: Origins to Termination

The Founding

Throughout the duration of The Project and New Eden's existence, Joseph Seed functions as the charismatic leader. Raised in the working-class neighbourhood of Rome, Georgia, Joseph and his brothers—Jacob and John—lived abused and impoverished lives. Their mother, 'a ghost' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 21) who was absent throughout their childhood, was later institutionalized. Their father, an alcoholic, beat the brothers and preached an extreme conservative Christian religion: condemning the sins of Hollywood and banning all forms of non-religious media. During Joseph Seed's seventh year (c. 1983 [2]), he heard the Voice, which described the impending destruction of the world. Joseph heard the Voice proclaim 'that [the brothers] had been chosen to achieve Its destiny. And to give humanity one last chance' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 33). As Joseph says in *The Book of Joseph*, 'God has tired of humanity's behaviour and intended to take back everything He had created' (2018, 17). He continues:

Man's pride has made him so forgetful and ungrateful, that God intends to start over. For we have learned nothing. ... Our perversion, our duplicity, our indescribable cruelty we inflict on each other has fanned the flames of His anger. ... We may have been created in His image, but we have reinvented ourselves, ... contorting ourselves into strange shapes to become ghastly creatures. We who were once so pure, who lived in Paradise, now wallow in muck day and night entombing our original goodness under a thick layer of filth. (The Book of Joseph, 2018, 17)

Only a few days after this revelation, the Seed siblings were taken into care and their father was arrested; John's teachers had noticed marks scarring his back and called child protective services.

After moving between abusive foster homes, Jacob Seed—the eldest of the siblings—was detained in a juvenile centre before signing up to the Marines; John Seed—the youngest—was taken in by a conservative religious family of wealthy heritage; and Joseph Seed, during periods of unemployment and homelessness, spent his early adulthood in libraries researching modes of religious devotion, becoming deeply interested in religious practice. He recognized similarities between religious individuals and himself, seeing their dedication to faith as a means of 'begging for something to fill the emptiness inside of them' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 48).

During this time the Voice revealed a second Vision to Joseph:

The end of the world, the complete collapse, call it what you will. Everything you know will soon be gone. Humanity has been condemned. It is inevitable, imminent, and terrible. The Voice did not show me exactly how it all would end. Humanity is incredibly imaginative when it comes to self-destruction. ... We have brought about so many catastrophes, created so many new threats. Our corruption is so deep that we have earned more than just one punishment. ... Each person will experience the end they dread. (The Book of Joseph, 2018, 63)

Fuelled by this Vision, Joseph dedicated himself wholly to finding his brothers and spreading the presence of this Voice 'far and wide to try to convince the pure of heart to join our family' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 33). Practising conservative Christian principles and observing literalist interpretations of biblical teachings—'literalist' in the sense of obeying biblical teaching as concrete in meaning and application—Joseph Seed and his brothers began to preach small sermons around Georgia, recruiting members from their childhood community and warning them of the coming Collapse.

The first sermon of The Project was held in the early 2000s, in a disused slaughterhouse. While not many members attended, very quickly Joseph's [prophecy](#) grew in popularity. The early days of The Project held a membership of predominantly under-privileged individuals. As Joseph observes in *The Book of Joseph*:

In a society where selfishness triumphs, ... where they worship themselves, what becomes of the righteous? What becomes of goodness? Of the humble or those who wander abandoned in this vast wasteland that the world has become? ... They are ridiculed. ... We heap insults upon them and beckon them to join the macabre carnival of frenzied consumption. And if they refuse, we become

| suspicious of them and cast them out. (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 19-20)

The community became a space for 'those that society calls losers' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 93) to find safety among people of their kind. Their numbers grew rapidly. With this growth, The Project developed federal attention and, sometime in the early 2010s, Joseph moved his community towards the northwestern mountain ranges of America to seek freedom from prosecution. As their caravan of believers traversed America, word spread of Joseph Seed and his prophetic Vision, and numbers expanded. Numerous times, police arrested members of The Project, searching vehicles and attempting to seize property, but they never found conclusive evidence of any wrongdoing.

The Pyramidal Structure

Settling in Hope County, The Project developed an agricultural community, cultivating their own food, taking over abandoned missile silos, and fitting them ready for the Collapse. Hope County represented the community's 'hope of giving birth to a new humanity, of creating a purer, fairer, more fraternal society from the ashes of the old' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 98). Discarding their clothes from their lives before, members of The Project donned white-only clothing. The men grew beards and clothing became gender neutral; both men and women wore long cargo pants to facilitate physical labour. They built religious structures and compounds and became self-sufficient, befitting the large numbers of people who began travelling from across America as word spread of The Project. The popularity of this community unsettled the residents of Hope County, who quickly proclaimed The Project to be a 'cult' and condemned such a settlement. Given the large membership, Joseph Seed allocated his brothers, John and Jacob Seed, and a trustworthy and pious woman whom he named Faith Seed, to run factions within The Project. This pyramidal structure, with Joseph at its head, allowed the community to prepare thoroughly for Joseph's Vision of the Collapse.

Jacob Seed, as an ex-Marine, was responsible for the creation of an 'arsenal that [would] aid [the] defence when dazed apocalypse survivors [sought] out and [tried] to loot [the] resources' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 114) of The Project. Training the strongest of the community's people, Jacob created a militia. These holy soldiers broke from the white-only clothing of The Project's membership: instead, they wore black cargo pants, military-grade boots, and earthen-coloured cargo tops with the insignia of the cult emblazoned upon them (as depicted in **Figure 1**).



Figure 1 Far Cry: New Dawn (2019). This image depicts the symbol of New Eden, reclaimed after the Collapse and once the insignia of The Project. Screenshot from gameplay. © Ubisoft.

John Seed possessed the innate ability to gain the trust of others—‘a chameleon, as heartless as he was shapeshifting’ (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 74). Due to the psychological torture he experienced throughout his life, during his adoption into a wealthy conservative family who were obsessed with sin and confession, John became the confessor of The Project. Each member of his faction adorned themselves with scars of their sin—carved into their flesh and peeled away upon repentance. ‘Thanks to [John], [Joseph knew] that each member of [the] family [was] devoted body and soul to the grand plan that [Joseph] must accomplish and that there [were] no informants among [the] ranks’ (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 79).

The third faction, that of Faith Seed, was one that would conform to the stereotypical notion of ‘brainwashing’ in anti-cult circles. The title ‘Faith Seed’ had been provided to numerous women from the beginnings of The Project, in the early 2000s to 2018, but the Faith Seed guiding the community during its Hope County occupation would be the last. Her faction provided for those in the ‘depths of the darkest depressions and the darkest addictions’ (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 111). The women who were chosen to become Faith Seed were addicts who, after painful periods of withdrawal, were ‘purified’ (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 112). Using a drug known to The Project as Bliss—made from a plant physically akin to jimsonweed or devil’s snare—Faith treated addicts and depressives with this hallucinogenic to help ease their symptoms and cope with the knowledge of the coming Collapse. Replacing one addiction with another, her faction members, known as Angels, were recognized by their shaven heads, surgical masks, and filthy white clothes. Verbally incoherent, these docile figures followed the instruction of Faith and Joseph Seed and were predominantly made up of the more reluctant members of The Project: addicts in withdrawal, those battling depression, or those who were once residents of Hope County, pulled into the cult during The Reaping (see below).

In the epicentre of these three factions sat Joseph's island, upon which The Project constructed a grand white church and the largest of the community's compounds. Here, the cult congregated to hear his sermons and watch as the cult continued its exponential growth.

The Reaping, or Violent Era

Sensing that federal interest would return as numbers surged, Joseph began preaching of the seals that, through being broken, would herald the coming of the Collapse and the foretold apocalypse. He anticipated that people would come to take the Father (i.e. himself) away from The Project, but God would prevent such an external threat from succeeding. In 2018, the year of *Far Cry 5*'s release, a police unit entered the compound in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to arrest Joseph Seed on 'suspicion of kidnapping with the intent to harm' (*Far Cry 5*, 2018). As [prophesized](#), the external threat had come for the Father. As the handcuffed Joseph Seed was placed into a police helicopter, members of The Project climbed atop the helicopter and threw themselves into the propellers to prevent its take-off. In doing so, the first seal was broken: the arrest failed, symbolizing God's intervention. This indicated the beginning of the Collapse and the commencement of the countdown to the apocalypse.

Here began the era of violence for The Project, as Joseph Seed called for the commencement of The Reaping, wherein members of the cult would forcibly take non-cult members belonging to the Hope County community, purge them of sin and bring them into their ranks, or cleanse the irredeemable from the earth in God's name. This violent era, however, saw the progressive decline of each faction of The Project. In response to the violence of The Reaping, the player of *Far Cry 5* (2018), known as the deputy, systematically killed each faction leader—Jacob, John, and Faith—and destroyed each faction's underground bunker. Survivors from the Hope County community joined forces with the deputy and, as the members of the cult turned towards violence in response, many of The Project's population was destroyed.

In a last conflict between the player and Joseph Seed, the final seal was broken and the Collapse reached its peak. As the deputy secured the surrender of Joseph Seed, global nuclear war began. Earth, due to this apocalyptic event, was irradiated. The Vision of Joseph's [prophecy](#) was confirmed. Retreating to a small prepper bunker, the deputy and Joseph Seed were trapped underground with no conception of there being any survivors. It was perceived, by the conclusion of *Far Cry 5* (2018), that The Project had been destroyed.

The Tribulation Period

After the Collapse and consequent apocalyptic destruction of the earth, Joseph Seed and the deputy were trapped for seventeen years beneath the ground. Not much is known of this stage: *Far Cry 5* (2018) and *Far Cry: New Dawn* (2019) detail the time either side of this period.[3] A small number of survivors belonging to The Project found refuge within the damaged bunker once belonging to John Seed's faction. Due to architectural damage caused during The Reaping, many of these members succumbed to starvation, disease, or flooding. Many questioned whether Joseph's promise of a New Eden was true, and their faith was challenged.

Meanwhile, the deputy, guilt-ridden after disbelieving the Vision Joseph foretold of the Collapse and killing thousands who had prepared for such a [prophecy](#), turned to faith. They believed in Joseph's ability to hear the Voice and, over time, became the Judge—a silent figure who obeyed the word of Joseph Seed and

protected the cult.

Joseph Seed, however, battled with his own faith. He had lost his brothers and Faith during the Collapse. Most of The Project's population were destroyed and, trapped in the prepper bunker, Joseph did not know whether his community had survived the Collapse. It was during this period that Joseph once more heard the Voice and began writing The Word, a new [prophesized](#) Vision foretelling the coming of Eden now that the Collapse had ended and the world had been cast into ruin. Joseph told of 'the one who will Shepherd Eden when [Joseph] is gone. It was not a face [he] recognise[d]. It did not look like [Joseph]. So it [was] not [his] child of blood' (*Far Cry: New Dawn*, 2019).

Upon finishing The Word and after seventeen years of entrapment, Joseph Seed and the Judge ascended onto the topsoil, leaving The Word of Joseph behind. Joseph's [prophecy](#) foretold that the Shepherd would locate The Word and return it to Joseph Seed, ushering in a time of peace for New Eden and any survivors of The Project.

The Creation of a New Eden

After this period of underground entrapment, the radiation levels upon earth had become regulated and the survivors of The Project—alongside Joseph and the Judge—sought somewhere to relocate and rebuild. Struggling to find sustenance and shelter, the community suffered until Joseph Seed found the Apple Tree: a tree grown at the base of a lake flooded by Bliss that, consequently, imbued those who ate it with extra-human strength and constitution. Thriving, the community rebuilt: creating a compound from earthen materials, rejecting all remnants of the old world before the Collapse, and renaming the community New Eden. They replaced the white clothing of The Project with leathers and earthen colours, crafted by scavenged materials from the post-apocalyptic land around them.

During this time, Joseph Seed condemned the violence of The Project. Vowing to avoid such violent ways again, Joseph gave sermons of peace behind the walls of the compound. Also during this time, Joseph was reunited with his son, Ethan Seed, who had been born to a woman named Megan away from his father and who had been told of Joseph's [prophetic](#) and messianic status by his mother. After growing sick during the Collapse, she managed to return Ethan to his father before her death.

Raised during the Collapse and outside the teachings of the Father, Ethan Seed was a prideful child. He demanded access to an apple from the Apple Tree, which Joseph denied him, declaring it was 'not God's plan' (*Far Cry: New Dawn*, 2019). Ethan vowed Joseph was 'an old man. And when [he died], [he] [would] take one' (*Far Cry: New Dawn*, 2019). Facing threats from within New Eden, the cult also confronted sin from outside their community; as the post-apocalyptic state of the earth offered only barren wastelands and irradiated agriculture, dangerous communities encroached on New Eden's haven. The Highwaymen, a group of youthful and violent individuals led by teenagers born during the Collapse, heard of New Eden and posed an immediate threat to the community.

Surrounded from all sides by sin, Joseph Seed's conviction faltered, and he once again battled with his faith. The post-apocalyptic world New Eden existed within was not that which had been promised by the Voice; instead, the earth continued to be filled with sin and violence. Joseph, consequently, isolated himself in the north, returning to the shelter of the Apple Tree that had once sustained New Eden in its time of suffering. He vowed to remain while he awaited the Shepherd, who would bring him The Word of Joseph

and consequently be 'ordained by God to be the true ruler of Eden' (*Far Cry: New Dawn*, 2019).

The Reign of Ethan

With the self-inflicted exile of Joseph, Ethan Seed took over New Eden. Met with dissent from its membership, who continued to praise Joseph and await his return, Ethan grew bitter. His rule was one of anger and violence. He began training the youth of New Eden to fight alongside cougars raised within the compound walls. Instead of allowing The Highwaymen and other external threats to challenge the safety of New Eden, Ethan's rule focused on combating such threats, thus rejecting Joseph's vow to avoid violence and live a peaceful life.

It was during this time, in approximately 2035, that *Far Cry: New Dawn* (2019) began. The people of New Eden were suspicious of outsiders and anxiously awaited the return of Joseph. They constantly undermined and challenged the words of Ethan, doubting his leadership and rejecting his proposals to change practices laid out by the Father. The Judge, left behind to guard New Eden, silently watched over the community yet upheld The Word of Joseph Seed, siding with the membership of New Eden. Upon the arrival of the player, who indicated they were the [prophesized](#) Shepherd through the return of The Word Ethan was angered. He declared it should have been him who ruled New Eden as 'ordained by God' (*Far Cry: New Dawn*, 2019) and instructed the player to travel north towards the Apple Tree and provide evidence of Joseph Seed's death to solidify his own leadership over the cult: 'Our family still believes in him and they'll never stop believing in him ... until they understand that he was not a messiah. He was just a man' (*Far Cry: New Dawn*, 2019).

However, in bringing The Word of Joseph to New Eden and locating Joseph Seed by the Apple Tree, the player fulfilled the [prophetic](#) Vision of Joseph and was named the Shepherd of New Eden. Joseph Seed returned to New Eden and reclaimed leadership of the cult, with the Judge and the Shepherd supporting his vision of a peaceful livelihood for the community. Ethan was relegated to obeying The Word of Joseph once more.

The Betrayal and Dissolution

Spited by the return of the Father and angered that he was not the select Shepherd—which he believed to be his birthright—Ethan Seed deserted New Eden and sought the support of The Highwaymen. Ethan formulated an agreement with this community; he would lead them to the Apple Tree and, as a reward, they would destroy the New Eden compound. Ethan's conflict with his father was, ultimately, what led to the destruction of this religious cult. The Highwaymen succeeded in destroying the New Eden compound, burning the community to ash. While the Shepherd killed the leaders of The Highwaymen, they failed to save the compound.

Ethan Seed, during the siege, took advantage of the conflict to gain access to the Apple Tree, despite Joseph's declaration that it was not part of God's plan. However, due to the sin within his soul, the Apple Tree poisoned him, and he died in a violent battle with the Shepherd, seeking forgiveness in his death throes.

Grieved by the loss of New Eden and his son, Joseph Seed's faith finally fractured. He perceived that he had never had a connection to the Voice and that his Visions were misled. Joseph declared he 'only spread

suffering and death in the name of God' (*Far Cry: New Dawn*, 2019) and begged only for death, which the Shepherd mercifully gave him. The Judge, surviving this conflict, mourned the loss of Joseph Seed and retreated, agreeing only to help the Shepherd cleanse the earth of remaining Highwaymen.

The few remaining survivors of the New Eden compound fire were welcomed into a local community within Hope County, known as Prosperity. They stopped following The Word of Joseph, seeing his death as proof that his messianic status was fictional. In this way, New Eden and Joseph's [prophetic](#) teachings were dissolved.

Beliefs of the Movement and the Role/Understanding of Prophecy, Divine Inspiration, and Revelation

The beliefs of The Project defined the movement as both apocalyptic and millenarian: apocalyptic in the sense of believing in the coming end (the Collapse) of an era—that is, the destruction of the contemporary world and the society it housed. This destruction, for the cult, was [prophetic](#), coming through a Vision granted by the Voice to their messianic leader, Joseph Seed. And, with this apocalyptic belief and prophetic Vision, The Project can be seen as millenarian. They believed that, after the Collapse, a promised time of peace would be provided to those deemed worthy by Joseph Seed, who, as the messianic figure promised to the worthy and guided by the Voice, would lead them through the dangers of the Collapse and towards prosperity. Ironically, they found Prosperity only in the collapse of their belief.

Such beliefs are similar to those shared by several real-world movements popularly understood to be 'cults'. The most obvious similarity is in the physical likeness of Joseph Seed to [David Koresh](#) (1959–93), the charismatic leader of the [Branch Davidians](#). Both leaders were influenced by Adventism, an off-branch of Protestantism that anticipates the second coming—or 'second advent'—of Christ. Adventism is estimated to have originated in the United States during the 1830s. Today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognizably the largest denomination belonging to Adventism, founded in 1863 and estimated to support over 21 million members.

Situated within the Adventist faith, The Project portrays many communities that collapsed after their apocalyptic [prophecy](#) failed. And, mirroring the end of the Branch Davidians, whose compound was burned in a federal siege—the Waco siege (28 February to 19 April 1993)—The Project also collapsed as a consequence of the New Eden fire. Prophecy dictated the belief systems of both the Branch Davidians and The Project. Consequently, as Joseph's prophetic Vision was shown to be fictive and the compound destroyed, the faith system of New Eden collapsed.

Revelation—both the revealing of that which is hidden (as in the classic use of the term 'apocalypse') and the Book of Revelation—are also key to the belief system of The Project. Joseph's manipulation of the seven seals as described by the Bible (Revelation 5:1–8:13) guided The Project through the Collapse and eventual destruction of the earth. Koresh, similarly, used the notion of the Lamb from the Book of Revelation (Revelation 5) to lead his own people and designate himself as their messiah. Both the fictional cult of The Project and the real-world Branch Davidians believed in a literalist interpretation of the Book of Revelation, in the sense noted above. Arguably, this explains their dedication to the belief in an apocalyptic end and their willingness to die within their respective compound fires: it heralded the

breaking of seals and the ushering in of a new era.

Geographical, Political, and Social Contexts

The phenomenon of groups popularly labelled or assumed to be ‘cults’ is nothing new in America, particularly in areas such as Montana, which borders Idaho, which in turn houses the second largest population of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in America, with Utah as its central hub. It was in the state of Idaho that the infamous Ruby Ridge shooting took place in 1992, wherein an 11-day federal siege led to four deaths—including that of a child. It occurred only a year before the Waco siege and included many of the same agencies, and the theme of rural stand-off between federal agencies and communities living on the outskirts of society is echoed by the representation of The Project and its conflict with the deputy of *Far Cry 5* (2018) and the compound fire of New Eden (*Far Cry: New Eden*, 2019).

Furthermore, Joseph moved The Project to the northwestern mountains in recognition of the ‘many religious and [survivalist](#) communities [who] set up camp there to flee persecution and live on the fringes of society’ (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 98). It is the ability of these communities to live *outside* societal norms that provides them freedom from governmental control and, consequently, leads to such prosecutions as those described above.

The anti-cult rhetoric fuelled by governmental action towards alleged ‘cult’ groups has created an image of cults as threatening to society: an image reflected in the narrative arc of *Far Cry 5* (2018) and encouraging the deputy to destroy the cult. Cults are often understood as small, insular communities, rejecting contemporary societal ‘norms’ and posing a threat to the way of life of said society. However, in giving voice to Joseph Seed and his beliefs and motivations, *Far Cry 5* and *Far Cry: New Dawn* challenge this stereotypical image.

Joseph can be considered an anti-bureaucratic leader. His beliefs are fuelled by state failure to protect the impoverished. Many of his sermons draw attention to the masses ‘hardened by misery’ (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 24). For Joseph, the need for The Project is a consequence of the failure of the state to protect the working classes, the greed of politicians and corporations, and the mistreatment and persecution of minorities:

This is the world we have built for our children? Communities being torn apart. Walls being erected. Because leaders are too impotent to act. Bullies are too addled to lead righteously. (Far Cry 5, 2018)

Look at what the world has become. Look at how some bask in opulence while others drown in misery. Witness the vicious cycle of conflicts spiralling out of control, of crusades driven by the greed of men. Greed—that is what drives mankind. ...Those with nothing are worth no more than those with everything. Victims never dream of a more just society, they yearn only to join the caste of the unjust, to tread on the poor in turn. (The Book of Joseph, 2018, 17–19)

Joseph's beliefs, fuelled by governmental neglect and the impoverishment of the working class he grew up in, engages with concerns about violence and poverty. Throughout his childhood, 'violence filled [his] neighbourhood. ... The full range of misery, and its faithful companion, crime, was everywhere [he] looked. ... Violence [had] become so normal' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 28) for the people of Rome, Georgia. It is the mistreatment of the impoverished, of addicts, and of the mentally unwell that Joseph draws attention to. It is those people whom Joseph chooses to save from the Collapse. His messianic teachings criticize the wealthy and challenge the class system of America. As he identified, due to 'the amount of mistreatment that we had suffered' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 35), the working classes were feared by the elite: 'Our suffering might make us violent and poorly adapted. We might represent a threat to society. And that was to be avoided at all costs' (*The Book of Joseph*, 2018, 35). The Project, therefore, functioned as a space providing safety to those mistreated by governmental systems, neglected by welfare, and deemed a threat to society as a consequence of their suffering. Joseph challenged class injustice.

Source Materials, Scholarship, and Principal Publications

Primary sources with regard to The Project, while existing (see the numerous inclusions of quotes from *The Book of Joseph* as examples), must be noted as fictional. They are created as part of the *Far Cry* video-game franchise and used to create a 'reality effect' with regard to The Project and Joseph Seed. However, the use of apocalyptic [prophecy](#) to support the beliefs they depict echoes the words of many Christians who observe biblical scriptures as literal in the sense noted earlier, with specific attention to the Book of Revelation and the supposed inevitability of its predictions. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Joseph Seed's sermons reflect an Adventist approach to the apocalypse.

Interestingly, there is a significant lack of coverage and attention surrounding not only the cult representation found in *Far Cry 5* (2018) and *Far Cry: New Dawn* (2019) but also the interactions between the video-game industry and cult representations more generally. Fielding-Redpath (2020), in her ongoing work, takes steps towards remedying this. Given the apocalyptic themes underpinning both religious and secular spheres, her article explores the use of the contested term 'cult' and the negative associations with such a term across fictional representations. Identifying how such representations subvert the expected demonization of cult communities, she shows how fictional uses of cults allow texts (novels, video games, films, and TV series) to challenge contemporary 'norms' and combat the anti-cult rhetoric of the cult as threat to society.

While criticism of video games certainly exists, it tends to focus specifically on the wider concerns of video games' interactions with religious belief (Wagner 2013; Bosman 2019) or the response of video games to cultural phenomena (Wills 2019). Academic responses to apocalyptic themes more specifically often reflect novel representations of apocalyptic events and real-world groups assumed to be cults more widely. Ample research can be discovered regarding the [Branch Davidians](#) and the Waco siege, the [Jonestown](#) massacre, the Manson Family murders, and the events surrounding many other cults that met a violent end (Barker 1983; Lewis 1994; Hall 1995; Stein 2017). Likewise, research exploring literature's interactions with the apocalyptic can be found from numerous sources (Fiddes 2000; Walliss and Newport 2009; Sheldon 2015; Tate 2017).

The following sections contain lists of publications that are useful for research into *Far Cry 5* and *Far Cry:*

New Dawn in the context of [apocalypticism](#). They cover a wide range of approaches with regard to literature, the apocalyptic, and cults. Of course, those listed are only a fraction of the existing research in these areas, the totality of which is too extensive to be noted here.

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Notes

[1] Only 2,000 copies of *The Book of Joseph* were released, as part of a special edition launch of *Far Cry 5* (2018). Due to the consequent rarity of this text, a physical copy of the text was unavailable. Therefore, page numbers are included throughout the article while the exact publication details of the author and publishing house are unavailable.

[2] Due to the fictional existence of The Project at Eden's Gate, featured in videogames from 2018 and 2019 and novels, some dates are estimated in order to provide a sense of a timeline.

[3] I recurrently use the past tense to describe the events of The Project. While I am aware the events of *Far Cry: New Dawn* (2019) are set in the future, the videogame itself was released in 2019 and, consequently, the storyline of The Project and its community's downfall rests in the past.

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