

Ufuk Özden

CULTS IN LINEAR VIDEO GAMES FROM A NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Author(s)	Ufuk Özden
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ABSTRACT

This thesis research aimed to analyse the narrative structure of linear video games that featured a setting where the players encountered a cult. The main question this research aimed to answer was how linear video games used cults when building their narrative structure.

The research covered a range of side topics for a more comprehensive understanding of the matter. Said topics were addressed to answer the following questions: “Are there any similarities between the story arcs of analysed video games that feature a cult-like organisation?” and “What is relation between the player character and the cult-like organisation?”.

A comprehensive literature review was done to understand the structure of cults. Steven Hassan’s BITE methodology was reviewed and used as a framework for analysing the control methods adopted by the cults in selected games. Various story structures and narrative elements were reviewed and explained before the analysis.

A qualitative comparative analysis was done to analyse the narrative structure of two linear video games. The selected games were Outlast 2 and Resident Evil 4 Remake. The analysis was limited to a narratologist approach due to the limited scope of the research and the reasons explained in the corresponding chapters. The games were analysed for their plot, story structure, control methods of the cults based on the BITE model, and finally the interaction between the player character and the cult.

The analysis indicated that linear video games that portrayed a cult did not feature any specific gameplay mechanics as the cult’s impact on the game was found to be limited to the narrative. The plots displayed similarities in terms of their incident incidents and initial introduction to the cult’s presence. Low-ranking cult followers were found to serve as violent enemies who are devoid of free will or any concerns for their own well-being. BITE model was found to provide a sufficient framework for the cults’ control methods over their followers.

Keywords: video games, narrative design, cults, narrative, BITE model

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1 INTRODUCTION

Thanks to eased access to information, numerous cults have found media coverage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to their beliefs and activities that are often deemed radical by the public. Tragic events that were triggered or a direct result of cultic activities were met with public interest because of their shocking nature. As a result, cults and cultic activities have been represented in various forms of media, from movies to plays that were performed on a theatre stage.

Certain video games adopted cultic themes, featuring cults that were either fictional or based on historically documented organisations. This thesis aims to conduct research with a focus on linear games where the player character is facing a cult-like organisation. In order to keep the scope manageable, the research and analysis are limited to narrative design. The research aims to have a better understanding of building a game narrative through an analysis of selected games' story elements.

Design choices that are not directly related to narrative, such as visual design or game play elements, are not included in the analysis process in an effort to maintain the focus on narrative development. Chosen research methods will be explained in their corresponding chapters following a literature review on cults and general principles of narrative design in video games. The research aims to understand how linear video games that featured a cult built their narrative structure and the player character's interactions with the cult.

Steven Hassan's (Hassan 2021) BITE method has been selected as the framework for understanding the control methods adopted by the cults in selected games. Research methods and frameworks are discussed in more detail in chapter 5 of this thesis. Preliminary review of the literature indicates the lack of studies in the field. Therefore, this study aims to provide a basis for future research that focuses on analysing the representation of cults in video games.

2 CULTS AND THE BITE MODEL

A quick internet search on infamous cults and cult-related incidents brings many results on the mainstream media and blogs. Although these resources are not necessarily of academic nature, cults have become an infamous topic of interest that captivates a broad audience due to their extreme and sometimes violent activities.

Sullivan et al.'s (2021) blog article lists some of the most well-known cults and various tragedies caused by their activities. Founded around the year 1950 by Jim Jones, Peoples Temple continued their cultic activities in Jonestown where they were isolated from the rest of the world. When authorities arrived at the site for an investigation based on various claims, the Cultists opened fire in response, as Jones ordered his followers to commit mass suicide by consuming liquid that contained cyanide. As a result of the armed conflict and the incident, 918 people were killed. (Sullivan 2021.)

In 1997, 38 members of Heaven's Gate committed suicide in hopes of being carried to a higher level of existence by a spaceship trailing behind a comet. The leaders of the Uganda-based cult that named themselves Restoration of Ten Commandments set their own church on fire after having failed to predict the date of apocalypse and receiving backlash from their followers. 530 people were killed in the fire. (CBS News 2021.)

Although this research does not mainly focus on analysing cults, it is important to understand their structure and methods for a more accurate analysis of their representation in video games. Therefore, this chapter features a high-level literature review on the cults alongside a subsection that discusses BITE methodology to understand the connection between cults and their followers.

2.1 Definition of cults

Zablocki (1997), who is well-known for his academic works in sociology, defines a cult as an ideology-based organisation that demands absolute commitment and

is held together by charismatic relations. It is important to note this definition refers to a wide range of cultic organisations regardless of the presence of religious elements in their beliefs. In *Britannica Encyclopaedia*, Rebecca Kulik (2023) describes a cult as a usually small group of people who are devoted to a person, idea, or philosophy. However, she proceeds to note the term was often applied to religious movements that contradict dominant religious or inclination of the society they emerged from within. *Cambridge Dictionary* also emphasises most cults' connection to religion and describes cults as a religious group where the members often live together and share beliefs that many would consider extreme or strange (*Cambridge Dictionary*).

It is also important to note that the word cult has gained a new meaning in the nineteenth century. In their thesis research, Best (2018, 1–2) states the word originates from the Latin word *cultus*, which means worshipped and cultivated according to *Oxford Language Dictionary*. Best (2018) argues the word is now associated with any religion or denomination other than dominant practices of Christianity. Similar to the original meaning, the modern meaning of the word refers to a group of people that worship a charismatic leader figure.

In his paper published in *Review of Religious Research* journal, Richardson (1993, 348–349) attributes the modern term to Troeltsch's research which was published in 1931. Troeltsch (1931) states that although he developed the term to classify theoretical scheme of religious forms in the Western culture, the term itself has become a "rug" that various devious and troublesome religious movements were swept under. Richardson (1993) himself describes cult as a usually small and informal group that lacks a solid authority structure although having a charismatic leader figure(s) that is spontaneous in development to a certain degree. He notes (1993) cults tend to have mystical orientation as their inspiration and ideology derive from outside the predominant religious culture.

Robbins and Anthony (1982, 283) define cults from a broader perspective without a strong association with orthodox religions while addressing various pathological consequences their converts suffer from. They define cults as manipulative and

authoritarian groups that allegedly apply mind controlling methods at the expense of their followers' mental wellbeing. In their classification, they list commonly observed specifications of cults as having an authoritarian leadership, having a communal and totalistic organisational structure, aggressively attempting to proselytise, being relatively new in the United States and mainly targeting middle class as their clientele. It is important to note the article was published in 1982, thus, this may not apply to the present situation. They also argue that the conceptualisation of cults' impacts on their followers as a mental health problem has expanded the contents of medical studies into religious and social movement related research. (Robbins and Anthony 1982.)

2.2 Cult categories

Depending on the views and purposes of their leader, cults can be put into categories. Although most cults share a similar structure established by a charismatic and authoritarian leader, a broad classification of cults based on their fundamental beliefs and activities can be useful for research purposes. However, it is important to note that a cult can be put in multiple categories based on their characteristics. The categorisation discussed in this chapter is based on the literature review demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Categories of cults based on the literature review

	Literature
Destructive Cults	Palayon et al. (2020)
Racist Cults	Vysotsky (2006), Lalich (2004)
Religious Cults	Bromley and Melton (2002)
Doomsday Cults	Brown (1943)

Destructive cults

Palayon et al. (2020, 42-43) define destructive cults as organisations where the leader figure attempts to convince their followers to engage in destructive activities. Said destructive activities often involve acts of murder or mass suicide. In a destructive cult, the leaders usually appear to adopt a style that focuses on othering, intensifying, elaborating, and negating in order to establish complete

control over their followers. The leaders do not refrain from administering physical punishment and rigorously focus on isolating their community. Based on their description, People's Temple (CBS News 2021) is amongst the most notorious destructive cults due to their leader Jim Jones' activities that led to the death of more than 900 people.

Racist cults

Although racist cults are often involved in destructive actions, they are more militant by nature and they often target a specific group or multiple groups based on their shared identity or ideology. White supremacist groups often display similar characteristics to those are often observed in cults. Vysotsky (2006, 11–12) states these groups believe in a racial hierarchy and tend to share similar views on antisemitism, dualism, apocalypticism, male patriarchy, and they openly reveal an antipathy towards the members of the LGBTQ+ community. Ku Klux Klan is perhaps one of the most notorious racist cults in the near history. There are no official records of the number of victims that were murdered or harmed by the cult members.

Religious cults

Religious cult is a broad term that can be applied when defining a certain variety of cults, albeit not without academic controversy over labelling them. Lalich (2004, 5) notes that many academics have refrained from using the term “cult” and referred to said groups as “new religious movements”. The latter term is considered more accurate by researchers, since despite their beliefs and practices that deviate from dominant beliefs and practices, these groups are simply another religious movement.

A modern example of new religious movements is “Love Has Won”, which was founded by Amy Carlson in 2006. Combining commonly referred conspiracy theories with unique beliefs in which she self-identified herself as the deity “Mother God”, Carlson used the power of internet to recruit followers around the world, to whom they sold various products through their website. When Carlson died of multiple organ failure, anorexia, alcohol abuse, and regular consumption

of colloidal silver in 2021, her closest followers mummified her body, which was later found in a police raid. (NY Times 2023.)

However, it is important to note that some religious cults were involved in collective violent acts. In their book *Cults, Religion & Violence*, Bromley and Melton (2002, 3) argue the actions of Al Qaeda and similar radical extremist groups triggered the debate on the topic to have a better understanding of religious groups that deviate from the mainstream form and practice of the religion they are based on. In many ways, aforementioned groups display similarities with various cults such as Branch Davidian's, Aum Shinrikyo's, or Heaven's Gate. Bromley and Melton (2002, 3) also note the initiatives to subdivide religious movements into subdivisions such as "cults", "sects", or "destructive groups" were linked to a wider range of legislations and state sanctions all around the world.

Doomsday cults

The core beliefs of doomsday cults are based on an upcoming catastrophic, often apocalyptic event, which in some cases would end life on Earth as we know it. Said apocalyptic events are often predicted by the leader figure and provide a foundation for the cult's beliefs. In many cases, the leader predicts an exact date for said destructive event. The cult members are expected to prepare for the event as dictated by the leader, in hopes of salvation.

One of the earliest well-known doomsday cults is Millerites, which was started by William Miller. Miller predicted the world would end on 21st March 1843, firmly believing that "Christ would descent to this earth." However, Miller's predictions were proven false, despite his followers' various attempts to reset the predicted date for "The Day of Event", which caused a great disappointment amongst his followers. (Brown 1943.)

However, a quick search through online media articles reveals numerous violent events that took place as a result of these cults' actions. Founded by Shoko Asahara in Japan, members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult were led to believe that

only the followers of Aum would survive the “Nuclear Armageddon”. The group eventually carried out a chemical attack with sarin nerve gas on Tokyo metro system, killing 12 and injuring over 5000. The Waco Branch Davidians’ members, who believed they lived in the final times, barricaded themselves at their headquarters in Texas under the FBI siege. The building caught fire, killing 76 Davidians. Heaven’s Gate followers committed mass-suicide in 1997 as they believed a spaceship behind a comet would redeem their souls from impending doom. 39 members were found dead. (CNBC 2013.)

2.3 The BITE model

The radical and sometimes violent actions of cult members have incited various researchers to examine the connection between a cult and its members. It appears that various criminal and destructive acts committed by cult followers are of “selfless” nature as the perpetrators in question almost never benefit from the consequences of their actions. Instead, they merely act under the influence of indoctrination they were subject to, and in some cases, they become the sole victims themselves, as seen in the previous chapters, they were involved in mass suicide incidents, seemingly careless about their own wellbeing.

There are various methods and criteria listed by numerous researchers to analyse the impact and extent of cults’ control over their members. Lifton’s criteria for thought reform (1961), Schein’s model for coercive persuasion (1961), or Singer’s six conditions (2003) for thought reform are some of these well-known methods that were often referred to and discussed in the literature. (Hassan 2021, 26–42.) This thesis research focuses on Hassan’s BITE model in order to refine the scope for it is found to provide a clear and suitable framework for analysing the control methods of cults.

Steven Hassan’s BITE (Behaviour, Information, Thought, and Emotional Control) Model of Authoritarian Control provides a framework to understand the principles of mind control methods adopted by cults and similar organisations. Being an old cult follower himself, Hassan (2021, 2) narrates his story in the introduction of his dissertation:

“...They withheld vital information, distorted information, and outright lied. I had no idea they were part of a religious group and certainly not one which was also antidemocratic and an extreme right-wing political group... I became a right-wing fanatic who worked 18 to 21 hours a day, 7 days a week for no pay. I dropped out of college, donated my bank account, and recruited and indoctrinated others... Members were programmed to die or kill on command and were sent on various missions to take over the world for “God.” ...”

Having stayed a member of the Unification church for three years (Hassan 2021), Hassan decided to quit the cult in 1976 following a discussion with his family and local community and helped many ex-cult members adapt back to a new life through non-profit organisations he founded and through his academic research that analysed the control methods practiced by numerous cults.

2.3.1 Undue influence

It is important to define the term undue influence before explaining any methodology that analyses the process of mind control. California Welfare and Institutions Code 15610/70 defines undue influence as below:

Undue influence means excessive persuasion that causes another person to act or refrain from acting by overcoming that person’s free will and results in inequity. In determining whether a result was produced by undue influence, all of the following shall be considered:

- (1) The vulnerability of the victim. Evidence of vulnerability may include, but is not limited to, incapacity, illness, disability, injury, age, education, impaired cognitive function, emotional distress, isolation, or dependency, and whether the influencer knew or should have known of the alleged victim’s vulnerability.
- (2) The influencer’s apparent authority. Evidence of apparent authority may include, but is not limited to, status as a fiduciary, family member, care provider, health care professional, legal professional, spiritual adviser, expert, or other qualification.
- (3) The actions or tactics used by the influencer. Evidence of actions or tactics used may include, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- (A) Controlling necessities of life, medication, the victim's interactions with others, access to information, or sleep.
- (B) Use of affection, intimidation, or coercion.
- (C) Initiation of changes in personal or property rights, use of haste or secrecy in effecting those changes, effecting changes at inappropriate times and places, and claims of expertise in effecting changes.
- (4) The equity of the result. Evidence of the equity of the result may include, but is not limited to, the economic consequences to the victim, any divergence from the victim's prior intent or course of conduct or dealing, the relationship of the value conveyed to the value of any services or consideration received, or the appropriateness of the change in light of the length and nature of the relationship.
- (b) Evidence of an inequitable result, without more, is not sufficient to prove undue influence.

2.3.2 Influence continuum and BITE components

Hassan (2018) argues that a framework needs to be broad and easy to understand in order to be effective in protecting individuals from undue influence. For this reason, he created a figure based on his BITE model to explain influence continuum in his book *From Combating Cult Mind Control*. In Figure 1, Steven Hassan's Influence Continuum figure helps to identify and distinguish constructive and destructive traits when evaluating the impact of influence.

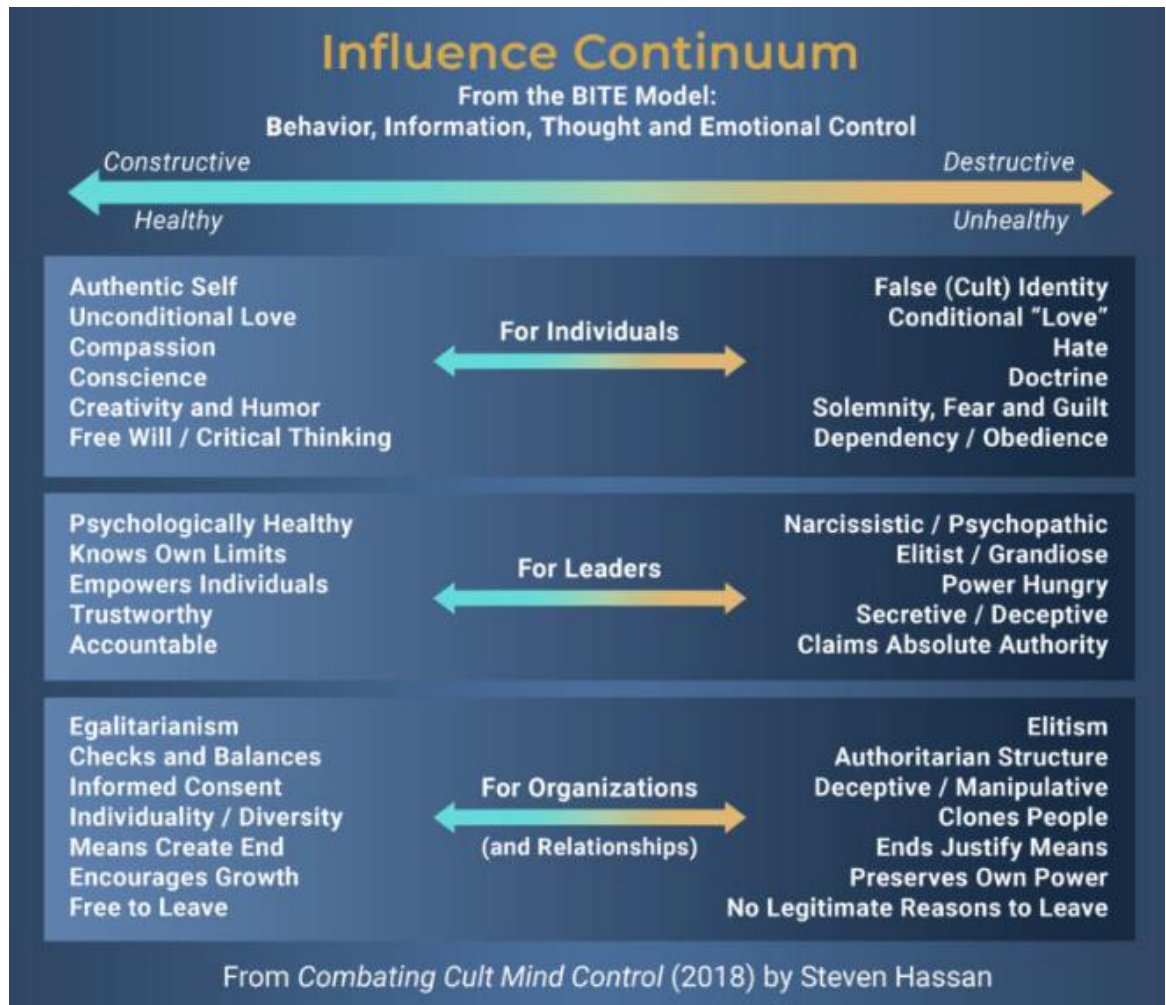


Figure 1. Influence Continuum (Hassan 2018)

The BITE model consists of four components to understand mind control. These main components are behaviour, thought, emotional and information control. Hassan (2021) states that humans operate based on the information they receive. In other words, human brains need to filter and evaluate data before they can decide how to act. Hassan (2021, 51) argues that cults deprive the individual of the information and/or deliberately creates an information overload in an attempt to suppress the real self and replace it with a new identity that is designed to be controlled by the cult.

The criteria of various forms of BITE control as listed by Hassan (2021) can be found in Appendix 1 section of this research. The model then lists the criteria for each of the four aforementioned components, which can be used as a

benchmark to measure the severity of the destructive controlling relationship between the cult and its members.

Behaviour control

In the BITE model, behaviour control refers to a series of actions and sanctions that aim to increase obedience and dependency amongst the cult followers.

Individualistic tendencies and freewill are discouraged whereas putting the group or the leader figure/deity first becomes mandatory. The members cannot make any major decisions before getting permission from the group / leader. Not only actions but even inner thoughts and feelings must be disclosed to the superiors. In addition to living arrangements of the members, their clothing, relations with each other and people outside the cult, and their sexuality are strictly regulated. Any minor violation of dictated cult regulations can lead to severe punishment. (Hassan 2021, 56.)

Information control

Hassan (2021, 58–59) notes that information control begins during the first interaction between the cult and a potential member. While an ethical group would clearly inform a newcomer about their beliefs and their expected role, an unethical group would use deception through lies, withheld information, or distorted information to avoid initial conflict and make their beliefs seem more acceptable. The information is restricted from a pyramid shaped system, where the data flows from the top (the leader(s)) down to the lowest tiers (lowest ranking members). This structure allows the top executives to decide on the nature and scope of the information that will be delivered to the lower ranks. The isolation policies commonly observed in destructive cults allow the low-ranking members to be indoctrinated and influenced in a controlled environment whereas the leadership has often access to greater privileges. The low-ranking members, who represent the majority of the members, are rendered defenceless against the propaganda broadcasted by the leadership. They are not allowed to access news and information sources other than the cult's official propaganda channels. Members are encouraged to spy on each other and any information on a member is used against them when necessary.

Thought control

Based on the BITE model, thought control in cults mainly aim to reduce and eliminate critical thinking and rational analysis. Members are given deliberately monotonous and frequent lectures that include prayers and monologues that consist of repeated words. Guided meditation can be used as a tool of manipulation. Authoritarian groups work to limit their members' perception of things down to absolute good or evil, by labelling any contradictory idea or opinions as evil. The members are encouraged to resist these evil thoughts by adopting thought stopping techniques and critical thinking is frowned upon as a display of weakness or lack of devotion. Some groups give their members a new name to build their new identity in line with the group's teachings. (Hassan 2021, 60.)

Emotional control

Cults often tend to use language that would potentially evoke feelings of belonging and attachment within the members, provided said members follow the beliefs of the group. A special emphasis is put on making the members feel flattered and unique to ensure their emotional dependency on the group. The members are encouraged to feel grateful as they are a member of a small minority that is promised salvation. Negative feelings or feelings that are considered harmful by the leader are often met with harsh criticism from the other members and they are encouraged to suppress such feelings based on the groups' beliefs and agenda. For instance, a member expressing their concerns regarding their safety can be blamed with cowardice and lack of faith. Cults can also use the member's existing phobias or install new ones to convince the members into thinking they cannot have a normal, satisfactory life outside of the group. The members can be threatened with violence, blackmail, and extortion, if they attempt to leave the cult. (Hassan 2021, 61–62.)

3 NARRATIVE DESIGN IN VIDEO GAMES

A complete definition of the term "video game" is a complex issue due to the vast variety between video games in terms of design and function. Cambridge

Dictionary defines a video game as “a game in which the player controls moving pictures on a screen by pressing buttons”. This simple definition is technically accurate and it defines the function of video games alongside the general means of interaction between the player and the game. Narrative design in video games, on the other hand, is a more complicated topic which lacks a general definition due to the unique nature of games and the experience of the player. It is also essential to understand the term “narrative” in a broader frame before discussing “narrative design” and its fundamental role in video game development.

3.1 Narrative, story, and plot

Oxford Languages defines narrative as “a spoken or written account of connected events; a story”. In many mediums and research fields, the words narrative, story, and plot are often used interchangeably. Based on their literature review, Goodson and Gill (2011, 2) state three common features shared by these concepts: they feature a sequence of events, they all display externalised personal significance and meaning, and they’re affected by the relationship between the teller and the listener.

However, there are contradictive opinions regarding this interchangeable terminology. In her article about uses of narrative, Elshafie (2018, 1214) addresses discussions where some researchers argue that narrative refers to a series of chronological events, whereas a story include a setting (a character, location, and time), a plot which features a goal for the character, and a resolution that tells the outcome of their endeavours.

In other words, narrative is a sequence of interconnected events that have a significant meaning within the context. Based on this description, it becomes clear that a basic narrative structure needs at least an initial, causative event, a final event which serves as the outcome, and a binding event that connects the two. This flow is referred to as story arc as seen in Figure 2.

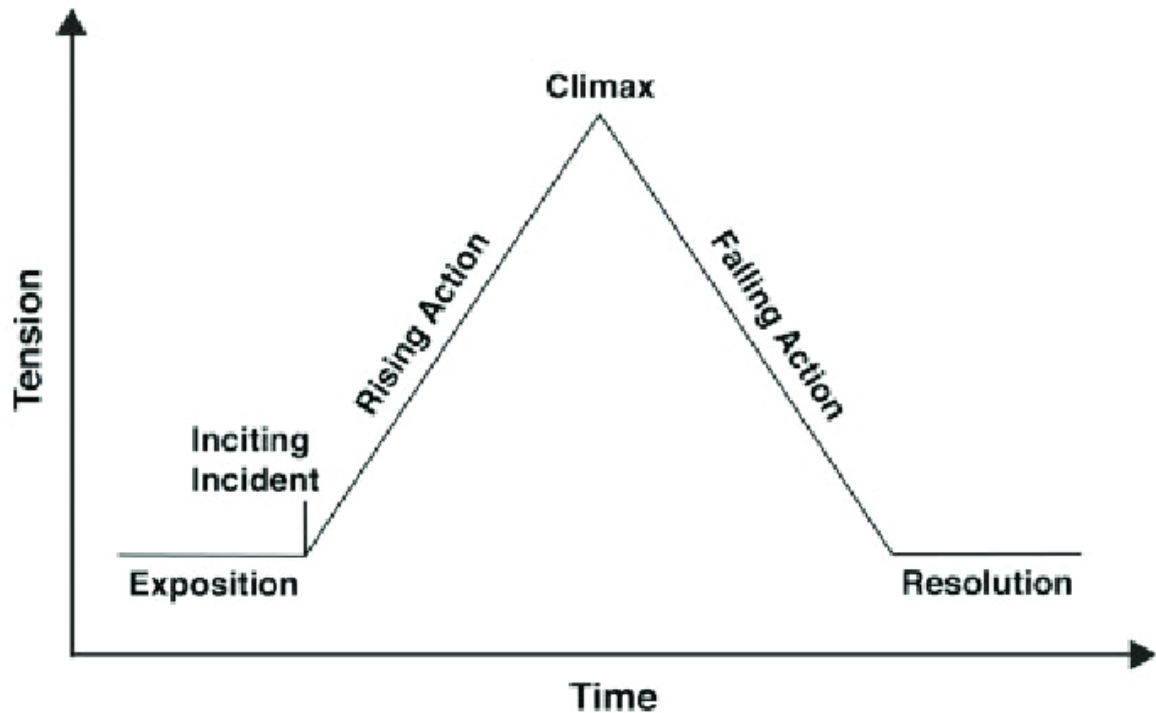


Figure 2. Freytag's pyramid showing the structure of the plot and the changes in the tension over time (Elshafie 2018)

As seen in Figure 2 above, Freytag (1863) visualised Aristotle's plot terms in the form of a pyramid called a Freytag Pyramid. "Exposition and Rising Action" sections represent *diesis*. "Climax" represents *peripeteia*. "Falling Action and Resolution" sections represent *lusis* phase.

In his book on writing for games, Jacobs (2021, 25) defines narrative as a series of methods for communicating the story materials to the audience. Based on the definition of the term plot by Aristotle, the plot is "the arrangement of incidents", which makes it a core element of narrative. According to Aristotle's model, a plot features a beginning, middle, and end by default. *Diesis* functions as the beginning point that leads to a point of crisis. *Peripeteia* defines the point of crisis. Finally, *lusis* provides a resolution of the story. (ibid. 26.)

3.2 Story structures

Story structures define the order of story elements in a narrative. Any complete and coherent story has a structure by nature. Freytag's pyramid, which was briefly explained in the previous subchapter, can be defined as a story structure.

This subchapter aims to describe some of the other well-known story structures that have been thoroughly researched in literature and adopted by numerous writers in various mediums including video games.

3.2.1 The hero's journey

In 1949, Joseph Campbell (1949) published his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, where he introduced his hero's journey model based on the patterns he observed in various well-known stories in the history of literature. In addition to a certain story structure, the hero's journey puts a great emphasis on character development.

In his thesis, Moffitt (2013) explains the journey begins with the call to adventure, which can be a life-altering, and in some cases tragic, event that deconstructs the hero's usual state of reality. With the destruction of the reality they were accustomed to, the hero has no option but to go through a rite of passage that forces them to step into an unknown and mysterious reality that comes with unique challenges. The hero is often guided by a mentor, and they might find companions along the way. Following the climax, where the hero achieves their goal after having faced various challenges, they are changed, as in a sense, they are reborn. The hero might either return back home as a reborn version of themselves or seek a new home.

The structure of the hero's journey model can be observed in numerous video games. In *Baldur's Gate 3* (Larian Studios 2023), the player finds themselves infected with a tadpole that would eventually turn them into a mind flayer which is a creature that is bound by the will of their colony's collective mind. Guided by a mysterious mentor figure, the player sets out on a journey where they would recruit allies and face foes, depending on the results of their choices. Although outcome of their journey is defined by their actions and decisions, the player gains a new identity as a powerful hero or a villain.

The hero's journey might have different sections depending on the individual story. For instance, the hero might initially refuse to answer the call to adventure

or return to their original home. However, the foundation of the story structure has certain patterns as seen in Figure 3.

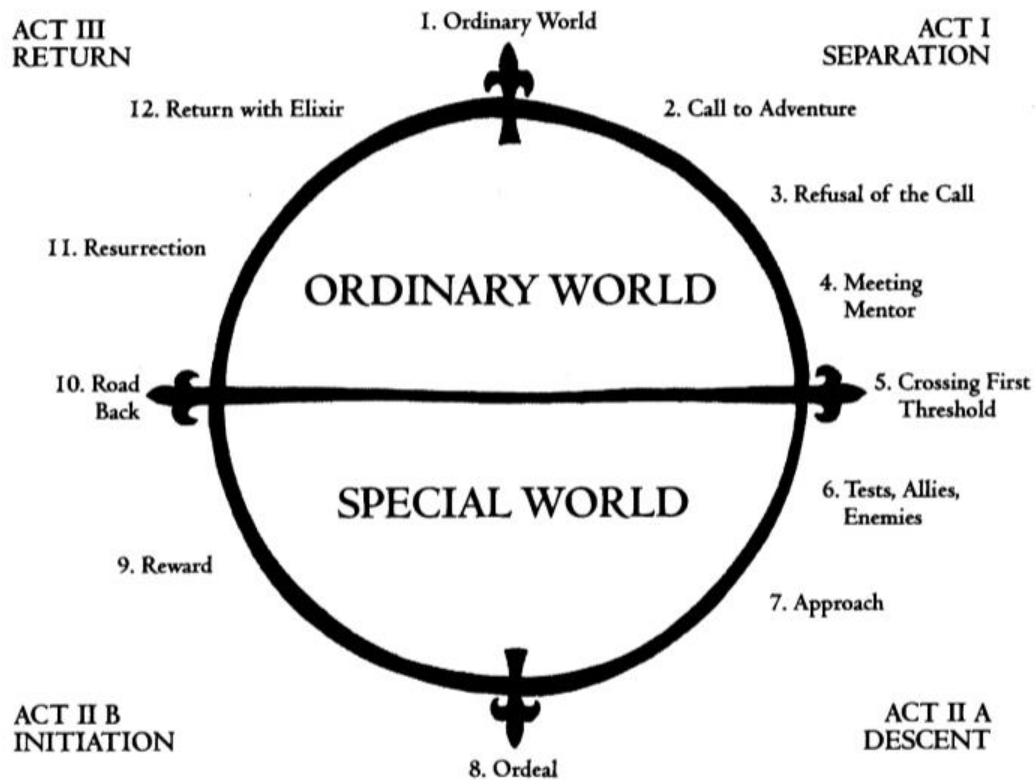


Figure 3. Acts and story structure in hero's journey model (Jorstad 2018)

3.2.2 Three act structure

Syd Field (1979) who was a screenwriter that worked in Hollywood, introduced his three-act screenplay model in his book *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* which was published in 1979 (Field 1979.) This model mainly focuses on writing screenplays and was adopted by various screenwriters. The model is based on the idea that one page of screenplay is equal to one minute of screentime in the film (Jacobs 2021, 30). In the three-act structure model, the story is divided into three main sections that take a certain amount of screentime. This model is shown in Figure 4.

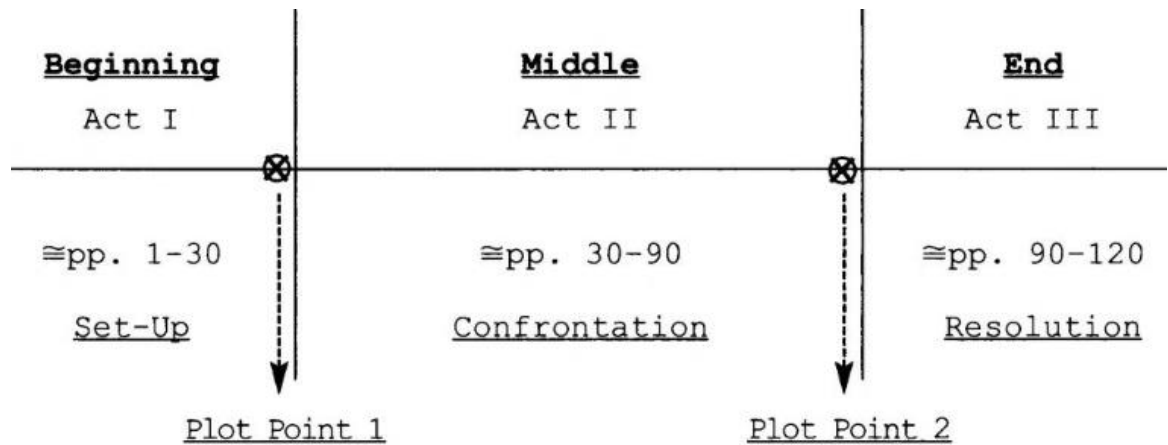


Figure 4. Paradigm of the three-act story structure (Field 1979, 40)

Field (1979, 42–46) states all stories have a beginning, middle-section, and an ending. The first act is called as set-up. This act is where the context and the contents of the setting are introduced, the story is set up, the characters are established, the premise is revealed, and the situation is defined. The second act is defined as the confrontation and it tells the obstacles faced by the character. The third act is resolution and Field (1979) argues that rather than a mere ending, this act is required to show a solution to the situation that surrounds the character and the world. In other words, the audience needs to be presented with an outcome of the challenges faced by the characters and their fate. (Field 1979)

Although Field’s model (1979) provides a popular and well-established narrative building method to storytelling, it is important to state that it cannot be applied as it is when designing a narrative for video games. Video games are interactive mediums where the pacing is greatly affected by the unpredictable actions of the player, therefore the exact timing of the plot points cannot be determined. This problem is further discussed in the next subchapter of this research.

Although there are other story structures such as Dan Harmon’s story circle (Owens 2014), the Fichtean curve (Smith 2021), or “save the cat” method (Snyder 2005), the aforementioned structures are deemed sufficient to explain the basics of narrative structure in this research. As previously stated, it is essential to note that many of the well-known story structures may not function as intended in an interactive video game setting.

3.3 Narrative design in video games

Narrative design in video games is the process of implementing a narrative structure in conjunction with the gameplay. In other words, narrative design process includes writing the story but is not limited to it. The amount of freedom granted to the player (player agency), building a coherent world, introduction of new challenges and abilities, and pacing of the gameplay experience are all aspects of narrative design in video game development.

Berger (2019, 11–13) defines narrative design as a process that involves creating a pathway for the story that will be revealed in pieces once certain conditions are met within or between game play moments. He states a narrative designer must also determine and design the moments where the narrative is intertwined with the gameplay. For instance, the story can progress when a certain item is collected or through cutscenes that are played after or before certain major events. Unlike traditional media forms such as movies or TV series, video games require the player to achieve certain tasks and progress through the structured gameplay to be rewarded with new narrative pieces, gameplay moments, or various in-game awards, such as experience points or more powerful in-game items. Berger (2019) discusses that the narrative structure in a game should be designed in a strategic way to avoid interrupting the player experience to an extent that could potentially affect their gameplay experience in a negative way.

In his book on game writing, Richard Boon (2021, 45) addresses the unique aspects and challenges of narrative design in video games by stating the designers should consider the needs of a player as a player rather a passive observer. Narrative elements are triggered as a result of the player's actions. Therefore, it is essential to understand, predict, and enable the player's role within the narrative structure and game space.

Smed et al. (2021, 81) state that narrative designers need a specific set of skills some of which might be difficult to be adopted by traditional media writers that often have full authorial control over the medium. Video games are often

developed by multidisciplinary teams working together and narrative design requires constant collaboration between the narrative design team and the teams working on visual, audio, and gameplay aspects of the project.

3.3.1 Linear and non-linear games

Depending on how the narrative structure in a game tells the story, video games can be linear or non-linear. However, this differentiation does not only affect the story structure but also defines the player's experience and the gameplay.

In linear games, the player progress is built on rails. In other words, every player needs to complete the same objectives in the same order. Shepard (2014) argues this is beneficial in narration as a linear narrative ensures that all players have a similar experience while allowing streamlined themes, morals, and expected emotions, similar to different mediums such as literature or films.

Therefore, in many ways, linear games adopt a narrative structure that is based on the story structures that were previously defined in this research.

As seen in Figure 5, linear games tell a chronological account of events with a beginning where a problem is exposed and eventually solved following a moment of climax.

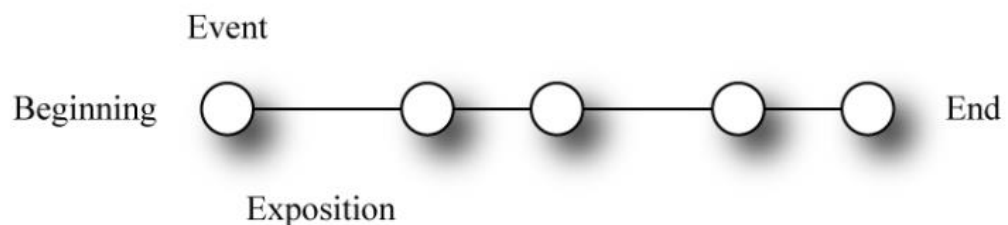


Figure 5. Linear story structure (Dam 2021)

Non-linear games, on the other hand, grant the player a certain amount of freedom over the progress and story. The player can make decisions that change the outcome of the story, character arcs, or even the world. For instance, in *Baldur's Gate 3* (Larian Studios 2021), the player can either aid the thieflings or form an alliance with the goblin leaders to raid the druid coven where the thieflings took shelter. This major choice can affect the entire game world and the

player avatar's interaction with various non-player characters. As seen in the variety of choices the players are presented with, non-linear games often feature a branching narrative structure and an open-world setting where the player can explore freely.

In her article about player agency, Lindsay D. Grace (2005) states the stories in non-linear games can either have a tree-like structure that branches out with different end points or plot lines that converge or diverge like parallel paths that lead the same, final outcome. In some cases, the narrative structure is a combination of both. Some non-linear games have an open world where the player can explore any part of the world or complete any objective whereas some non-linear games can feature branching or parallel narrative with a single outcome or multiple, possible outcomes. Various narrative structures in non-linear games are shown in Figure 6. (Grace 2005.)

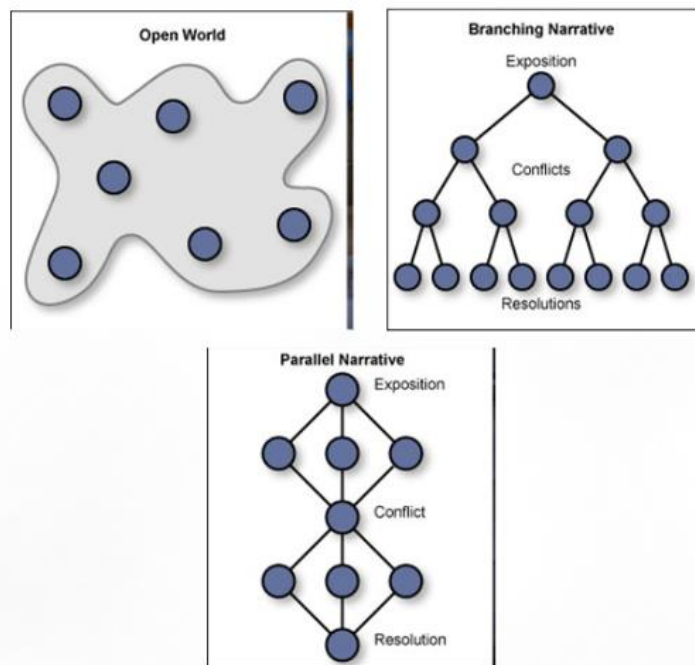


Figure 6. Types of narrative structure in non-linear games (Grace 2005)

This thesis research focuses on linear games in order to analyse their narrative based on various structures that are commonly adopted in various mediums. Although more comprehensive research that analyses video games with various

types of narrative structures would be beneficial, the scope of this research is limited to a specific structure.

3.3.2 Narratology and ludology

Analysing video games from an academic perspective has led to the emergence of different approaches and schools of thought. Two of the major approaches that have become common in the field of game studies are narratology and ludology. Narratologist approach heavily focuses on the narrative aspect of games with an emphasis on the story structure, character arcs, and cinematic events whereas the ludologist approach puts the emphasis on the gameplay, arguing that narrative elements are of lesser importance.

It is clear that both approaches have their limitations when it comes to analysing a video game as a whole. Fuschs (2014, 4) discusses that despite being a more common approach, ludology can be limiting in video game analysis due to its sole focus on game play. However, a strictly narratological approach would not allow for a full understanding of the game in question, as it ignores gameplay and stylistic choices.

When discussing the debate between the two methodologies, Michalis Kokonis (2014, 173–175) states narratologists find affinities between video games and traditional storytelling methods, whereas the ludologists focus on the mechanics of games, arguing that story elements in a game do not bear any importance. Kokonis (2014) argues that the somewhat radical approach of ludologists stem from their efforts to prevent game studies from becoming a subfield of traditional literature or media studies. However, the reason behind this debate is mostly a series of misconceptions as a combination of both methods can help establish games study as an independent academic field.

Aarseth (2012, 2) notes that games are more than “games”, but complex programs that are capable of emulating any medium, including films, graphic novels, board games, and novels. Therefore, the difference between games and narrative is not always absolutely clear. The building blocks of game stories such

as worlds, agents, objects, and events are also the cognitive building blocks of human reality. For this reason, Espen (2012) discusses that the priority should not be solely given to the games or stories, but rather to the base of the model that spawned both.

Based on the various discussions, it is clear that neither of the two methodologies are enough to analyse a video game as a whole. However, in order to maintain a more refined scope, this thesis research adopts a narratologist approach to the comparative analysis of games. Although narrative design in video games is organically tied to the gameplay, a preliminary analysis indicates that cultic themes do not have a significant, identifiable effect on the gameplay, but they are rather impactful on the story and narrative.

4 RESEARCH METHODS

For this thesis research, a comparative analysis was conducted to understand the narrative structure in selected linear games that featured a setting where the player faces a cult. Two linear games were selected for the analysis. The selected games are *Outlast 2* (Red Barrels 2017) and *Resident Evil 4 Remake* (Capcom 2023). The games were sampled based on their popularity and commercial success. According to Steamspy (2024), *Outlast 2* is estimated to have sold 2 to 5 million copies on Steam alone while *Resident Evil 4 Remake* is estimated to have sold 5 to 10 million copies on the same platform. It is important to note that both games were released on multiple platforms, thus the total number of copies sold is higher than the aforementioned numbers.

Both games that were selected for the comparative analysis are in the survival-horror genre. By default, survival horror games have an intentionally terrifying and stressful setting where the player is highly vulnerable, or in some cases, entirely defenceless against threats once they are spotted. Resources are often scarce and inventory management is crucial. Perron (2004) states survival games are designed to scare their players and they often rely on horror mythology and conventions of horror movies. Having said that, their design focuses on eliciting game play emotions. The sense of dread stem from the

player's actions and the game world's reaction to said actions. Game play emotions often come from actions such as exploring, getting lost, fighting, hiding, feeling trapped, and solving problems.

Although both titles are survival horror games, genre of the titles selected for the comparative analysis was not a criterion for selection. The research revealed most linear games that featured a cult are of survival horror genre due to the dreadful nature of cults, and in some cases, their followers. Brainwashed by the cult's doctrines, the followers tend to execute orders without questioning, no matter how extreme and violent said orders might be. Therefore, cults can provide the designers with a shocking and disturbing setting which is most suitable for the survival horror genre. However, it is essential to note that there are also video games in different genres where a cult is portrayed. Marvel's Spider Man 2 (Insomniac Games 2023), which is an action game without any horror elements, features The Flame cult that operates as an apocalyptic doomsday cult with destructive actions.

The main question the research aims to answer is: "How do linear video games use cults when building their narrative structure?" The research also aims to analyse the cults featured in the fictional setting based on the BITE methodology. In addition, the research focuses on covering a number of side topics for a more comprehensive understanding. Said side topics will be addressed to answer the following questions: "Are there any similarities between the story arcs of analysed video games that feature a cult-like organisation?" and "What is relation between the player character and the cult-like organisation?".

A qualitative comparative analysis has been selected as the research method due to the nature of the research. Analysis of narrative structure in video games does not provide numeric data, and thus requires a comparison between aspects that cannot be measured by numbers. Bolbakov et al. (2020) describes qualitative comparison as a method that aims to find a binary relationship between the compared objects or their properties. Therefore, a comparative analysis has been found to be the most effective method for this research.

The comparative analysis begins with a through summary of the plot explaining all the major story events. The plot is then analysed based on the hero's journey and three-act story structures. Although the three-act story structure was mainly designed for writing screenplays, many video games have chapters or levels that correspond to certain moments in films. Following this analysis of the narrative structure, the fictional cults in the selected game will be analysed based on the BITE model which was previously explained in the literature review section of this thesis research. The next part of the analysis will analyse the connection between the player character and the cult and their interaction.

The comparative analysis aims to analyse the narrative structure in selected linear games alongside the structure of the cults in them based on the BITE model. The framework for the analysis is as shown in Figure 7.

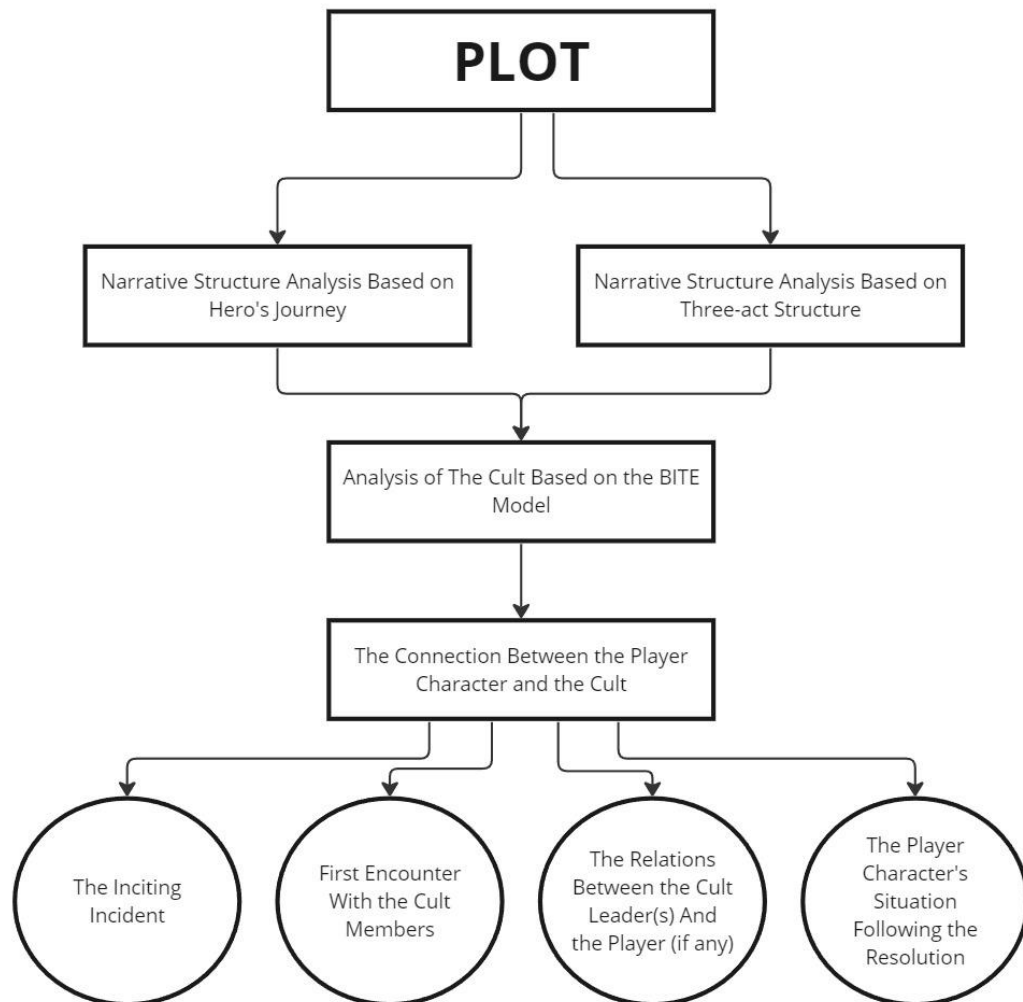


Figure 7. The Framework of The Comparative Analysis

The analysis in this thesis research adopts a mostly narratologist approach which was discussed in Chapter 4 in order to keep the scope manageable due to the limited time frame. The author of this thesis acknowledges that further research in the field can provide more comprehensive and beneficial data.

5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The comparative analysis done for this thesis research includes two linear games that features a setting where the player character faces a cult. The two selected games which are *Outlast 2* (Red Barrels 2017) and *Resident Evil 4 Remake* (Capcom 2023) were analysed based on the research methodology explained in chapter 4 of this thesis. The final conclusions of the comparative analysis are discussed in the conclusions section. The analyses were done by completing the story modes from the beginning until the end while taking notes for reference.

5.1 Outlast 2

Released in 2017, *Outlast 2* is a survival horror game developed by the Canada-based studio Red Barrels. The game heavily focuses on delivering a stressful experience that aims to evoke a sense of desperation in a setting that features elements of shock and gore. In *Outlast 2*, the players have no defence against the aggressive enemies in a direct confrontation. Instead, they need to run, hide, and often sneak through. In order to increase the level of tension, the players are equipped with a small handheld camera which they rely on as their only tool for navigation thanks to its night-vision mode. However, the night-vision mode depletes the limited battery life and the players are often required to find new batteries for replacement. The game was purchased and played on the Steam platform. The total playtime was 7 hours and 20 minutes.

5.1.1 Plot

Blake Langermann, who works as a journalist/cameraman wakes up from a disturbing dream to find himself flying in a helicopter they rented with his wife Lynn. Blake reveals the details of his dream, where he saw Jessica Gray, who used to be a classmate of theirs from the Catholic School they both went. Blake and Lynn are investigating the suspicious death of an unidentified teenager they refer to as "Jane Doe". Since the autopsy revealed mercury in her blood, they suspect she grew up near a factory-like facility. Based on this assumption, they book a helicopter trip to investigate the region in rural Arizona, where the teenage girl was initially found.

As the two are recording their intro, a sudden blast hits their helicopter, and their pilot declares they lost the engine. Despite the pilot's best attempts, their helicopter crashes. Blake finds himself momentarily at St. Sybil, which is the name of the Catholic School he, Lynn, and Jessica went. Following this mysterious and ambiguous scene, Blake then wakes up in the crash scene but he can neither find Lynn nor their pilot. Injured and confused, he leaves the crash site in hopes of finding Lynn and calling for help. Soon after, he makes a shocking discovery when he finds the flayed body of their pilot on a cross.

Blake continues his research and discovers a seemingly abandoned small town. As he enters the town, he spots decaying bodies of livestock, dilapidated houses, and a few locals that seemingly chant lines from a mysterious teaching whilst avoiding him. Shortly after, the townspeople become aggressive and downwards hostile, forcing Blake into hiding and running. Blake manages to locate and save Lynn, albeit briefly, as they are being chased by the townspeople. As the two are trying to escape, they hear Knoth's (seemingly a leader figure) voice over speakers as he orders the people to stop Lynn from giving birth in an attempt to prevent the arrival of Antichrist. As evidenced by Blake's disturbing discovery of murdered infants, it becomes clear they're facing a radical Christian cult that murders their newborn babies to stop the coming of Antichrist. Lynn's pregnancy causes an additional layer of surprise as neither seemed to know about it and as it was narrated by Blake, the couple did not have sexual intercourse in months.

Blake and Lynn are eventually captured by the cultists and amidst the struggle, a third party of people arrive at the scene, killing all the cultists. These people are so-called Heretics and their leader Val, is willing to witness the birth of antichrist, whom they believe is Lynn's baby. The heretics then take away Lynn, leaving Blake in a heavily wounded state. Blake is then found by a local named Ethan, who takes Blake to his home where he lives as an outcast and provides Blake with shelter. Their brief conversation reveals Ethan was the father of the mysterious teenage girl they were investigating. Blake lies to Ethan about her fate, telling Ethan she survived. Soon after, a powerful cultist, a seemingly old woman, arrives at Ethan's house and murders him while Blake is hiding in the basement.

Leaving Ethan's house, Blake arrives at a chapel where he finds a tortured man. Soon after, Knoth arrives with cultists who captured the tortured man's wife. Knoth interrogates the man about Lynn's whereabouts whilst torturing his wife and has both of them killed once he learns the heretics took her into the mines. With this information, Blake also tries to find a way that would lead him into the mines.

Meanwhile, Blake's visions which take him back to their old school become more vivid and terrifying. A hostile demon-like being chases Blake around the school building as he often sees a disturbing scene where Jessica, their old classmate, hanged herself as she did in reality. The visions seems to get worsened by the sudden bright lights that hit the town.

On his way to the mines, Blake falls off a bridge and is captured by "The Scalled". These are exiled cultists who are sick and disfigured due to incest relations that various STI that seem to be common amongst the cultists. Their leader, Laird, believes Blake is the messiah and they can be cured by consuming his flesh after he dies and is reborn. Left on a cross to die, Blake manages to escape, only to be captured one more time and buried alive in a coffin. Once again, he manages to escape and arrives at the mines following a final confrontation with Laird.

The heretics in the mines are hostile against Blake since he wishes to free Lynn. Somehow, he manages to find Lynn and together, they leave the mines. However, before he frees Lynn, Blake has one last hallucination where he visits the old school. In his vision, it is revealed that Jessica was possibly sexually assaulted and killed by Father Loutermilch, who was a teacher at St. Sybil. Although Blake witnessed the event, he was threatened by Loutermilch and agreed to comply with his fabricated story that claimed Jessica committed suicide.

After this final vision, Blake and Lynn arrive at the chapel where Lynn dies after giving birth. Blake passes out from shock and injuries. When he wakes up, he finds Knoth sitting next to him. Unable to prevent the birth of antichrist, Knoth kills himself. Blake picks up "the baby" and leaves the chapel where he sees the bodies of the townsfolk who committed mass suicide. At that moment, the sun grows brighter and everything is swallowed by the light. Blake has one final vision, where he is greeted by Jessica, who tells Blake she will never let him go again.

It is essential to note that the events in Outlast 2 were mainly triggered by the experiments run by the Murkoff Corporation. Murkoff experiment with powerful devices which are capable of mind-control and mass manipulation that are being tested for military purposes. Both the cultists, and eventually Lynn and Blake, lose their ability to tell their visions from the reality. Blake's visions where he re-enacts the incident of Jessica turn out to be a manifestation of his guilt and trauma. Lynn is not truly pregnant and nor is the baby real, as it was implied by the lack of its shadow in the final scene. However, none of the characters in the game are aware of Murkoff's involvement.

5.1.2 Story structure

By a narrative design choice, Outlast 2 does not clarify whether some of the events that took place throughout the game truly happened as they were shown to the player through Blake's heavily traumatised perception. Blake's mental

condition deteriorates due to mind-controlling experiments and his own traumas, and the player is presented with a distorted depiction of the events surrounding the game world. Based on the ambiguity of the plot combined with an enigmatic ending, analysing the plot based on the hero's journey model has proven challenging. However, a meticulous review of the plot allowed the coherent framework seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Plot in Outlast 2 based on hero's journey framework

ACT I: SEPARATION	
The Ordinary World	Blake and his wife Lynn decide to investigate the suspicious death of an unidentified young woman.
Call to Adventure	As they're flying over rural Arizona for investigation, their helicopter crashes near a seemingly abandoned town.
Refusal of the Call	Blake is terrified when he finds the skinned body of their helicopter pilot and yet, he pushes on to find and rescue Lynn.
Meeting Mentor	Ethan, a lonesome local in exile, helps Blake recover his strength while briefly explaining him about the terrors of the cult.
ACT II A: DESCENT	
Crossing the Threshold	As Blake ventures deeper into the Temple Gate town, he faces the darkest horrors of the cultists as he begins to lose his own sanity.
Tests, Allies, & Enemies	Blake confronts various members of the cult and manages to save himself from the clutches of scaled cultists.
Approach	Having witnessed cults' most vile actions and becoming familiar with their leader and history, Blake is determined to save Lynn from the heretics before the cultists can get to her first.
ACT II B: DESCENT	

Ordeal	Blake manages to evade the heretics and cultists and somehow finds Lynn as she's about to deliver a baby. At the same time, he confronts his inner demons and traumas from his past (at the expense of his sanity).
Reward	Although it is hardly a reward in the traditional sense, Blake manages to save Lynn (who dies at "birth"), evades the "heretics", and the cultists commit mass suicide, no longer posing a threat to Blake.
ACT III: RETURN	
Road Back	Having witnessed/relived traumatic events both on the outside and inside his own mind, Blake leaves the chapel.
Resurrection	Blake has changed (albeit traumatised and unable to tell the difference between the reality and his own perception) as he is engulfed in a bright light.
Return with the Elixir	The ambiguous ending of the game does not reveal the fate of Blake. However, it becomes clear he will not be able to return to the normal world as the person he were once.

Outlast 2 has six chapters that the players progress through in a linear fashion. The game does not display a specific message to inform the players before the next chapter begins. The names of the chapters are only displayed in the relevant save files. The names of the six chapters in Outlast 2 are Genesis, Solomon, Lamentations, Judges, Leviticus, and Revelations. Table 3 shows the game's plot based on the three-act structure framework.

Table 3. Plot in Outlast 2 based on three-act structure framework

ACT I: Set-Up	<p>Chapter 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blake and Lynn are investigating the death of a young woman when their helicopter crashes. • Blake finds the mutilated body of their pilot. <p>Chapter 2</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blake discovers more bodies and finds out about the horrific beliefs.
ACT II: Confrontation	<p>Chapter 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blake ventures further as the violent cultist mob is chasing him. • Blake meets Val, the leader of so-called “heretics”. <p>Chapter 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blake learns more about the history and plans of Knoth, the cult’s leader. • Blake’s visions become more vivid and detrimental. <p>Chapter 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blake confronts Marta, who serves the cult’s enforcer and reaches the mines where he encounters the aggressive horde of heretics and Val.
ACT III: Resolution	<p>Chapter 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blake relives the most traumatic moments of his past in his hallucination where he abandons his friend Jessica, only to find her murdered moments later on. Although having witnessed the incident, Blake decides to remain silent all his life. • Lynn dies following her “phantom pregnancy”, Knoth takes his own life, the cultists commit mass suicide, and Blake walks into a mysterious bright light, carrying a baby that is not real.

As explained in the plot subchapter, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to understand and analyse the true nature of events that take place in Outlast 2. Being exposed to the effects of Murkoff’s mind-altering signals in addition to the impact of his past and present traumas, the player character Blake’s perception fails to deliver a reliable narrative. Furthermore, the signals appear to trigger shared delusions, such as Lynn’s phantom pregnancy. Many aspects of the story, including the ending, are left up to the interpretation of the players. The progressive insanity in Outlast 2 serves as an essential building block of the game’s narrative structure.

5.1.3 Analysis of the cult based on the BITE model

Outlast 2 features the fictional cult “The Testament of the New Ezekiel” based in the town of Temple’s Gate in Arizona. The cult is founded and led by Sullivan Knoth who possesses an unlimited amount of authority over his followers that he abuses to extreme ends. Although The Testament of the New Ezekiel has beliefs that have roots in Christian theology, the cultists share a highly radicalised and violent ideology. Apocalyptic themes are fundamental to their beliefs and directly affect the cult’s various operations and activities. Based on the literature review done for this thesis research, The Testament of the New Ezekiel can be categorised as a religious and destructive doomsday cult.

As dictated by Knoth, the cult believes an apocalyptic figure they refer to as Antichrist is to be born, thus bringing the end of the world. The cultists are trapped in a secluded town, isolated from the rest of the world. They are brainwashed and violently punished or murdered when any form of disobedience is demonstrated. Misogynism is also a fundamental aspect of their beliefs. Women are often captured as slaves and sexually assaulted by Knoth himself. Incest relations and rape are common. A large number of cultists suffer from the consequences of inbreeding and diseases such as syphilis. Sacrifice, violent and gory ritual practices, and murder are encouraged within the cult’s doctrine.

Sullivan Knoth claims to have heard the “voice of the God” and wrote his own version of gospel. The full manuscript of “The Gospel of Knoth” can be found in Appendix 2 of this thesis. Knoth leads the cult based on the teachings in his gospel, which he claims to be direct commands from God. The systematic control methods in The Testament of New Ezekiel based on the BITE model are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Cult’s analysis based on the BITE model

<p>Behaviour</p> <p>Control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cult members are not allowed to leave the town (Temple Gate) under any circumstances. The cultists are constantly monitored both by the upper-level cult members and each other. • Any disobedience or failure to comply with orders from Knoth are immediately and violently punished.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cult members have assigned duties such as farming or looking after the livestock. These tasks are assigned by the higher-ranking cultists and they are absolutely non-negotiable. • The cultists are not allowed to interact with any outsiders. Other than the violent aggression towards Blake and Lynn as ordered by Knoth or Laird, the cultists avoid any interaction with them. • Individuality is discouraged and often punished. Members are forced to perform rituals together but they are not allowed to gather in smaller groups for various social events unless directed by the leading figures. • The cultists do not have access to use any modern equipment save for an old generator unit and primitive lifts.
Information Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultists have no communication with the outside world. There are no phones, functional radio or TV units, or any devices that are capable of connecting to the internet. • Other opinion or information that contradicts the teachings of Knoth is immediately silenced. • Due to the lack of any external connection or communications, cultists are completely disconnected from the rest of the world.
Thought Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cult members have been conditioned to acknowledge the presence of outsiders as a direct threat to their beliefs and cause. • Any self-criticism or discussions of reform are strictly forbidden when the cult's beliefs are in question. • Knoth uses a complex language with a specific terminology that often refers to the fundamentals of their beliefs. In other words, the language becomes a tool to enforce manipulation and control over the members. • Blake and Lynn are immediately labelled as a threat to the community by Knoth who uses the cult's doctrine to justify his orders.
Emotional Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a person is interrogated or punished for any reason, their relatives and family members are tortured to break their resistance. For instance, Knoth has Josiah's wife tortured to force him into giving them Lynn's location. • Knoth often sexually assaults cult members' or their children and often murders the babies that were born.

	<p>Any members, such as Ethan, who oppose his actions are exiled and/or punished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knoth's teachings often degrade individualism and the value of an individual for strict control. • Cult members are expected to feel ashamed and sinful in the event their actions do not comply with the cult's beliefs.
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Although it is unclear to what extent Murkoff Corporation's experiments have affected the cultists, *The Testament of the New Ezekiel* adopts various control methods that were listed in the BITE model.

5.1.4 Connection between the player character and the cult

The plot of *Outlast 2* begins with the Blake and Lynn Langermann's investigation of the death of an unidentified, pregnant young woman. The unnamed victim, whom they refer to as Jane Doe, was discovered in Southern Arizona and immediately brought to a hospital where she allegedly committed suicide. Due to the difficulty of navigating through the rocky terrain, Blake and Lynn rent a helicopter to investigate the area the woman was discovered. However, their helicopter loses its engine following a mysterious blast, crashing into the rural area they were flying over.

The cult's presence is foreshadowed when the helicopter pilot's mutilated body is found on a cross near the crash site. The nature of the scene indicates direct hostility towards outsiders in a violent fashion. The cross, on the other hand, hints at the presence of a possibly radicalised group, as it is common with religious cults. The ritualistic and terrifying nature of the murder scene serves as an early introduction of the challenges Blake is yet to face. As Blake arrives at the outskirts of Temple Gate and observes the cultists chanting in a catatonic state, the narrative structure conveys the message that the enemies are seemingly brainwashed, fanatical in their beliefs, and possibly incapable of developing empathy. This also indicates the cultists are stripped of their individuality and they are likely to act as a unified mass controlled by a leading figure.

The cult becomes instantly hostile towards Lynn and Blake the moment their presence is known to the cult's leader, Sullivan Knoth. Delirious from his paranoia regarding the birth of Antichrist, Knoth immediately has Lynn captured and examined, and is convinced she is pregnant with the Antichrist. The literature review indicates cult leaders are often known to suffer from paranoia due to the fear of any internal or external opposition that can possibly target their beliefs or themselves. Due to his absolutist point of view, which is common in cults, Knoth leaves no room for any kind of compromise or a peaceful solution to the matter. Both the leader and the cultists deal in absolutes, without any hesitation or compromise, due to the cultist doctrine that is built upon the distinct and strong separation between the cultists and everyone else.

Blake's encounters with the two other major antagonists of the game are also affected by their radical and illogical beliefs. Laird, who acts as the leader of the expelled cultists known as "The Scalled", is convinced that Blake is the "scalled messiah" and consuming his flesh after his rebirth shall cure them of the diseases and deformities they suffer from. Val, who is the leader of the group referred as heretics, aims to trigger a chaos of an apocalyptic scale through the birth of Antichrist. Once a devoted follower of the cult, Val appears to have lost their sanity after the murders they committed in the name of their faith and developed sociopathic tendencies. As an individual who was exposed to brainwashing and forced to commit acts of violence, Val's radical beliefs are only replaced with different radical beliefs, as the cultic doctrine can possibly affect an individual's mental perception almost irreversibly.

The confrontation with the cult and reliving through his past traumas, Blake's mental state has shaken to a degree where he is no longer able to discern between the reality that surrounds him and his own hallucinations. Following the closing scene, Blake's fate is not revealed and left up to the players' interpretation.

5.2 Resident Evil 4 (Remake)

Resident Evil 4 was initially released in 2005 for Nintendo GameCube console. In 2023, the game was remade with major changes to its graphics, sounds, and

minor changes to its story and gameplay. This thesis research features an analysis of the remake for a better understanding of narrative design choices in modern games. Resident Evil 4 Remake is classified as a survival horror game and carries many of the common aspects of the genre. With intentionally limited ammunition and resources, the players are required to reach their objectives in a setting that features horror elements. The game was purchased and played on the Steam platform. The total playtime was 22.4 hours.

5.2.1 Plot

Resident Evil 4 Remake puts the players in the shoes of Leon Scott Kennedy, who is the protagonist of Resident Evil 2 (Capcom 1998). In Resident Evil 2, Leon, who was a rookie police officer back then, finds himself in Raccoon City where humans were turned into highly aggressive zombies as a result of the secret experiments of Umbrella Corporation. Following the incident, Leon joins the program to become a state agent and undergoes rigorous training under the supervision of Major Jack Krauser.

Six years after the Raccoon City incident, Leon is sent on a mission to find and rescue the president of United States' daughter, Ashley Graham. The intel gathered by the government leads Leon to Valdelobos, which is a remote village in Spanish countryside. Leon is escorted by two local police officers one of which does not return after leaving the car for a moment. Following the missing steps of the missing officer, Leon enters a dilapidated shack where he retrieves the officer's badge covered in blood. At this very moment, Leon is attacked by a villager, who was previously oblivious to his presence as he was chanting in a corner of the room. After a fierce struggle with the hostile villager, Leon explores the shack and discovers the disfigured body of the missing police officer. Shortly after, he is attacked by the villager, who has now mutated with tentacles growing on his body.

From this point onwards, all the villagers become hostile towards Leon, without any means of compromise. Leon pushes forward and arrives at the village where he witnesses the brutal, ritualistic murder of the police officer left in the car, as the

villagers burn him alive. When spotted, Leon finds himself in a desperate struggle against the villagers, where he tries to defend himself from the violent mob. Amid the struggle, the bell of the village church tolls, and the villagers abruptly cease their attack. They drop their weapons and head into the church while chanting, completely ignoring the presence of Leon.

Leon's intelligence officer directs him to a path where more villagers constantly attack him. Exploring a cellar, Leon rescues a man called Luis, whose intentions are unclear. Leon is then attacked by the village chief, who manages to inject him with a mysterious substance. Leon loses consciousness and wakes up in a room with Luis, where the two are put in shackles. A conversation with Luis reveals he has information about Ashley's, the daughter of the president, possible location. Leon and Luis manage to break their chains, but Luis immediately leaves the scene without sharing more information. Leon contacts his intelligence officer and requests a background check on Luis.

Leon continues to explore the area and finds himself in the village manor where he faces Mendez, the village chief who previously injected him with a mysterious substance. Seemingly immortal, Mendez appears to be invulnerable to Leon's attacks. Mendez also refers to their previous incident, noting Leon's body "accepted the gift". It appears he infected Leon with "Las Plagas", which is a parasite that allows the cult to control their subjects. At this moment, a mysterious figure comes to Leon's aid and buys Leon time to escape.

As Leon continues his search, the intelligence officer informs him of Luis' background. Luis was a successful scientist who used to work for Umbrella Corporation. Leon discovers Ashley is possibly being held captive in the village chapel and retrieves the key to the chapel gates following a detour to the lake. Due to the parasite's collective mind, Leon begins to have troubling visions. Leon manages to enter the chapel, locate Ashley, and inform the intelligence officer on his radio. The two are asked to proceed to a certain location where a helicopter will arrive to evacuate them. However, they are attacked by a large group of villagers and take shelter in an old house where they run into Luis again.

Luis notices Ashley has been infected with Las Plagas as well and tells them he had to undergo a procedure to have it removed after getting infected himself. Although reluctant, Leon agrees they might require his help in the matter. After Luis leaves again, Leon is informed the helicopter will not be able to evacuate them immediately due to unfavourable weather.

In search of a shelter, Leon and Ashley venture into the depths of the region as the zombified villagers relentlessly pursue them. They finally find themselves in an unavoidable encounter with the village chief Mendez. After prompting Ashley to run away, Leon manages to eliminate Mendez who is now completely mutated. Leon barely escapes, reunites with Ashley, and enter castle area. As they're exploring the area, Luis tells Leon about a drug that slows down the infection. After a series of encounters, they manage to infiltrate the castle where they are met by Ramon Salazar, a high-ranking member of the cult. Salazar reveals the cult's plan is to use Ashley as a puppet host and spread the infection. Salazar attempts to demonstrate the power of the infection by controlling the movements of Ashley. The two manage to escape but shortly after, Ashley abandons Leon and runs away as she is scared of the fact that she might no longer be able to control her actions because of the parasitic infection. Leon then runs into Ada, who is an acquaintance of his from the Raccoon City Incident. Working for an unknown boss, Ada seems to be in search of a substance which she refers to as "amber".

Leon manages to find and rescue Ashley and assures they will find a cure. As they explore the castle interiors, Leon gets trapped in a cage and then rescued by Ashley. Just before their reunion, Ashley is kidnapped by another powerful, mutated figure. Leon proceeds to the throne room where Ashley is taken. When he arrives at the room, Leon is captured by the mutated creature and forced to witness Salazar torture Ashley. He is then thrown into a hole and tries to make his way back up to the surface.

Leon reaches the mines where Luis administers a suppressant drug to him in order to slow down the progress of his infection. As they explore the mines, Luis explains that the cult initially discovered Las Plagas in the mines and believes the mines are sacred. The two manage to escape the mines, however, Luis is stabbed to death by Krauser, who was Leon's training officer. Leon is shocked to find out his officer has aligned with the cult.

Leon pushes forward to search for Ashley when Ada informs him Ashley was taken to the clock tower. Leon sees Krauser taking Ashley away and confronts a mutated form of Salazar. After he destroys Salazar's mutated form, he runs after Krauser to watch him take Ashley to a nearby island. Ada offers Leon help and takes him to the island in a small boat. Leon attacks the fortified base on the island and finds Ashley whose condition has deteriorated due to the infection. He administers the suppressant drug to Ashley, buying her some time as well.

Ashley and Leon eventually discover a room with chunks of amber that contain the parasites that spread Las Plagas. They are attacked by Saddler and once again, the cultists carry away Ashley despite Leon's best efforts.

Leon finally encounters Krauser, who reveals his motives for joining the cult. Following a fierce fight, Leon comes victorious, seemingly disappointed by Krauser's betrayal. He arrives at the sanctuary where Ashley is taken. As he finds her, the two are met by Saddler who urges them to accept the gift and become one with the hive mind of the parasitic network. They manage to escape and Leon takes Ashley to Luis' laboratory where they can be cured of the infection. As his condition is worsening, Leon barely manages to operate the machinery and cure Ashley of Las Plagas, only to collapse onto the floor unconscious. Ashley, who is now cured, places Leon into the operating chair and initiates the protocol for eliminating the parasite.

At this moment, it is revealed the "amber" Ada's been seeking for contains an extremely powerful subspecies of the parasites. Before they could leave the island, they face the final form of Saddler, which is a grotesque monster. Leon

manages to destroy Saddler and the two leave the island on a jet ski Ada left for them. Leaving the island with the amber in a helicopter, Ada finds out her boss' plan is to eliminate billions of people in order to control the world with the parasite. Terrified by the situation, she forces the helicopter pilot to change course.

5.2.2 Story structure

Resident Evil 4's narrative structure features a chronological order of events with a clear, definitive ending. Although Leon occasionally suffers from visions, said visions serve as a direct message from the cult's leader rather than lucid hallucinations that are open for interpretation. An analysis of the game's story based on the hero's journey structure is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Plot of Resident Evil 4 based on hero's journey framework

ACT I: SEPARATION	
The Ordinary World	Following the Raccoon City Incident, Leon undergoes military training and works as a government agent on various missions.
Call to Adventure	Leon is sent to a rural area in Spain based on intel that suggests that possible location of the U.S. president's missing daughter.
Refusal of the Call	As his mission dictates, Leon is only focused on rescuing Ashley without any intentions of facing her kidnappers unless necessary. However, he finds himself in a situation where he has no other option but to face the entire cult.
Meeting Mentor	Leon is aided and guided by numerous allies throughout the story. The intelligence officer on the radio guides Leon to his next objective and provides intel. Luis occasionally fights enemies with Leon and provides crucial information on the cure, the cult, and the nature of the parasite. Ada often directly or indirectly helps Leon in dangerous situations and takes him to the

	fortified island. A helicopter pilot named Mike clears out the enemies in certain areas to help Leon proceed.
ACT II A: DESCENT	
Crossing the Threshold	Leon is attacked by a zombified, mutated villager and finds the body of the missing police officer. He then proceeds to the village where he witnesses the irreversible effects of the cult's experiments with the parasite on the villagers. As he is hunted by mutated enemies, his only option is to move forward and locate his target.
Tests, Allies, & Enemies	Forcibly injected with the parasite, Leon has to rescue Ashley and evacuate while facing increasingly stronger enemies due to advanced stages of parasitic mutation. In addition to common enemies, Leon encounters high-ranking members of the cult such as Mendez, Salazar, Saddler, alongside his former trainer and mentor, Jack Krauser. Despite Leon's best efforts, Ashley is recaptured numerous times by powerful opponents. The two also need to cure themselves of the infection in a time-sensitive fashion before the damage becomes irreversible.
Approach	The two need to cure themselves of the infection in a time-sensitive fashion before the damage becomes irreversible. The heavily fortified base requires Leon to face numerous and powerful enemies.
ACT II B: DESCENT	
Ordeal	Leon and Ashley reach Luis' laboratory moments before the they are both irreversibly infected with Las Plagas. Taking in turns, they operate the machinery that destroys the parasite inside the host's body. As they are ready to leave the island, they are stopped by Saddler who reveals the true extent of the mutation he had. With

	help from Ada, Leon manages to defeat Saddler for good.
Reward	Leon and Ashley are completely cured of Las Plagas and they put an end to the cult's activities. They can now leave the island.
ACT III: RETURN	
Road Back	As the island begins to collapse, Leon and Ashley need to ride their jet ski through the blast and falling debris before they are safe from the devastating explosion.
Resurrection	Before they leave the island, Ada reveals her true mission that indicates the parasite is not completely eradicated.
Return with the Elixir	Ashley and Leon develop a bond over the challenges they faced together. They ride to safety in the distance. Meanwhile, Ada, who is in possession of a powerful variant of the parasite, forces the helicopter pilot to change the course after she finds out the details of her employer's plans.

Resident Evil 4 Remake has sixteen chapters. The player is shown their gameplay stats after they complete a chapter and asked if they would like to save their progress. In other words, there is a clear definition of when a chapter ends and the next chapter begins. The game's plot based on the three-act structure is as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Plot in Resident Evil 4 based on three-act structure framework

ACT I: Set-Up	Chapter 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon is sent on a mission to rescue the president's missing daughter who was reportedly last seen in rural Spain. • Leon encounters mutated villagers and witnesses their violent acts. The villagers immediately attack him.
	Chapter 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon is infected with Las Plagas. • Leon meets Luis who informs him of his infection.

	<p>Chapter 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leo travels to the lake where he encounters a mutated, aquatic monster and retrieves the key to the chapel. • After facing many challenges, Leon locates and meets Ashley.
<p>ACT II: Confrontation</p>	<p>Chapter 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon and Ashley are directed to wait for evacuation with a helicopter. However, the plans are cancelled due to bad weather. Ashley begins to show symptoms of the Las Plagas infection. <p>Chapter 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon meets Ada, who allegedly died in the Raccoon City Incident. Leon is attacked the village chief, Mendez. <p>Chapter 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon arrives at the castle to find Ashley. • Luis tells Leon about a suppressant drug that slows down the infection. • Ashley's symptoms become more severe. <p>Chapter 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon encounters more powerful mutants. • Leon finds Ashley who is traumatised. The two move on together. <p>Chapter 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon is trapped by the cultists. Although Ashley manages to retrieve the key that unlocks Leon's cage, a powerful mutant kidnaps her. <p>Chapter 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon reaches the throne room to save Ashley. He finds her being tortured by Salazar. Leon gets tossed into a hole. <p>Chapter 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon teams up Luis in the mines and learns about the origins of the infection. Luis is killed by Krauser, Leon's old mentor.

	<p>Chapter 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon fights a mutated form of Salazar and eliminates him. He goes after Ashley, whom Krauser takes to an island nearby. <p>Chapter 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon finds Ashley in the fortified base on the island. With haste, he carries her and injects her with the suppressant drug to slow down the infection. <p>Chapter 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon and Ashley face Saddler who tries to force Ashley into shooting at Leon through his controlling powers granted by Las Plagas. Although Ashley manages to resist, she is taken away by the cultists. <p>Chapter 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon encounters Krauser in a final confrontation and manages to beat him.
<p>ACT III: Resolution</p>	<p>Chapter 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon and Ashley manage to reach Luis' old laboratory and cure themselves of the infection. <p>Chapter 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leon rescues Ada who was captured by the cult and defeats the mutated form of Saddler. With a jet ski Ada left for him, Leon and Ashley escape the island.

Resident Evil 4 Remake has a well-formulated story that complements its gameplay. The narrative is used as a rail that carries the players to increasingly more challenging areas. In other words, the story is used as a means to justify the increased difficulty. However, a more comprehensive future research is required to analyse the effect of the story on the gameplay as this thesis research solely adopts a narratologist approach.

5.2.3 Analysis of the cult based on the BITE model

The cult in Resident Evil 4 Remake is named Los Illuminados, which can be translated as “The Enlightened Ones”. Based in rural Spain, the cult claims to have roots that can be traced back to ancient pagan beliefs. As a neo-pagan cultic movement, the cult reveres and worships a parasite-like organism that grants its host with extraordinary strength and constitution, at the expense of their mental integrity and individualism. The parasitic infection allows the cult leaders, who are injected with stronger specimens of the species, to assert absolute dominance over individuals injected with lesser forms.

The in-game lore states the members of the Los Illuminados were sanctioned and sent on exile on numerous occasions throughout the history. The Salazar family, initially tasked with eliminating the cult members and ensuring Catholic dominance in the region, have stationed in the village castle for generations. However, the newest leader of Los Illuminados, Osmund Saddler, sought ways of using modern technology to establish more effective control using the parasite. Having infected himself with a strong specimen, Saddler gained the ability to control the others after having infected them with a lesser form. Saddler succeeded in manipulating Salazar the 8th, and eventually injecting him with the parasite, which granted him access to the mines where the parasite was initially discovered. Through Salazar’s influence, Saddler had the villagers infected while building a military base around the facilities where clearly unethical experiments were done.

Los Illuminados can be classified as a destructive, religious cult. The parasitic organisms are revered as a divine gift to be embraced and spread to others. The higher-ranking members of the cults wear different robes to indicate their rank. Ritualistic ceremonies with human sacrifice are common. The cult has designated areas for worshipping, such as the old chapel in the village. The cult has its own paramilitary group and attempts to influence the US politics by using the parasite.

The cults' control over the villagers in Valdelobos can be defined as absolute. The systematic control methods adopted by Los Iluminados based on the BITE model are explained in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Cult's analysis based on the BITE model

Behaviour Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infected by Las Plagas, the cult followers are completely stripped off of their individuality and they no longer have the ability to make personal choices. • The village is completely isolated from the rest of the world, the villagers are not allowed to leave. • The infected cultists are constantly monitored by the village chief, Mendez, who also fell victim to Salazar and Saddler's manipulative cultist propaganda. Mendez ensures total obedience amongst the local people. • The local people are forced into labour, doing their daily tasks as directed by the cult's high-ranking members. • Other than the ritualistic gatherings, the local people have no social connections or individual leisure-time activities.
Information Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no modern technology in the village, leaving the local people completely oblivious to the events in the rest of the world. • The local people have no means of communicating with the outside world. • Presence of any outsiders is perceived as a direct threat and all outsiders are immediately captured and brutally murdered. Leon witnesses the execution of one of the police officers who escorted them. He then discovers the body of a missing cyclist who was killed as human sacrifice in a cultic ritual.
Thought Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The low-ranking cultists no longer possess the free will to make individual decisions. They are hostile against anyone who is not a cult member by nature. • The villagers suffer from a decreased level of intelligence due to the consequences of being infected with Las Plagas. They are not capable of forming their own thoughts. It is clear they can no longer do their daily tasks efficiently. The buildings in the village are in a dilapidated state, indicating poor maintenance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The infected villagers are constantly chanting the cult's teachings which shows the extents of the indoctrination they were subjected to.
Emotional Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the cult's leader, Saddler adopted emotional control methods to convert leading figures in the region to gain control. • He initially manipulated Salazar, who led a life in solitary with his servant in his castle. Missing a father figure, Saddler influenced Salazar without any intervention, eventually turning him into a puppet figure. • Saddler also manipulated the village chief Mendez, who was a peaceful priest. Hiding his true intentions, Saddler managed to gain the trust of Mendez by convincing him that he could help him solve various issues the villagers were facing. • The parasites develop a hive-mind which creates a sense of unification amongst the members. "Becoming as one" as a doctrine is often preached by high-ranking members of the cult. Through this doctrine, the followers are encouraged to give up on their individuality in exchange for becoming a part of a greater being.

The analysis of Los Illuminados shows that they have many of the commonly observed properties of cultic organisations. Their beliefs are built around a parasitic organism that grants a manipulative leader with absolute control over isolated and deceived individuals. Extreme measures which include forming a paramilitary group are taken to ensure the dominance of the cult. The use of parasite is combined with a faith system for easier manipulation and control.

5.2.4 Connection between the player character and the cult

Leon Scott Kennedy, who has become a federal agent following the Racoon City Incident, is sent on a mission to locate and rescue the missing daughter of US president, who was last reported to be spotted in rural Spain. Escorted by two local police officers, Leon heads to a small, isolated village in the area.

One of the police officers leaves the car momentarily but does not return after several minutes have passed. Soon after Leon leaves the vehicle to look for the missing officer, finds the decaying carcass of livestock in an altar-like setting. The

symbols and the dilapidated, abandon shacks on his way emphasize the disturbing and menacing nature of this unknown environment. Leon then walks into a battered old house where he is met by chanting local, who seems oblivious to his presence. Following a brief investigation, he finds the badge of the missing police officer and immediately attacked by the villager. Shortly after, Leon discovers his body in the basement and witnesses the execution of the other police officer when he arrives at the village. Both executions are gruesome and performed in a ritualistic setup. It becomes clear the locals are hostile to outsiders and interpret their sole presence as a threat to their beliefs. When the chapel's bell tolls, the cultists stop their attack on Leon and head to the chapel while chanting, which indicates they are indoctrinated and brainwashed.

Although the local cultists are hostile towards Leon, the village chief injects Leon with the parasite as ordered by the cult's leader, Saddler. Instead of directly eliminating Leon, the cult's leader attempts to "convert" him with the Las Plagas. Due to the connected hive mind between the parasites, Saddler delivers "messages" to Leon, trying to convince him into accepting the gift and giving into the infection. However, Leon resists the infection and eventually reaches to Luis laboratory where a cure is available. Leon eliminates high ranking officers of Los Illuminados and eventually destroys Saddler with the aid of Ada.

The ending of Resident Evil 4 Remake shows Leon and Ashley leaving the island after most cult members were killed in the explosions triggered by the final battle. Despite being shaken by his confrontation with the cult and saddened by the betrayal of his old mentor Krauser, Leon seems in a mentally and physically stable state, as he was successful in his mission. He also seems proud of Ashley who proved her potential as a capable individual.

6 RESULTS

Both in Resident Evil 4 Remake and Outlast 2, the low-ranking cultists were portrayed as hostile persons devoid of personality and free will. They were hostile, relentless, and brutal. Since they function as puppets directed by the cult leader(s), the cultists do not need personal motives for their actions, no matter

how gruesome said actions might be. Ritualistic murders are common. From a narrative point of view, it is understood cultists serve the purpose of “force of nature” type of enemy who can neither be compromised with nor stopped, unless killed by the player. Therefore, they allow the narrative designers create “unstoppable and ruthless enemies without empathy” within the context.

Both of the games in the analysis begin with the protagonist investigating a case. In Resident Evil 4 Remake, Leon is searching for a missing person whereas in Outlast 2, Blake is trying to uncover the story of an unidentified person who reportedly died in hospital after being found in the countryside. Both protagonists spot a decaying animal corpse (seemingly abandoned livestock) which indicates disturbance in the area. In addition, Blake finds the mutated body of their helicopter pilot whereas Leon discovers the body of the missing police officer in the basement of the dilapidated house he explores. When attacked by the cultists, both are shocked and terrorised, however they are left with no other option than to proceed due to their goals.

Whereas Leon has many allies who provide him with valuable information and provide direct support in combat, Blake is only aided by an exiled local who provides him with shelter and gives his life to protect Blake. Given the fact that the plot of Outlast 2 heavily relies on themes of isolation and desperation, the limited number of allies indicate a narrative choice. Both protagonists encounter more menacing cultists. Unlike Leon who is capable of defending himself and eliminating the hostiles, Blake is often chased by groups of violent enemies since he remains unarmed throughout the game.

Based on the BITE method (Hassan 2021), the cults in the analysed games adopted extreme measures of control over their members. Both cults were stationed in a remote region without any technology that would allow communications with the outside world. Using modern technology and equipment was avoided. Any disobedience or open manifestation of disagreement with cult’s beliefs were met with hostility. Any opposition were suppressed; when eliminating the opposition was not possible, the opposing members were exiled from the

community. The cult members were manipulated into perceiving the presence of outsiders as a direct threat to the community. Both cults used religious motifs and performed rituals.

It is important to note that both cults either conducted or were affected by scientific experiments. In *Outlast 2*, it is implied that the cultists', and eventually Blake's, mental integrity was compromised due to the signals broadcasted as a part of Murkoff Corporation's mind-altering experiments. In *Resident Evil 4 Remake*, the cult's leader uses modern technology to do human experiments with various specimens of the parasite.

In *Resident Evil 4 Remake*, Leon was injected with a specimen of the parasite in an attempt to "convert" him. However, in *Outlast 2*, the cult remained hostile towards Blake, without any opportunities for compromise.

In *Outlast 2*, Blake's mental health is severely affected by his experience whereas in *Resident Evil 4 Remake*, Leon seems to have survived the incident without any visible changes to his personality or mental capacity. The lack of a significant character arc can be explained by the fact that Leon already experienced and processed his trauma in the Raccoon City Incident.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to analyse the narrative structure and connection between the player character and the cult in linear video games that featured a cult like group. The results supported an earlier observation that cultic themes affected the game's narrative structure rather than the unique gameplay elements. As indicated by the preliminary analysis, although the cultic themes helped the designers build up an intense atmosphere, the games did not feature any game mechanics that were intertwined with the presence of a cult in their setting. This conclusion allowed a more comprehensive analysis of the selected games despite the fact that the scope of the analysis was limited down to a narratologist approach.

The findings suggest that survival-horror appears to be a common genre amongst linear games that feature a cult although quantitative research is required to confirm this assumption. Furthermore, the BITE model was found to provide an effective framework for an evaluation of the control methods adopted by the cult in a fictional setting.

In conclusion, the research revealed that a more comprehensive analysis is needed to review the implementation of cultic themes in video games. The comprehensive literature review did not reveal any previous studies that were directly related to the representation of cults in video games. Therefore, future research with more samples is suggested. An analysis of selected games for their art, visual, and sound design is suggested to provide a better understanding of cults in video games. The author of this research is in the hope that this thesis research will form the basis for future studies on the topic.

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BITE CONTROL METHODS AS LISTED BY STEVEN HASSAN

Steven Hassan lists the criteria for behaviour control in cults and similar organisations as below (Hassan 2021, 52-53):

1. Regulate an individual's physical reality
2. Dictate where, how, and with whom the member lives and associates or isolates
3. Dictate when, how, and with whom the member has sex
4. Control types of clothing and hairstyles
5. Regulate diet—food and drink, hunger and/ or fasting
6. Manipulation and deprivation of sleep
7. Financial exploitation, manipulation, or dependence
8. Restrict leisure, entertainment, vacation time
9. Require significant time spent with group indoctrination and rituals and/ or self-indoctrination
with Internet
10. Require permission for major decisions
11. Use rewards and punishments to modify behaviours, both positive and negative
12. Discourage individualism, encourage groupthink
13. Impose rigid rules and regulations
14. Punish disobedience by beating, torture, burning, cutting, rape, or tattooing/branding
15. Threaten harm to person, family, and friends
16. Force individuals to rape or be raped
17. Encourage and engage in corporal punishment
18. Employ kidnapping
19. Separate family members
- 5 3
20. Use imprisonment
21. Permit torture, lynching, murder
22. Instil dependency and obedience.

The criteria for information control in the BITE model are as listed below (Hassan 2021, 53-54):

1. Deception
 - a. Deliberately withhold information
 - b. Distort information to make it more acceptable
 - c. Systematically lie to the cult member
2. Minimize or discourage access to non-cult sources of information, including
 - a. Internet, TV, radio, books, articles, newspapers, magazines, media
 - b. Critical information
 - c. Former members
 - d. Keep members busy so they do not have time to think and investigate
 - e. Control through cell phone with texting, calls, Internet tracking
3. Compartmentalize information into outsider vs. insider doctrines
 - a. Ensure that information is not freely accessible
 - b. Control information at different levels and missions within group
 - c. Allow only leadership to decide who needs to know what and when
- 4 Encourage spying on other members
 - a. Impose a buddy system to monitor and control member
 - b. Report deviant thoughts, feelings, and actions to leadership
 - c. Ensure that individual behaviour is monitored by the group
5. Extensive use of cult-generated information and propaganda, including
 - a. Newsletters, magazines, journals, audiotapes, videotapes, YouTube, movies and other social media
 - b. Misquote statements from non-cult sources or use them out of context
6. Unethical use of confession
 - a. Information about sins used to disrupt and/or dissolve identity boundaries
 - b. Withholding forgiveness or absolution
 - c. Manipulation of memory, implant false memories

The criteria for thought control in the BITE model are as listed below (Hassan 2021, 54-55):

1. Require members to internalize the group's doctrine as truth
 - a. Adopting the group's "map of reality" as reality
 - b. Instil black and white thinking
 - c. Decide between good vs. evil
 - d. Organize people into us vs. them (insiders vs. outsiders)
2. Change person's name and identity
3. Use of loaded language and clichés which constrict knowledge, stop critical thinking
and reduce complexities into platitudinous buzz words
4. Encourage only "good and proper" thoughts
5. Hypnotic techniques are used to alter mental states, undermine critical thinking, and
even to age regress the member
6. Memories are manipulated, and false memories are created
7. Teaching thought-stopping techniques which shut down reality testing by
stopping
negative thoughts about the cult and allowing only positive thoughts using denial,
rationalization, wishful thinking, chanting, meditating, praying, speaking in
tongues, singing
or humming
8. Reject rational analysis, critical thinking, constructive criticism
9. Forbid critical questions about leader, doctrine, or policy allowed
10. Label alternative belief systems as illegitimate, evil, or not useful
11. Instil new "map of reality"

The criteria for emotional control in the BITE model are as listed below (Hassan 2021, 55-56):

1. Manipulate and narrow the range of feelings
2. Frame needs as evil, wrong, or selfish

3. Teach emotion-stopping techniques to block feelings of homesickness, anger, doubt
4. Make the person feel that problems are always their own fault, never the leader's or the group's fault
5. Promote feelings of guilt or unworthiness including doubts about oneself, one's family, one's past, one's affiliations, identity, and actions.
6. Instil fear, such as fear of the outside world, independent thought, loss of salvation, shunning, and the disapproval of other members
7. Promote extremes of emotional highs and lows– love bombing and praise one moment and then declaring you are horrible sinner
8. Employ ritualistic and sometimes public confession of sins
9. Inculcating irrational fears or phobias about leaving the group or questioning the leader's authority in any of the following ways:
 - a. Contend that no happiness or fulfilment is possible outside of the group
 - b. Contend there will be terrible consequences if you leave: hell, demon possession, incurable diseases, accidents, suicide, insanity, 10,000 reincarnations, and so forth
 - c. Shun those who leave; use fear of being rejected by friends and family
 - d. Reject any legitimate reason to leave; those who leave are weak, undisciplined, unspiritual, worldly, brainwashed by family or counsellor, or seduced by money, sex, or rock and roll
 - e. Threaten harm to ex-member and family

THE GOSPEL OF KNOTH

Appendix 2 has The Gospel of Knoth which Sullivan Knoth claims to have written following a divine intervention in Outlast 2 (Red Barrels 2017). Sections of the script is available in the game scattered throughout the chapters and the complete script can be accessed online (Outlast Wiki 2021):

Chapter 1

1. The words of Sullivan, who would be the new Ezekiel, who would be the Prophet to lead the scattered usurping strangers of a fallen Christ in the stolen Zion of the Pueblos, the Jicanilla, the Mescalero, and the Navajo.
2. Elected according to the blood wept in revelation, the foreknowledge of the Enemy even at the Gate and the crumbling ramparts, and obedience to the blood of God and Jesus Christ: Grace unto you but never peace.
3. To him blinded to a corrupted inheritance of defiled faith, the liars of Babel and whores of Babylon, they befot of the Devil who is a liar and father of lies.
4. O Zion, Zion, thou that stonest the prophets sent unto you so that your house is desolate and the blood of your ill-got children is sprinkled upon the earth to feed the wheat that fattens your brood for slaughter.
5. For all flesh is grass to fatten the sacrificial ox or the sacrilegious calf, O Ba'al, O EI, O Gugalana, O Moloch, but grass left to wither and fertilized with blood will to seed and spread.
6. For the seed of the Prophet shall root the Enemy, that the Prophet may strike down with furious vengeance the bastard of lies begot in his own sin cleansed by his own blood spilled of his own issue.

Chapter 2

1. Wherefore gird up the loins of you that would listen, ready your mind, be open and sober in patience for revelation, obedient as children to parents, as parents to the Prophets, as the Prophets to God and His angels.

2. For as much as ye know that ye were not made incorruptible by incorruptible gold, so are the lies of tradition received from your fathers;
3. Received not by immaculate blood, the line of Adam corrupted beyond salvation by the line of Cain, circumcised but stiff-necked, uncircumsized of heart, and ill-grown of your father's lust;
4. Who verily defiled the revelations of Abraham, and of Jesus of Nazareth, and of Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim, thou hellbound Jews, thou hellbound Christians, thou hellbound Moslems, who sow damnation in wait of reaping;
5. But receive not the vain conversation of your fathers, and pass the time of your sojourning in fear, not fashioning yourselves in ignorant lust.
6. And when called to account by the Father, defend His Heaven by the spilling of the heart's blood of the spider-eyed lamb, the Enemy, the unborn prince of lies.
7. For trust unto him whom it was revealed: be ye holy, for I am holy.

Chapter 3

1. Now it was in the thirty-fourth year of Sullivan Knoth, who would be Ezekiel, in the four-hundred and seventy-ninth year of Zion, in the one-thousand-nine-hundred and seventy-first year of Christ, in the eleventh month, on the dawn of the twenty-sixth day.
2. I was a prisoner of the usuries, a cobbler in the land of Al-Barquq, the mountain of the apricot tree called Albuquerque;
3. And I was weighed by false debts to the Pharisees of Zion, condemned to bear a mark of shame by those clothed in shame;
4. In the country of an usurping King called Lynch in his birth, who faced war and fought not, who set in stone the corruptions of he that came before, and condemned Zion to a sickness even unto death.

5. And the word of the Lord came unto me unbidden, as a thief in the night, cloaked in lies but shining with truth, a voice electric cast by a sinner and caught by metal rod;
6. And it spoke the words of Lamentation, saying "For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim."
7. Saying "Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it."
8. Saying "Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation."
9. Saying "Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time?"
10. Saying "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."
11. Saying "But thou hast utterly reject us; thou art very wroth against us."
12. And I knew that he that spoke was the fox upon the mountain, called Mai-Dotłishĩ and Mai-Iltsói by the defeated Navajo, the fox upon the mountain was the Prince of Chaos who speaks truth in lies.
13. And I silenced the voice and looked, and beheld unseen a great fire enfolding itself in the brightness of the rising sun, and out of the midst thereof a color out of space;
14. And my frenzied eyes cast back in unworthy gulfs of darkness, away from knowledge unbearable to man, and noise of the fury of the Lord came upon me;
15. And my ears bled as the member of a child at circumcision, and the Lord made known by this our covenant is made which ye shall keep.
16. He that hears where words cannot be spoke shall abide until time is no more, and the Enemy born of thine own issue shall be thy change for my vengeance.

1. Hear the prophet Sullivan say: I feared greatly to hear the voices of the Lord, and denied Him in shame and heavy lamentation, rending the hair from my chest, even by the roots, so that blood marked my shanks as blood marks the cunt-passage of a beast born to toil.
2. And the Lord made known to me in words unspeakable, saying despair not, but open yourself even to me as a wife opens her cunt to her husband and rejoice in creation.
3. Your shame is not your own, sayeth the Lord, for I am but sore displeased with your fathers.
4. As ye thrive unjustly in the usury and treasure of thy father's toil, sayeth the Lord, so to do ye unjustly share in the righteousness and shame of they father's deeds, yea, only your blood is your own.
5. Therefore, o son of man, sayeth the Lord, turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you.
6. Turn ye from your evil ways, turn ye from your unsired rutting, take not pleasure in women unmarked by their natural blood covenant with the Lord, but fuck and multiply as the act was designed of the Lord.
7. And I am very sore displeased sayeth the Lord, with the Gentile, and with the Heathen, and with the Pharisees of my gifted nation Zion, who take ease in their affliction, and turn they away from the teachings of the prophets.
8. Therefore, sayeth the Lord, as thine blood is thine own, and your deeds undone, open yourself to me, for the burden of the word of the Lord is thine.
9. Therefore as the Lord God commanded that I open mine eyes, I did, and did see.

Chapter 5

1. And I looked, and a gyre unwound form the night, a fire turned inward, burning from all directions towards the center, and drew the light from the

walls of my room so that I hung in a void that shone in rainbows like oil upon a black mirror.

2. And I looked despite the pain and behold, out of the midst of the inward fire came the likeness of a creature, a figure as like to a man as a circle is to a sphere.
3. As a cross-section of a sphere would make a circle, so the cross-section of this creature would make a man,
4. And this was their appearance, they had the appearance of Jesus Christ's agony upon the cross, and in chest and sex had the appearance of a man.
5. And their faces were innumerable and joined to one another, a thousand eyes and everything a mouth, with wings and jaws inseparable even in sight, and the purpose of the eyes and the purpose of the jaws was both for a more perfect consumption.
6. Thus were their faces, and in the next moment, they were the bones of the Four Horses of the Apocalypse and the bones of the Horsemen, too.
7. And in the moment that followed their faces were the sex organs of angels, and in the moment that followed a bonfire of flame with voices singing in beauty to rend the mind, and in the moment that followed a reflection in silvered glass.
8. For their faces were all of these things at once, and their wings were joined one to another and as they flapped wove to arrest time and I could not take air into my body.

Chapter 6

1. Now as I beheld the living creature, God's Lamentations fresh in my mind, I asked, are you the Four Strange Creatures revealed to Ezekiel?
2. And the voice came from the firmament that as over their heads said unto me, Son of Man, this angel appears to Ezekiel, and to though, too, for your burdens are the same.

3. And, sayeth the Lord, you shall be Ezekiel to these wretched times, and Muhammad to its chosen people, and Noah to the flood of blood inflamed that will destroy the Heathens and Gentiles and Pharisees.
4. And like the four strange creatures of Ezekiel, and of John, and of Isaiah, and of Daniel, behold a wheel there upon the earth by the living creatures.
5. The appearance of the wheels and their work was as like to the corona of an eclipse; and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.
6. The rings of the wheels were dreadful, and full of eyes round about them four, thousand of eyes and none of them human, but black and intelligent and shining like the eyes of beasts ready for slaughter.
7. And where the unfaced creatures looked, the eyes of the rings focused, for the spirit of the creatures was in the wheels, and the spirit of the wheels was in the creature.

Chapter 7

1. And the creatures said unto me, son of your father's sins, lift your feet from the earth I will speak unto thee.
2. And the spirit entered the cunt of my mind and made seed there, and I became as the chorus of screams in the movement of the wheels,
3. And we said unto all of creation but I alone was given ears to hear, I send thee as Ezekiel to the shepherds of a false Israel, formed in mockery of My Will in the time of your birth, and sustained in warlike transgression and greed by every nation.
4. And all the children of false Israel and all the pharisees shall murmur against Ezekiel and against his gospel as they feast on that which dieteth of itself, baked with the dung that cometh out of man, in communion with their children.
5. Neither came their abominable flesh into my mouth,

6. And the Lord said unto me, get thee down unto the stiff-necked and weak of flesh, for your people have corrupted my book in the defilement of Esdras and Tobit, and Esther, and the Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus, and Baruch, and the letters of Jeremiah, and the Prayer of Azariah, and Susanna and Bel who killed the Dragon, and the Prayer of Manasseh, and the Maccabees.
7. For if you worship Me but partway you are as the parent who cuts away the limbs of his child to better love what remains.
8. And that child will die and I will hate thee as a killer of little children.

Chapter 8

1. And your people have made war in the fields of my son, in Eretz Yisrael.
2. My land laid waste but my seed firmly set, against Babylon and the Assyrian and against Rome, but fallen to the Moslem and failed in the crusades and betrayed in the time of the Publican Pharisees.
3. As it was written by Baruch ben Neriah in the words of the weeping Jeremiah: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by lucre and shame and my people love to have it so.
4. Be thou instructed, O Ezekiel, lest my soul depart from thee, let not thy face be uncircumcised, in thy Jeremiad thou must not weep naught but tears, thou must weep even blood.
5. And Sullivan Knoth inscribed his name as EZEKIEL upon eternity's banner, with iron blade he scratched the word "I" down the globe of his eye and it was slit and bled and his face was washed with tears and blood.
6. Thus saith the true Lord: now may I show you the truth, for you have cut thine face in covenant to me.
7. And the Lord saith: you have not cut away thine eye, but the scale you took for an eye, and now you may see.

Chapter 9

1. And the hand of the Lord took me by the roots of my innards and put a hook in my jaw and lifted me away from the bones of dead Zion and the shit of Publican swine.
2. And in the murk of outer dark I became as a cloud that covers the land and saw many things:
3. I turned my mind upon the desolate pasts where the history of the Lord should have been writ.
4. I turned my mind upon the coiled and ignominious now of a great prophet beaten and spat upon as a manged cur.
5. And finally God turned my mind to the future, of a dark and wonderful burden, of my blade at the throat of the Antichrist child, of my children drunk on the blood of those who would poison the word of the Lord.
6. And I flew as ravens four hundred miles west, across the land of the Havasupai, who recorded Noah's flood as the work of Hokomata.
7. And beyond Hokomata's wound that rent this failed Zion, God set me upon a very high mountain.
8. Then the lord said cover your uncircumcised eye that you may truly see.
9. I placed my hand over my immaculate eye, and the lord spilled such vision into my split and bleeding orb, as man issuing seed into the split sex of a blossomed woman.
10. Then said He unto me, here is your Temple, and here is your Gate.
11. And the dimensions, materials, and labor of Temple Gate was made known to me.
12. And the hands of those who would build Temple Gate were made known to me, and their faces, and their hearts.
13. Their hearts were filled with fear, but their hands would be willing, and their eyes would see the glory of His kingdom come.

1. Then God showed me the work that was to be forged upon the anvil of Temple Gate; a blade honed even to cut the throat of the spider-eyed lamb.
2. And I gathered my disciples, from the land of Al-Barquq, and the town of Holy Faith, and from among the impotent apocalyptans in Los Alamos.
3. All the time pursued by Publicans and their tax collectors, hounded and harried, moving as we grew, a tribe born wandering in no man's desert.
4. The Lord gave to Ezekiel more wives than brothers, though I turned away none; neither thief, whore, rapist, addict, murderer, paedophile, cripple.
5. And I asked the Lord for guidance of the temptations of many wives and a voice of strong wine spoke: know ye not Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon.
6. It is simply commanded that you take no woman as rival to her sister, do not uncover one's nakedness while the other is alive.
7. Nor take your daughters as rivals to their mothers before their blood or while the elder is alive.
8. And of your wives and daughters you will have your greatest warriors, in wimples with weapons that censer.
9. And it shall be yours to multiply, to make children upon a legion of women, and children upon those children, and upon those children, until your line is a nation.
10. For from your nation the Enemy shall emerge.

Chapter 11

1. The fruit of destruction shall ripen within the foul womb of the martyred mother, the spider eyed lamb shall bring judgement of the lesser whore onto even the great whore who sitteth upon many waters.
2. For from Ezekiel's nation the Enemy shall be born.
3. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

4. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
5. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receiveth not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
6. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie:
7. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
8. And Ezekiel said unto his midwives, and his hunters: you are the raven and I am the wolf, who will allow you to feed if you lead me to slaughter.
9. For God has said the flesh of beasts is yours only in sacrifice to me, even unto the flesh of your offspring.

Chapter 12

1. And finally from the Temple the teachings of Sullivan Knoth, servant of truth and faithful witness, the gateway to paradise, who loved us and washed us from sins in our own blood.
2. Remember this: thou hast fallen, and must repent, and the bloody work is before you; so harden they hearts and thy hands, and sharpen thine blades.
3. And know these things shall precede the coming of the Antichrist, and fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.
4. Fear not the dreams that walk outside sleep, that by which ye shall be imprisoned and tortured; that shall dredge from the prisons of thy memory your unrepentant sins.
5. And they faults, even in the virginal fears of your whelping years, shall be visited upon you, and you shall bleed and wail, and you shall repent.
6. For the sins of the past shall rise before the dead may rise in the last days; for thou has little strength, and denied all names, and tarried long in the hours of temptation.

7. And the air shall be as thick with locusts as will choke thy breath.
8. And ye shall be ravaged with boils and sickness; your body a temple and city to pestilence, and thy sex will wither and rot as flesh for carrion birds.
9. And the corpses upon the water shall be as solid land so thick they lie, with death an open door beneath, and no man can shut it, and no angels can hear they voice.
10. And the blood of the lying God of the sky shall be cut, and his blood will fall as rain, for all things must die when God finds no perfection even in his own perfection.

Chapter 13

1. And by these signs shall though know of the nearing breach of Hell's cunt.
2. Then the night air shall sing with the grinding edges of the midwife's blades, and the fearful lamentation of the righteous and sinners alike.
3. And the final sign shall be the work of the Enemy, fearful even in his prison, who shall reach out and into the heart of Sullivan Knoth's dearest and most trusted disciple.
4. For this one is secretly stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart, the offspring of Seth, the offspring of Cain, for the eldest and best of the child fertilized only the earth and with his blood.
5. The disciple's mind shall descend among the damned and hated of God, shall commune with the Enemy, shall bathe in the seed of the spider-eyed lamb.
6. It shall be the betrayal of Temple Gate, and of God, and even of Sullivan Knoth who has loved true and would guide the chosen to salvation.
7. And heretics shall rise in the midst of the righteous, and they all shall suffer a thousand tortures and seven times seven that in suffering and shame before death and in eternity forever,
8. For lo, at the sounding of the Prophet's truth, the babe shall leap in the martyr's womb for fear.

Chapter 14

1. And in the moments before her birth the Antichrist shall wake, even in the womb, and her woe and misery will bleed and corrupt the earth.
2. As Jesus Christ of Nazareth dethroned death in glory of God, the Antichrist of Temple Gate shall set the grim horsemen back upon their throne, unless she is murdered in her bloody cradle.
3. But Ezekiel shall judge the unborn spider-eyed lamb by knife and by fire, and the righteous shall proclaim and Alleluia.
4. And ye shall see Heaven open and come to Earth, and Ezekiel shall sit astride a white horse; his eyes shall be flame, upon his head will be all the crowns of the earth.
5. And he shall take a new name, as of to the Word of God, for he shall be clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his new name shall be known to none but himself.
6. And the angels shall be carrion birds, who feast upon the flesh of kings, the flesh of mothers, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and them that sit on them, the flesh of free men and slaves.
7. And if they feed on the flesh of that damned child, then heaven is yours.
8. But if that child draws breath; if the eyes of the antichrist are allowed to take in the light of the world, they shall swallow the light of the world.
9. Then death shall reign again, and endless suffering shall reward those who revel in suffering, and endless regret shall torture the righteous in the immedicable regrets of sin and shame.

Chapter 15

1. And God spoke from the mouth of Ezekiel so that his ears bled, and his teeth cracked, and the seed issued from his inspired loins, and in his words were the blood of Christ.

2. And of this blood was a river, and its sustenance healed the festering wood of the trees that bore the seven nations.
3. By the blood of the lamb, the spider-eyed lamb shall fall forever.
4. And they that remain shall need no light, neither candle nor electric flame, for vision shall be an eternal dawn.
5. Seal not the prophecies of my word but copy them even exact of letter and with every waking moment of they life, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the Prophet, and father, and as shepherd say only this: God will reward you.
6. Be ye filthy, be ye just, bse ye unjust, be ye clothed in shame or in glory, in time God shall fuck ye with it, and so shall be thy reward.
7. We all of us are Alpha and Omega, and Ezekiel the first among all, and ye shall climb the tree of life or be crucified upon it.
8. Only the chosen of God shall find sanctuary within Temple Gate, for without there are whores, and killers, and idolaters, Pharisees, publicans, blasphemers, tax collectors, and tyrants.
9. And the angels say: God turned away from man until the time his son Jesus Christ came to testify unto you.
10. Jesus Christ turned away from man until the time his Prophet Sullivan Knoth came to testify unto you.
11. And every word of the Prophet is true for it is written in this book, and this book is the truth.
12. You shall testify these things, and in you shall be The-book of life, and you shall live in this holy city, and you shall say come quickly, revelations, even in my suffering, even in the death of my children, come Lord God and give me paradise.
13. The Grace of God and his prophet Sullivan Knoth be with you all. Amen.