



## **RELIGION AND MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FAR CRY V GAME AND IN THE REALITY PRESENTED IN WILD WILD COUNTRY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The world of video games has become more creative and attractive to people of different genders, ages and cultures. Games on different platforms and different categories of genres to be played make this market a real source of income for companies in the field and for game creators, as well as a source of entertainment for people. Within this universe, the themes of religion and migration could not be left out, as they are themes that can address historical or fictional facts ready to feed any plot of a video game. And it is in this context that I will address in this article about one of the games in the Far Cry franchise, more specifically, the fifth game in the franchise called Far Cry V, along with a historical event that took place in the 80's in the Oregon desert, USA, in which a utopian city was built by a cult leader known worldwide as Osho<sup>2</sup>, giving rise to a national scandal and its story was recently told to the world through a Netflix series entitled Wild Wild Country. Therefore, the main objective of this work is to discuss the elements of religion and migration both in the context of the game and in the context of the event in Oregon, USA, in the 80's. For a better discussion of the topic, texts by some theorists and scholars in the area of religion and migration will be consulted as Almeida, Flores and Nascimento that will undoubtedly contribute to a better and clearer understanding of the topics covered in this article. These texts that bring the theoretical basis of the religion and migration theme will be used to generate a link between the game Far Cry V and the event in the Oregon desert reported in the Netflix series. The objective of this article is to discuss about topics like religion and migration in games and documentaries and the contribution of this article will be extremely important for scholars of religion, migration, history and culture of peoples, since all these elements will be included in the present work translated as possible reality or fiction, depending on the reader's own critical and reflective reading.

**Keywords:** Games. Religion and migration. Entertainment.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Although there are numerous studies in the area of religion and migration, it is noticeable that the themes of religion and migration, discussed

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<sup>2</sup> Indian philosopher and guru, was born in December 11, 1931 with the baptismal name Chandra Mohan Jain, and soon after becomes known by his followers as Acharya Rajneesh, or Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, to finally change his name to Osho, worldwide known as the Sex Guru. His death is dated January 19, 1990.



or addressed in the context of video games and series on streaming platforms, are little spoken or related, at least here in Brazil, with the theories from both fields, among scholars in the area and as we cannot leave out of our universe of studies, readings, debates and reflections, interesting and researchable topics such as these, I understand that it is necessary to write about these contexts so that there is possibilities for more and more works like this to emerge in the field of Sciences of Religions, more specifically, in areas involving religion and migration. Studies involving religion and migration make room for the insertion of the most diverse contexts, stories or plots, whether fictional or real, as well as the world of video games and this is perhaps one of the greatest assets of these two genres of study, or that is, the power to embrace other themes and address their implications in the contemporary world.

For example, when we talk about migration, according to FLORES (2010), migration is now a phenomenon of mobility and it is in this sense that both the fictional story of the game Far Cry V and the reality lived and documented in Wild Wild Country meet, in constant motion. In other words, these stories fit the phenomenon of mobility, be it for any purpose giving a pretext for migration. Still on the phenomenon of mobility in relation to the migratory field, an article by Gisela Maria Ribeiro de Almeida and Rosana Baeninger reinforces the idea that migration is really a phenomenon of mobility and even more, states that this phenomenon supports society by modifying our ways of living:

We live under the aegis of mobility: estimates indicate that a trillion dollars circulate daily through the world's financial space. Goods, information and people move around the globe in such a way that categories such as space and time are receiving new meanings. Despite greater border control, especially in more developed countries, international flows of people have intensified, as well as types of mobility have also increased (2011, p.2).

So, based on these assumptions, we can clearly understand that the phenomenon goes beyond what is real, going towards the fictional, as for example, the context of the game Far Cry V. So, we can ask ourselves: Why do the characters migrate to certain locations in the game? Are there social and financial impacts in the course of these migrations? Have new meanings of the



world emerged for the player after realizing the phenomenon of migration, even in the world of virtual games? These are interesting questions to debate, since there is no way to dissociate the migration theme from the theme of games like Far Cry V, for example.

The same ideas about mobility apply now, to the real event, reported in the documentary. However, I believe that for a common observer these observations in relation to the migratory movement in the film will be much more noticeable, since there is a narrative detailing the process, while for the game player, the process, even though it is wide open in its front is gradually being built in terms of gameplay and not narrated in its entirety, camouflaging the phenomenon of migration.

Interesting to note is the latent ideological possibility of why to migrate from one place to another, and how to overcome life's difficulties, both in the fictional world of the game and in the reality of the documentary. And in this observation, I find the church, in a sense of something religious and of faith, generally radical, as one of the strong candidates for the question “why migrate” and as a place of support for those who want to migrate. According to Nascimento (2019, p. 4) the subject who emigrates, sees the church as a space that minimizes pain, especially emotional ones.

So far, in this short introduction, we've talked more about migration than religion in the contexts of the game and the documentary, but I emphasize that much stronger to identify are the elements of religion in both realities, such as: myth, symbol, doctrine, rite, moral values, etc.

As mentioned earlier in the abstract, the aim of this article is to move, in fact, the discussion on the theme of religion and migration in the world of games and documentaries. The method approached for the production of this article is conditioned from readings of the various texts cited in the references, from the gameplay of the game and the analysis of the documentary, bringing my conceptions of thought, both within the context of the game and in the documentary. The following chapters will be in the organizational order where



we describe about the game Far Cry V and the documentary Wild Wild Country and their direct or indirect links with the migration theme, video games and the connection with religion and migration and finally the final considerations about of the game and documentary focusing on the study of religion and migration in the field of Sciences of Religions.

Again, I reiterate here my critical position that there is no way to dissociate the elements of religion and migration from the context of the game and the documentary and on this position I will leave the reader, free to criticize, to choose to agree or not on the same.

**THE PRESENCE OF MIGRATORY ELEMENTS IN THE GAME FAR CRY V AND IN THE DOCUMENTARY WILD WILD COUNTRY**

In the game Far Cry V, right at the beginning of the game, the animation shows characters reporting the process of migration and land ownership by the antagonists and their followers and these reports are also seen, this time in a real context and not fictional, in the documentary Wild Wild Country. Such reports are quite similar and bring the same thoughts and theories of migration contexts. Let's see two lines of characters from the game and from the documentary in sequence:

“They started by buying all the farms in the area, then the radio stations. It didn't take long for them to buy until the police p \*.” (Far Cry V)

“They bought the Big Muddy Ranch of about 80,000 acres.” (Wild Wild Country)

Firstly, by playing the game and watching the documentary, it is possible to identify the elements of migration in their meanings and typologies. It is possible to understand, for example, the concept of migration given by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) where the organization says



that migration is the movement of people and populations across the earth's surface. With regard to typology, voluntary migration, external migration, inter-regional migration and even the so-called urban exodus are immediately observed, all of this, in the first minutes of the game and the documentary.

Secondly, we perceive the story of the characters involved as a kind of extraordinary story that something of this nature, that is, this great displacement of people, is too surreal, or that it could never have happened right in front of these people's eyes without realizing it. the final objective in both realities that it was necessary to establish, establish and develop a group that could bring about social changes in those localities.

Finally, in third place, we perceive the change, socially speaking, in the daily life of the people involved, the change in behavior of those who already lived in the place, the insertion of new customs of those who are arriving and the change in the gear or logistics of operation of rules and laws of society, such as bribery of authorities, land extensions purchased and changes in the radio communication process.

In addition to these aforementioned characteristics, arising from migration, we can identify, in both contexts, the causes of these migratory acts, such as, for example, economic and religious causes that, in my view, have an enormous relevance in both stories. And by citing the identifiable economic and religious causes in the contextual process of the game and the documentary, I leave here in this article, what Professor Kelly Thaysy Lopes Nascimento wrote in one of her works entitled *The Brazilian migratory flow in Orlando and the role of Brazilian churches: a research in progress*, as an interesting citation for this moment of reflection of the reading of this chapter that we are discussing. According to Nascimento (2019), the emigrant, subject of the technological revolution, finds the church as the space that minimizes his problems.

Analyzing this assertion, I highlight in the migratory process of the game and the documentary, this search for security under the “wings of religion”,



making a comparison with the church, in addition to the other elements mentioned throughout the text. Such a search is too perceptible to our eyes, to the point of bringing reflections about what happens in the world of religion and migration in relation to what is fact and what is fiction and the possibility that, in the field of migration and religion, there is a connection too great not to be noticed by scholars in the field. Let's see one of the speeches of a character in the game:

“They were different. Religious, militants. It was a wretched sect!”

If we realize, there is a link between the migration issue and the religion in the game, in other words, people migrated to those lands in search of something new related to the faith of each one, which in this case, in that context, would be the religious leader Joseph Seed, a new messiah, the man who would save those people's lives from the destruction of the world.

In the documentary Wild Wild Country, we observe the mass migration of people to the city of Antelope, Oregon (USA) in search of absolute truth, in search of new philosophies of life and even in search of peace under the direction or guidance of the Indian guru Osho. As in the game, the inclusion of migrant people in this new city was also not seen with good eyes and there was resistance from the local population in relation to the new residents of the place. The documentary shows that such resistance has increased on a national level when elements of religion are inserted into the story of this migration. For the American people, in that context, the new philosophy of life suggested by Osho and his followers, such as poly love, among other philosophies, was dangerous.

Even so, amid legal and political fights and internal fights between the very individuals of the migratory movement to Antelope, the migration process was effective and brought thousands of people to the place that they had baptized as a sacred place. In view of the facts, I understand that the religious



interferes with the migratory, specifically in this real context of the documentary.

### **VIDEOGAMES AND THEIR POSSIBILITIES OF INSERTING VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF RELIGION AND MIGRATION**

Consoles, or video games, as they are better known by the general public, bring games in different categories and forms of gameplay and this feature is one of the things that make the theme of religion, for example, become increasingly common. in the gaming world. Gameplay forms, especially when we talk about human-machine interaction, have been one of the assets for the success of great games like the Far Cry franchise, for example. In the article, The video game as a medium of historical representation, Robson Scarassati Bello and José Antonio Vasconcelos state the following:

Electronic games are the result of a historical process of development of socio-technological issues from the cinema and the computer, and their particularity is expressed in their specific relationship between their form and content, that is, between the structures of rules, the audio composition visual, the possibilities of interactivity and the narrative transmitted (2017, p.3).

When researchers speak of form and content, in the quotation above, I think of the word content and place myself, without blinking, in the world of religion and migration, where such a world is constantly used to feed the most diverse plots of video games, thus satisfying the great mass of gamers who like these types of plots that bring religion as a central theme, stories of belief, faith, or stories of mythical beings, heroes or gods. The God of War Franchise<sup>1</sup> is there on the market to prove it. Taking a ride on one of the games in the God of War franchise, we have, for example, the game released in 2018, titled with the same name as the franchise, God of War, which presents us with the story of the god Kratos leaving his land, in Greece, together with his son Atreus, to find rest in Nordic lands. The god, now tired of so much fighting in his homeland, seeks peace in a distant place where he migrated, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Game series created in 2005 for the *PlayStation* console developed by the Santa Monica studio.



instead of peace, the god finds only destruction and war. Now, there was a search for something, in this case, for peace. The search for peace forces a warrior to migrate to a distant and unknown land. Wouldn't it be a coincidence, perhaps with many real stories reported in research and studies of this nature?

Specifically, in the game Far Cry V, the figure of a messiah in the character named Joseph Seed is quite prominent, however, despite being supposedly the savior of those who migrated to Montana<sup>1</sup>, the false messiah uses violence against those who have not been converted to his faith.

In one of the scenes, right at the beginning of the game, there is an interesting dialogue between Joseph Seed and the authorities who were coming to arrest him. In the dialogue, the false messiah quotes words related to the scriptures:

"Here they are! The locusts in our garden...God won't let them take me.

I saw when the lamb opened the first seal and I saw one of the four animals that said with a voice like thunder: Come and see! And I looked, and there before me was a white horse, and hell was with him."

The dialogue, with the characters, inside a church, in a very delicate situation where a revolt of the faithful could be generated in defense of the false messiah and the background music bringing a unique suspense shows us that the marriage between the elements of religion and the world of games, at least in the game Far Cry V, it was a marriage that worked, where the player finds, right from the start, the answers that the game brings to the questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as "the lands of the great skies". City or county where the game's story takes place.





Why did these people migrate? By blind faith in a man who calls himself the savior.

Although we see elements of religion and migration in the world of video games, we realize that there is a kind of neglect on the part of scholars of religion. In the article, *The sacred in videogames*, Luiz Carlos de Lima Pacheco (2016) states:

The relationship between religion and digital games has been and continues to be neglected for four reasons: video games are considered simply as a form of youth entertainment; video games are seen as an artificial and worthless form of expression; the idea that new technologies contribute to the secularization of society; and the virtual worlds of games are seen as unreal. (2016, p.845).

### **FINAL REMARKS**

The fictional world of video games opens doors to other diverse worlds, logics and contexts never imagined before and could not be left out of this world or this universe of games, the themes of religion and migration. As a researcher, I dare to say that religion and migration make up what I would call the flagship for, in terms of themes, leading preference when talking about games preferred by gamers around the world.

There is still a lot to study and consequently take advantage of this object of study, in this case video games, along with studies of religion and migration. There is also an increase in documentaries on streaming platforms about facts that bring religion and migration as the main theme and this is of an interesting nature with regard to the possibilities of studies and dialogues involving these themes.

This short article brings up the possibility of further studies on the aforementioned game and documentary, from the social, political, religious and philosophical perspectives and this is something that, as a researcher, makes me want to study and research more and more about the subject. , since there is still much to learn and much to research.



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