

## Call for Articles

### Gaming and the Humanities: Interdisciplinary Essays on *The Last of Us* (2013–)

In this special collection, we aim to explore the generative potential of gaming for the humanities. Since the 1990s, scholarly traditions of videogame analysis have emerged, effectively underwriting ‘games studies’ as a growing discipline in its own right. But what does gaming have to offer the more traditional or established humanities disciplines, many of which have been slow to develop insights using the unique medium of videogames? How, for example, might the cornerstone of literary studies – close textual analysis – be reprogrammed to respond effectively to the aesthetics of a videogame? What might it mean for scholars of linguistic landscapes to rethink their principles, theories, and assumptions through interactive ludic spaces? That is, how might games stretch, challenge, or even transform the epistemological paradigms of humanities research? And can an interdisciplinary conversation between scholars, focussed on a single game, procure new questions or ideas for the humanities as a whole?

We are delighted to invite article proposals for this special collection of the *Open Library Humanities Journal*, ‘Gaming and the Humanities: Interdisciplinary Essays on *The Last of Us* (2013–)’. Comprising two major games (including several remastered versions and the *Left Behind* DLC), and an HBO series, *The Last of Us* is a popular apocalyptic action-adventure franchise, which has received critical and popular acclaim. Its success speaks to a popular obsession with apocalypse, set against the backdrop of real-world catastrophes like the Covid-19 Pandemic, climate change, and conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine. *The Last of Us* is a rich cultural artefact, not only in its narrative, aesthetic, and ethical complexity, but also in the difficult questions which arise its storytelling, production, and reception. In short, the franchise is ripe for thorough, critical, interdisciplinary interrogation. Using *The Last of Us*, this collection will constitute a collective enterprise in exploring, and taking seriously, the study of gaming in the humanities.

We invite abstracts of **250 words** for articles of **6-8000 words**, inclusive of references. In keeping with the interdisciplinary spirit of this collection, we welcome submissions from a wide range of humanities disciplines. As collective interdisciplinarity is part of the ethos behind the collection, we will hold several ‘work-in-progress’ workshops for contributors. Attendance is not mandatory, but the aim of the sessions will be to share ideas and to help contributors to draw points of connection between one another’s essays. The collection is intended as an assembly point for scholarly reflections on the value of gaming for the humanities.

We welcome topics related – but not limited – to the following:

- History, time, and archaeology in *The Last of Us*
- Law and order
- Sociological studies of *The Last of Us* and its publics
- Ideology critique of the game, its production, and its reception
- Infrastructures and digital spaces
- Narratological perspectives
- Language and semiosis in *The Last of Us*
- Medical humanities (including perspectives on the Cordyceps fungus, other mycological matters, and pandemics)
- Environmental humanities/ecocritical perspectives
- Music and other soundscapes
- The politics of *The Last of Us*
- North American apocalypse and its imaginaries
- Legacies of war and violence
- Identity politics & representation, including topics around gender, sexuality, and/or race

Submissions to this CFP should include:

- Abstract (250 words)
- Author information (short biographical statement of 200 words)

The deadline for the submission of the above is **1<sup>st</sup> May 2024**.

The special collection, edited by Adrienne Mortimer and Kate Spowage, is to be published in the *Open Library of Humanities Journal (OLHJ)* (ISSN 2056-6700). The *OLHJ* is an internationally recognised diamond open access journal with a strong emphasis on quality double-anonymous peer review and a prestigious academic steering board. Unlike some open access publications, the *OLHJ* has no author-facing charges and is instead financially supported by an international consortium of libraries.

In the first instance, submissions of abstracts and biographies should be made to the editors at **[gamingandhumanities@gmail.com](mailto:gamingandhumanities@gmail.com)**. If taken forward, authors will then be asked to draft their research over a period of at least five months, with a view to formally submit their work to the *OLHJ* platform to undergo a double-anonymous peer-review process. Authors will be notified of the outcome of the review process as soon as peer review reports are received.

To learn more about the Open Library of Humanities, please visit:

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