

Prospettive fungine videoludiche: il fungo come agente distruttore e creatore in scenari distopici, horror e post-apocalittici da *The Last of Us* a *In Other Waters*

Giulia Martino

DOI: 10.26379/2040

Abstract

Mushrooms have been perennial agents in the development of the plot, whether in folklore or literature or cinema or even in legal cases. Over the past two decades, scientific advancements in mycology have provided us with new insights into interpreting the influence of mushrooms within diverse ecosystems, viewing them not solely as agents of destruction and decomposition but also as world-makers.

Nevertheless, mainstream media, including video games, largely perpetuate a perspective on fungi primarily rooted in fear. This paper aims to scrutinize the dystopian, horror, and dark fantasy realms depicted in video games such as *The Last of Us*, *Resident Evil 7: Biohazard*, *Resident Evil Village*, and *Elden Ring*, where fungi significantly contribute to crafting atmospheres made of deteriorating landscapes, bodies, and psyches. Subsequently, an analysis will be conducted on *In Other Waters*, a video game that adeptly introduces novel perspectives of symbiotic existence within a damaged world, exploring both narrative and gameplay aspects.