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DGTHUM 187

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### **Annotated Bibliography**

Donnelly, Cormac. “Nightmares and Soundscapes: Implementation of Acoustic Ecology Related Sound Design Techniques to Better Terrify Your Players.” *Designing Sound*, 25 July 2013, [designingsound.org/2013/07/25/nightmares-and-soundscapes-implementation-of-acoustic-ecology-related-sound-design-techniques-to-better-terrify-your-players/](https://designingsound.org/2013/07/25/nightmares-and-soundscapes-implementation-of-acoustic-ecology-related-sound-design-techniques-to-better-terrify-your-players/).

Donnelly discusses using real-world sound behaviors and natural listening environments in horror game design. His ideas support how developers like Naughty Dog build immersive tension through ambient sound. This helps explain why *The Last of Us Part II* feels viscerally terrifying even during quiet, transitional scenes.

Farokhmanesh, Megan. “What Creepy Video Game Sounds Do to Your Brain.” *Wired*, Conde Nast, 7 Feb. 2023, [www.wired.com/story/game-horror-sounds-psychology-dead-space-remake-scorn/](https://www.wired.com/story/game-horror-sounds-psychology-dead-space-remake-scorn/).

Farokhmanesh explores how horror sound design affects the brain. This article gives neuroscience context to why audio causes fear, including why silence can be scarier than loud noises. I reference this to explain how subtle sound cues in *The Last of Us Part II* manipulate player tension without visual prompts.

Grimshaw, Mark Nicholas. “The Audio Uncanny Valley.” *Aalborg University*, 2009, [vbn.aau.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/61573698/audioUncannyValley\\_MG.pdf](https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/61573698/audioUncannyValley_MG.pdf).

Grimshaw introduces the idea of an “audio uncanny valley,” where almost-human sounds become unsettling. This theory helps explain why distorted voices or near-human infected sounds in horror games feel creepy. I use this to show how *The Last of Us Part II* manipulates vocal effects to disturb the player at a subconscious level.

Leamcharaskul, Jade. "What Is Horror Game Music and Its Effect on the Player?" *Medium*, Medium, 23 Nov. 2017, [medium.com/@JDWasabi/what-is-horror-game-music-and-its-effect-on-the-player-c3bfff3bc51d](https://medium.com/@JDWasabi/what-is-horror-game-music-and-its-effect-on-the-player-c3bfff3bc51d).

Leamcharaskul breaks down the psychology behind horror music. She explains how dissonance, tempo, and unexpected cues create anxiety. This source is helpful when discussing how the score in *The Last of Us Part II* ramps up or quiets down to reflect character stress and drive emotional immersion.

Richter, Jon. "Why Sound Design Is Critical in Horror Games." *Game Rant*, 13 Oct. 2021, [gamerant.com/horror-game-sound-design-resident-evil-darkwood/](https://gamerant.com/horror-game-sound-design-resident-evil-darkwood/).

Richter provides a historical overview of horror sound design and emphasizes how fear is mostly created through sound, not visuals. I use this source to connect *The Last of Us Part II* to horror traditions from earlier games like *Resident Evil*. It helps trace the genre's sound evolution over time.

Toprac, Paul, and Ahmed Abdel-Meguid. "Causing fear, suspense, and anxiety using sound design in computer games." *Game Sound Technology and Player Interaction*, pp. 176–191, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-61692-828-5.ch009>.

Toprac and Abdel-Meguid explain how sound design directly affects emotional reactions like fear and suspense. Their study uses an Unreal Engine test level to show how pitch, silence, and timing impact players. This article supports my project by breaking down technical techniques that influence emotional gameplay, especially relevant when analyzing *The Last of Us Part II*'s use of sound.

Walden, Jennifer. "Crafting the Quarry's Cinematic-Style Horror Game Audio - with Adele Cutting." *A Sound Effect*, 22 Aug. 2022, [www.asoundeffect.com/the-quarry-game-audio/](http://www.asoundeffect.com/the-quarry-game-audio/).

This article details how *The Quarry* builds a cinematic horror experience with carefully layered audio. It supports my argument that *The Last of Us Part II* shares a cinematic

horror design that depends on immersive sound cues like breathing, background moans, and distant footsteps to build tension.

Zhang, Ziwen. "Analysis of the Design Aesthetics and Player Emotions Of ..." *University of Skovde*, [www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1677001/FULLTEXT01.pdf](http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1677001/FULLTEXT01.pdf). Accessed 1 June 2025.

Zhang focuses directly on *The Last of Us Part II*, studying how design choices impact emotion. This is central to my project because it confirms how intentional sound design choices trigger fear, panic, and empathy in players. It supports my close analysis of the 19-second gameplay clip involving Abby's escape.