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Trabajo Fin de Grado

From Pixels to Screens: Human Interaction and
Violence in The Last of Us - A Comparative Analysis
of the Video Game and the Television Series.

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Resumen

El presente trabajo de investigación explora la condición humana y la interacción entre personajes en el mundo post-apocalíptico de *The Last of Us*. Al realizar un análisis comparativo entre el muy conocido videojuego y la adaptación televisiva, este análisis muestra diferencias entre la narrativa de ambos y destaca el alcance temático más allá de la mera supervivencia. A través de un análisis de cómo se desarrollan los personajes, de las técnicas de elaboración de la historia y de los elementos temáticos así como el análisis formal de varias escenas, este estudio pretende mostrar cómo los diferentes medios aportan distintas aunque complementarias perspectivas de las complejidades de la naturaleza humana y los lazos que se forjan en tiempos desesperados.

Abstract

This research work is intended to explore the human condition and interaction between characters inside the post-apocalyptic world of *The Last of Us*. By doing a comparative analysis between the widely known video game and the television adaptation, this analysis is intended to show the differences between the narratives and to highlight the thematic range beyond mere survival. Through an analysis of character development, storytelling techniques, and thematic motifs as well as the formal analysis of various scenes, this study aims to show how these two mediums provide different but complementary perspectives of the complexities of human nature and the bonds that emerge in desperate times.

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1. Introduction

Making successful content is supposed to be the aim of every film director. It is in this context that some creators decide to remake something that was indisputably a success. There are many different ways in which an idea can be repeated with this objective, some of them include expanding old successful films and making new ones based on the same idea as in *The Lord of The Rings* (2001) or *Star Wars* (1977), with much content being created today about those same worlds. Another way in which this can be done is by adapting stories from different sources like books or video games. Some examples of this could be *The Hunger Games* (2012) –an undoubtedly successful book adaptation– or *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2001), a successful adaptation of a videogame.

According to Picard and Fandango (2008), the history of video games shifted with the U.S. importation of Japanese gaming consoles from firms like Nintendo and Sega. Due to these consoles' great appeal among consumers, the video game industry in movies has experienced a revival of interest (and profitability). In their work, they analyze to which extent are connected the video games and film industries and discuss some of the adaptations already made by 2008. Regardless of the success of the video games, some of the film adaptations did not reach expectations and were a big failure. It is in this same work that they talk about the power of sales and marketing of popular franchises. They started to create derivative products such as films, series, video games, toys, comics, and so on. As they state,

This aggressive strategy played on consumers' desire for franchises they liked; once the consumption of a franchise begins, one wants logically and emotionally to obtain other products in the franchise, to obtain a complete vision of the whole, both materially and narratively. (Picard & Fandango, 2008, pp.6)

It is logical then that industries will try to achieve more money by repeating the same idea over and over again. It is precisely in video game adaptations that we find a very recent successful series, *The Last of Us* (2022). The video game named *The Last of Us* appeared in 2013, and it is today one of the most successful video games played in the whole world, selling 37 million copies in 9 years. Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann are the creators of the HBO post-apocalyptic fiction series called *The Last of Us*. The series, which is based on the 2013 video game created by Naughty Dog, is set in 2023, 20 years after a pandemic brought on by a widespread fungal illness that turns its people into zombie-like monsters and leads society to crumble. The show centers on Joel (Pedro Pascal), a smuggler charged with accompanying Ellie (Bella Ramsey), a teen with immunity, through a post-apocalyptic United States.

It is Pedro Pascal who acknowledged how the game was still successful with the youngest generations. He claimed in an interview in 2023 on the *Graham Norton Show* for the BBC, that his nephews insisted that he had to make an audition for the role of Joel:

And I said, 'Well, there's this job offer or opportunity that it's based actually on a video game.'

And Bruno and Pedro –are my nephews' names– they're like, 'What is it?' And I was like, it's called 'The Last...' (his nephews) 'THE LAST OF US? You better get that job!'

The series, as well as the video game, has had enormous success. In this essay, I will explore the reasons for this by analyzing different extracts of the series, discussing the differences between the HBO series and the video game, and looking for the common features that made both so likable and enjoyable for its fans. The purpose of this essay is to understand why the series differs from other zombie-themed series and what makes it outstanding. This dissertation paper starts with a brief description of the historical and cultural context of *The Last of Us*, followed by a series of factors that contribute to its success to try to analyze what made it successful from the beginning. The analysis of the series will be divided into two sections, one focusing on the human condition and relationships in an apocalyptic world, and the second

focusing on the morality of the characters. I will use a comparative analysis method to compare the characters, narrative, visuals, and gameplay elements of the video game and the television series, with data collected from watching the television series and videos of the video game, analyzing different interviews, reviews from critics and fans and different essays like Picard's *Video Games and their relationship with other media* (2008) or Le's *How to Create a Successful Video Game* (2022).

2. THE LAST OF US: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE GAME AND THE SHOW

The game's story is heavily influenced by various cultural and historical contexts. It is post-apocalyptic fiction, reminiscent of novels and films such as *The Road* (2006), *I Am Legend* (1954), or *The Walking Dead* (2010). These works, as *The Last of Us* does, explore the collapse of civilization, the breakdown of social norms, and the struggle for survival in harsh conditions. Additionally, the game is set in the United States and includes numerous cultural references to American history and society, incorporating not just the landmarks and symbols of American culture that Joel and Ellie encounter during their journey but also the constant use of weapons that are legally allowed in the United States.

There are several factors that I believe contribute to the success of *The Last of Us*. It is known for having a strong narrative with a compelling story and well-developed characters. The attention to detail in the world-building, as well as the innovative gameplay mechanics that create a sense of realism, are some of the features that set the game apart from others in the same genre. For instance, according to Le "to apply this medical kit, players must crouch down and wrap it around their arm. The game never pauses when gamers enter these situations." (2022). This adds a level of realism and stress to the game, similar to real-life situations. As a GamesRadar article notes:

The Last of Us tells a story that is both heart-wrenching and nuanced, with a cast of well-developed characters that players come to care about deeply over the course of the game. The game's mechanics, from its stealth and combat to its exploration and crafting, are all expertly designed and seamlessly integrated into the overall experience. (Tolito, 2013).

Despite the game's success, the series has achieved similar or even greater success, suggesting they share something exceptional. *The Last of Us* series explores the human condition in various ways, examining themes such as love, loss, grief, and the lengths people will go to survive. The series also raises questions about morality and ethics, and its emotional resonance with viewers requires analysis to understand why it has had such a significant impact.

2.1 HUMAN CONDITION AND RELATIONSHIPS IN AN APOCALYPTIC USA

Throughout the series, we are able to see different relationships between characters that shape the story. As stated above, the emotional resonance that the series has with its viewers it's something worth analyzing. It is through the characters' development that the audience is able to relate to them. One way in which this can be done is by analyzing how characters interact with each other and which situations shape their personalities. For that, I am going to start by analyzing one of the main characters who has one of the greatest character developments of the whole season, Joel, and then I am going to discuss one of the few romantic relationships that appear on the show. In order to see how the series tries to put emphasis on this emotional resonance, I am going to analyze different formal aspects of both the videogame and the series, to see which features they maintained and which one's changed with the purpose of having a greater emotional impact upon the viewer.

2.1.1 JOEL AND SARAH VS. JOEL AND ELLIE

Joel is one of the main characters of both the series and the video game. He is in charge of carrying Ellie through the U.S. to try and find a cure for the disease. Nevertheless, before the whole pandemic started, Joel worked in construction and was the father of Sarah. In the first episode of the series, we are introduced to his beloved daughter and the spectators follow her through her day. Because we follow her, we are made to believe that she is one of the main characters, so we naively assume that her character is not going to die (at least not so soon). This is one of the factors that surprise the viewer and it is here when we start to empathize with Joel since we feel the same betrayal that he does.

It is in this first chapter that the audience can observe how the series maintains its similarities with the video game. Apart from the storyline which is pretty much the same as in both mediums (with minimal changes), the way in which it is filmed also reminds us of the video game. This similarity could be one of the factors, apart from the way in which the series appeal to our feelings, that contribute to its success. To analyze that, there is a scene in the first chapter where we can see Joel, his brother Tommy and Sarah in a car, trying to escape from the infected people in their neighborhood (from minute 24.06 to 28.38 in the first chapter). This scene is filmed with the purpose of creating the sense that we are in fact playing a videogame. To achieve this, there are elements that contribute to this feeling.

The first segment of the video game is set in Austin, where Joel and his daughter Sarah are attempting to flee the city around the time of the Cordyceps fungus's initial spread. Joel is controlled by the player as he makes his way through the city's streets while dodging infected and looking for a way out. The player controls the camera, which is primarily in the third person. The character development that the adaptation shows is very similar to the one the video game shows. However, as television has more limited time than video games, the relationship between Joel and Sarah is not as developed as in the video game. Nevertheless, the job is pretty well done and the audience is soon attached to Sarah since they quickly introduce the type of father-daughter relationship that they have. In order to

compensate for the lack of time, we follow her through this first part of the chapter so that the audience has time to familiarize themselves with her.

The sequence with Joel, Sarah, and Tommy trying to flee the city tries to convey the same sense of urgency and tension as the video game despite the fixed camera and lack of control from the viewer over the action. With Joel and his daughter Sarah attempting to flee the city during the outbreak, the television series keeps loyal to the basic plot of the video game. Both the game and the series represent the events leading up to the vehicle pursuit in a similar way.

The player controls the camera in the video game, enabling them to gaze about and explore the area in any direction. The television show's fixed camera only allows the audience to see the characters from the perspective of the car. The show's use of close-ups and quick cuts, however, imbues the action with a sense of urgency and tension which is pretty similar to the one in the video game. Regarding visuals and graphics, the video game has better graphics and attention to detail than the television adaptation since it has more realistic environments and a higher level of visual authenticity. Nevertheless, the show uses desaturated colors and a gritty, realistic tone to convey the same post-apocalyptic mood and style as the video game.



Figure 1: Joel, Tommy and Sarah try to leave the city (In game)



Figure 2: Episode 1 "When You're Lost in the Darkness"

Overall, the TV show does a decent job of portraying the same sense of urgency and anxiety as the video game, despite some changes between the video game and the TV program's adaptation of the first chapter of *The Last of Us*. Close-ups and quick cuts are used to mimic the video game's atmosphere, but the fixed camera restricts the viewer's point of view and level of immersion.

This is just one of the examples that we are able to see throughout the whole television adaptation where we have the sense that we are in fact immersed in a video game, which I think contributes to the success of the television series. Soon after the car pursuit scene, Joel and Sarah encounter a soldier that is compelled to kill them, since in all that chaos the fear of possible infection is greater than the survival of possible infected people. Here is the first time where we are able to see the war between moral correctness and the instinct of survival. The soldier succeeds in killing Sarah and her death changes and shapes completely Joel's personality, which we are going to analyze by looking at the relationship he develops with Ellie.

The show goes twenty years forward in time, where we find the lead characters leaving in a quarantine zone in a totalitarian society based on military force. Ellie is a teenager of fourteen who was born after the pandemic started. Thus, she has no memories

of a pre-pandemic world and society. Because of this, we can see how she has the character of a mature person since she has not experienced what we consider a 'normal' childhood. The relationship between Ellie and Joel is tense at the beginning. Both have trust issues and the first episode helps us to understand the emotional impact that Joel is going to suffer due to the task of being in charge of a teenager the same age as her daughter when she died. "It is crucial to understand the cynical survivalist state that Joel is in at the start and just what Ellie represents to him his past failure and trauma" (Le, 2022, p.27).

The development of the relationship between Joel and Ellie is slow but steady. She has the innocence that belongs to someone of her age but curses like an adult and is obsessed with being able to use a gun. On the other hand, she likes reading comics from before the pandemic and likes to carry a book of bad jokes to entertain herself. These characteristics make it easier for Joel to start to like her. Throughout the whole first season, they develop a father-daughter type of relationship that helps Joel finally accept her daughter's death and to start to forgive himself for not being able to save her. Because of this, he feels now responsible for Ellie's life and it is in the last chapter of the first season when he has to make a huge decision; letting Ellie die with the general belief that they will find a vaccine for the rest of the human race, or save her and try to find another solution.

2.1.2 FRANK AND BILL

One of the chapters that surprised fans of the video game is Chapter 3. In this chapter, we do not follow Joel and Ellie but we are presented with a love story between Frank (Murray Bartlett) and Bill (Nick Offerman), two men that fell in love a couple of years after the pandemic started. In the video game, this love story is not fully developed, it is just mentioned and the player can make assumptions about their type of relationship. The series decides to study in more detail their relationship and explain how they fell in love and how their relationship was before their death. According to Nic Sam 'Happy endings are exceedingly rare in apocalyptic storytelling, particularly in "*The Last of Us*.'" But giving one to

Bill and Frank, whose story ends in unresolved tragedy in the game, shows yet another side of life after the apocalypse' (Andrew, 2023).

After having watched the first two episodes of the series, the audience has the same trust issues as Bill. Bill has been preparing his whole life for an apocalypse like this and has all the resources that will help him to survive. Moreover, the whole area of his house is surrounded by traps to kill not just infected people but anyone that tries to enter his property. This changes when Frank falls into one of his traps. Bill doubts between letting him die or helping him. The audience has the same problem since in the first two chapters it is clear how trust (in that context) can get you killed. Nevertheless, Bill decides to give Frank a chance and soon (with the help of time lapses where we see how their relationship develops) it is clear that Frank is a trustworthy person. Their relationship is from the beginning a love relationship and they have the most common possible life in a context in which a peaceful love relationship and maintaining a 'normal' life is inconceivable. It is a relief to have this chapter, where the focus is not on survival or violence but on other aspects that would be possible in an apocalypse and are rarely seen on television. 'I thought it was a beautiful snapshot of what 20 years in the pandemic could have looked like for some people,' said the streamer Valerie Anne (Andrew, 2023).

The show seeks to demonstrate how the right company could change your life. This chapter begins by illustrating how lonely Bill is, and there are instances where this is made clearly evident. For example, before meeting Frank, we see Bill eating alone (minute 20.54). This shot is remarkable since it instills the feeling that something is missing. The lighting is dark since there are just two small lights that provide illumination, which makes the atmosphere somber and cheerless. The prompts are very informative and particular. While we later see Bill and Frank eating at a big table, in this sequence, Bill is eating alone in a small one, and the fact that there are two chairs (one of them empty) fosters the idea that Bill is utterly alone. However, there is an impressive change in the atmosphere when they meet. Later in the chapter when they eat together (minute 28), as stated above, they eat at a much bigger table, and even if it creates the sense that they are still emotionally apart, the

atmosphere differs completely. Although we still see two small artificial lights as in the previous scene, there are accompanied by open windows that provide natural light and make this scene less gloomy.



Figure 3: Episode 3 'The Outskirts', Bill eating alone.



Figure 4: Episode 3 'The Outskirts', Bill and Frank eating together.

Showing their relationship in the series is one of the greatest examples of how human interaction is the source of happiness (at least in their case). They are two people that, before the pandemic, would likely have never met. But they did, fell in love, and decided to die together after spending twenty years living almost a 'normal' life. After seeing the new society and the relationships based on fear and violence that appear in that dystopian world, the relationship between Frank and Bill, as well as the one Joel and Ellie share, the bonds that they develop, and the trust that they have in each other are some of the aspects that make the audience believe that humankind has still some goodness in them. They do not just provide faith in the future of the human condition but are a glimpse of how relationships could develop with or without the pandemic.

2.2 VIOLENCE, SURVIVAL, AND MORALLY GREY CHARACTERS

In a context where survival is the main priority and where violence is the only mean presented to achieve this, it is clear that morally grey characters will appear doing whatever it takes to stay alive. There are different ways to define what a morally grey character is. According to Urban Dictionary (2018), 'Morally gray is a character who does too much bad to be a good character, yet too much good to be a bad character. A character who is in between good and bad.'. Other sources talk about moral ambiguity, where some may interpret the same acts as good or as bad, depending on different factors such as context and characters. Thus, there is uncertainty about if their acts can be categorized as right or wrong.

Klimmt, Schmid, Nosper, Hartmann, & Vorderer (2006) argue that there are different strategies used by video game players that serve as 'excuses' for violent acts. Among them, we can find mechanisms like providing the characters moral justification for their actions where their purpose is worth the violence; dehumanizing the victims so that the violent act seems less striking; or attributing the victims' blame, believing that they deserve that kind of treatment.

In *The Last of Us* series, every character makes use of violence as a means of survival. We are presented with different morally grey characters who I am going to analyze; Henry, Bill, and Joel.

Henry's character (Brandon Scott) appears in chapter 5 of the HBO series. He is trying to escape from the revolutionaries with his little brother Sam (Keivonn Woodard). Throughout the chapter, the audience discovers why they are running from them. Henry was the reason the rebels' leader was killed, whom he describes as a 'good person'. The reason for this was that Sam had leukemia and the only way to achieve medicine for him was to betray the rebels in exchange for the medicine. Henry describes himself as a bad man who did bad things for the person he most loves, his brother. Because the reason for his crime is

the well-being of his little brother the audience provides moral justification for his acts. The purpose of it was somewhat 'pure' and it is easy to feel identified with him. Is one of your relatives, the only one you have in the entire world, worth the life of other people? The audience, directly or indirectly, is stricken with this moral question. The use of violence for one's and one's beloved survival is constantly used in the show and the audience has to distinguish between good and evil people, where just considering their acts is not enough without the context behind them. The line separating a good person from a bad one becomes very thin, and the characters' morality becomes neither white nor black, but grey. During an exclusive interview with Screen Rant, Neil Druckmann said the following:

Because I love the idea that there aren't just good guys and bad guys. Everybody's trying to survive; everybody trying to live life to the fullest way they can. But often, the goals are competing with each other. And that's where the interesting things happen, and the different philosophies of how to survive or do the ends justify the means, speak to what the story is really about in new ways than we did in the game. (Tyrrel, 2023).

The character's morality is better explored in the HBO series since the story is not restrained by gameplay as in the game. In the game, the player follows Joel and sometimes Ellie, in the television series there is the chance to explore the rest of the characters more deeply, giving the audience different perspectives not shown previously in the game. Because of this, the series has a greater emotional impact than the video game. This chance of exploring new perspectives is shown with Kathleen (Melanie Lynskey), the sister of the man Henry got killed and the new leader of the rebels. As the episode goes by, we get to know more about her and her loss. The way in which each character deals with problems is very different and shapes their personalities and actions all the time. As Craig Mazing (co-creator of the series) said, 'Kathleen is driven to inhumanity because of her loss' (Simons, 2023). While the introduction of this new character who never appeared in the video game was intended to provide more moral ambiguity, she indeed served as an antagonist to Joel and Ellie so when

they have to decide to use violence against the revolutionaries, the audience is not troubled. According to Joshua St. Clair (2023), 'By introducing Kathleen, the show is ironically marching closer to binaries (right and wrong) than the relativism they likely want her character to reflect'. And while this can be true, the different view that Kathleen's perspective gives to the audience is very interesting to analyze and something not seen before in the video game.

In the case of Bill, I have previously mentioned how he had his home surrounded by traps (one of them being the one in which Frank fell). The need to protect one's belongings and one's own home is strong in Bill's character and because of this, some of the traps were mortal, not just for infected people but for anyone surpassing them. We are not shown if more non-infected people fell into his traps but if Frank did we can only assume that more people could have faced the same destiny. We do not know if someone else fell into these traps or if they died in them. Assuming that it was the case, we also do not know if Bill and Frank approved those deaths in order to maintain their happiness and tranquil lives. By giving the audience just some character's points of view, and maintaining others as unknown, we are conditioned to be on the side of the characters that we are familiar with.

Because of having the possibility of getting to know Bill, his perspective is clear to the audience and he is not considered to be a bad person. There is a particular scene where some raiders try to enter the city to steal their resources. With his rifle, Bill succeeds in killing most of them, the rest (as he assures Frank) will die in the traps. The lack of perspective in this scene plays an important part, someone may believe that they were in their full right to kill the trespassers but we do not know the real intention these people had. They could have required aid, or starved to death. The lack of perspective and context is in favor of Bill, while in reality what he had committed could be considered a massacre. It is easy to attribute the victim's blame since they were in fact invading other's property. It is easier to dehumanize them since we do not know them and we could not even name one of them. The struggle to categorize Bill's acts as good or evil, and the fact that we follow his perspective through the episode, turns him into one more example of a morally grey character.

As a smuggler, Joel has had to fight infected people since the beginning of the pandemic. Even though we are not sure if those people are capable of coming back to their previous selves, we understand that Joel has no other options to survive since they are considered the biggest threat. It is in the last chapter that we are stricken with one of the worst carnages of the whole series. Throughout the series, the relationship between Joel and Ellie develops to the point where they had some kind of father-daughter relationship. When the possibility of achieving a cure arises but the price is Ellie's life, the moral question of if humankind is worth saving emerges. Joel has already lost one daughter and he is not prepared to let another die. Moreover, he kills a huge amount of people that are trying to survive and end the pandemic with the only purpose of saving one life, Ellie's. Since the audience follows these two characters throughout the whole series, we do not consider Joel a villain but a savior. If we had been following some of the victims' lives, Joel would not be considered a hero since he prioritizes one life over the rest of them. It is because of the bond they have developed and the love they have for each other that the audience is capable of understanding the use of violence and feel identified with him. In this case, Joel prefers living with guilt to living without Ellie and he chooses to lie to Ellie and bear alone the guilt of the murder of those people. He is very aware of what he has done but he is also protecting Ellie for bearing that guilt. The audience can understand and feel identified with Joel, while at the same time being aware of the many people he had killed. Morality becomes very ambiguous and while we might understand Joel's perspective, it is very difficult to justify his acts. Thus, it is reinforced how human relationships are the source of happiness and faith while at the same time, violence is the origin of despair and salvation.

The pursuit of one's desires and the choices these characters have to make turns them undoubtedly as morally grey characters. Apart from this, they also become more realistic and easier to feel identified with. Humankind is driven by feelings, it is very difficult for a normal person to make always the right choice and to put the happiness of others upon themselves. 'Human beings are flawed. We struggle with pain and sometimes the confusion of not knowing what is right. Real humans rarely act inconceivably evil or wholly in pursuit of

the greater good.’ (Peng, 2022). The characters mentioned above fight for their and their beloved survival. Violence, as previously stated, is both the source and the solution to their struggles. In a context in which violence is the means to survival, love and emotional connection are what make these characters fight for a better future and it is in that fight that the line between good and evil inevitably blurs.

3. CONCLUSION

This essay has explored the intention behind the creation of both *The Last of Us* videogame and the HBO show, focusing on the changes made between them to emphasize character development in the last of them.

As has been argued, there are some characteristics of the game that the show has maintained, that create a unique atmosphere where the audience can feel as if they were completely immersed in it. Nevertheless, it is in the differences between them that our attention should be on. As stated above, this is not a story focused on the fight between humanity and survival, but a story focused on the loss of humanity in the non-infected humans.

By comparing the HBO show with the videogame we can argue how even if the message is the same, changes are made to emphasize human interactions. We are presented with a world surrounded by violence, where violence is a tool for repression and also the only mean to survival. In a world in which such characteristics are the basis of each possible human interaction, it is clear that the morality of them is going to evolve into something abstract, where many of them cannot be categorized as good or evil but as morally grey characters that sometimes make what we consider ‘bad’ things in order to survive. With the purpose of emphasizing these ideas, I have analyzed some formal aspects of the television series, which are used in different ways to emphasize the fact that the focus of the series is placed on human interaction and not just on survival. The magnificent use of

props, lighting, camera angles and movement, and the addition of completely new scenes and characters are essential tools that the creators of the series use that plays an important role in the understanding of the whole series.

As stated above, we have seen how human interaction is also the reason for people to move on. The relationship between Joel and Ellie or Frank and Bill are some of the examples we can find in the story that makes the characters want to live and gives them faith in humanity.

That being said, human interaction in this apocalyptic world is both the source of despair and peace for characters. The distrust humans have towards their specie is so vivid in the show that it causes even more fear and concern than the pandemic itself. Because of this, the moral question of if it is worth saving the entire specie is constantly present and as the characters start to question this, the audience is also troubled with this question.

This opens the debate about if humans are worth it or not, but what both characters and us as an audience can be sure about is that there are people worth saving. Love, friendship, and family are the emotions that push characters toward survival and the show makes an excellent job adapting these previously seen facts of the videogame and emphasizing them through outstanding actors. They are in charge of showing us how in a world surrounded by violence, where survival and one's own good are the basics of human interaction and no one is evil but just a character with grey morality, it is possible to create bonds between them and through them restore faith in a better future.

While the first season of the series conveys perfectly these ideas, the rest of the video game is yet to be adapted. While I do not know if the second season will change my perspective of the series, I do know that it will still maintain its essence and that the relevance will still be placed upon the human condition and personal interrelationships. The unresolved question of whether humanity deserves salvation remains, and the answer is yet to be determined.

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