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Citation: Smith, J. (2024). "I must be beautiful": becoming human through adaptive vocal soundscapes. In: Galloway, K. & Hambleton, E. (Eds.), Music and Sonic Environments in Video Games Listening to and Performing Ludic Soundscapes. Routledge Music and Screen Media Series. . Routledge. ISBN 9781032230320

This is the accepted version of the paper.

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“I MUST BE BEAUTIFUL!”: Becoming Human Through Adaptive Vocal Soundscapes.

Introduction

Voices can be considered human. Vocality, vocalisations, and speech can help in forming a sense of personal identity or decoding a speaker's vocal parameters. Communication through vocalisations, however, adapts between time, space, and people, through differences in lived experience and identity which are not interchangeable, as discussed by scholars such as Katherine Meizel:

[...] vocality as both an embodied act and a constructive process—as a way of singing inscribed and reinscribed with the lived experience of vocal sounds (linguistic and extralinguistic), practices, techniques, and meanings that factor into the making of culture and identity, and in the negotiation of power. Multivocality, then, denotes the performance of many such ways of singing, and highlights the breadth and depth of vocal intersubjectivity.¹

Meizel's discussion of vocality notes the lack of interchangeability between lived experiences, especially in singing style, as vocality is a powerful identifier and very personal organic trait. Where vocality focuses solely on vocalisations of people within their lived experience within one space, Meizel describes multivocality as singing and singers that have adapted between borders of identity, such as race, nationality, gender, and religion.²³ Movement between borders and spaces, gender, religion, and many other human elements highlights our adaptability as beings; our adaptability and ability to consciously change our identities engages with trans studies.

Amongst this human adaptability is the ability of play and imagination. William Cheng discusses humanisms through the act of play by describing that 'organic and animistic metaphors—as semantic exercises in make-believe—are, so to speak, the heart and soul of humanist inquiry.'⁴ Cheng also highlights the humanistic mirror that music provides when given agency, especially when prescribing music with metaphor, narrative, and emotional functions.⁵ When applied voices and music provide a narrative to audiences they can enhance the make-believe, or play, that players engage with during games. Meaning in music itself can invoke meaning and emotion but can also incorporate voice as a space for identity. We see parallels between our own human nature of adaptation, multivocality, and play amongst the ever evolving, and increasingly vocal, mechanical entities of *NieR: Automata*.

*NieR: Automata*⁶ is an action-role playing game (RPG), from the Drakengard series, which exists within the same universe as the game's predecessor, *NieR*,⁷ a 2010 cult classic video game that included a successful soundtrack and a provocative narrative. In *NieR: Automata*, the player is

¹ Katherine Meizel, *Multivocality: Singing on the Borders of Identity* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2020), 11, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190621469.001.0001>.

² Meizel, 12.

³ Meizel's examination of this term however is a developed concept from Mikhail Bakhtin who identifies that 'all utterances contain traces of multiple languages (heteroglossia) and multiple voices (polyphony)'; the problematic nature of Bakhtin's 20th century analysis is the assumption that languages are not naturally multilingual or affected by colonialism. Meizel's concept of multivocality implies the concept of intersubjectivity of humans through voices and singing and thus improved Bakhtin's original terminology.

⁴ William Cheng, *Sound Play: Video Games and the Musical Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 10.

⁵ Cheng, 10.

⁶ Platinum Games, *NieR: Automata*, Tokyo: Square Enix (PlayStation 4, Microsoft Windows, Xbox One, 2017).

⁷ Cavia, *NieR*, Square Enix (PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, 2010).

provided three playable characters to navigate the post-apocalyptic environment and narrative: 2B, 9S, and A2. The original goal of the player in this sci-fi RPG, and the game narrative, is to embody 2B as a character, with 9S as a non-playable member of the team and reclaim the earth which has been ravaged and taken over by alien machines for the humans who have escaped earth and live on the moon. The android military, YoRHa, have been tasked by humans to reclaim earth from the machines, that still reside there after thousands of years, so humans may repopulate the planet. Vocalisations and singing are important to the world of *NieR: Automata* and use Meizel's definition of multivocality to identify and enhance the human versus machine narrative throughout the game. However, although the narrative includes human salvation, one of the main narratives is the evolution of machines into their sentient and humanistic nature during their time on earth. For this evolution, singer Emi Evans created a language for the series, named Chaos language, that is used within the non-diegetic music of the world, and which incorporates various vocal sounds and structures from current languages, as described by Clara Hertzog:

Perhaps one of its most unique details was the made-up lyrics Emi created, suitably named "Chaos Language", invented to sound as if our modern languages had drifted away for thousands of years to finally become indistinguishable to us. "The reason we went for this mysterious made-up language is because we felt that as game music, having lyrics which you can recognize and understand might distract you from the gameplay," explained Yoko Taro, the game's director.⁸

Chaos language acts as an identifier of post-humanisms through multivocality in the worlds of the NieR games. The machines of *NieR: Automata* are multivocal, however, speaking Chaos in the non-diegetic space and English diegetically (or Japanese depending on the localisation of the game), after adapting their identity of mindless machine soldiers to the sentient inhabitants of the earth; the androids have bases on earth but mostly reside on a lunar base. What it means to be human, and sentient, is one of the core battles between androids and machines, a battle which is both physical through combat and mental through a denial of machine voices by androids. Rachelle Chadwick discusses the post-humanistic qualities of the voice that rebuffs this denial, suggesting that 'voices are living movements, relational enactments and entanglements of physiological, semiotic, more-than-human, affective, material, historical and geophysical vibrations, resonances, and (colonial, racialized, gendered) atmospheres and sediments'⁹. Chadwick's focus of voices as 'living moments' questions the argument that machines are not humanistic in any way because they have been created for the purpose of destroying humans.¹⁰

NieR: Automata begins with the player character android 2B, and an infiltration team, accessing a machine factory in order to find and destroy a goliath machine, which results in the team's death along with 2B and 9S. In this mission, the player is introduced to 9S as a backup to 2B, who cannot contain his joy of being paired with 2B. 2B is quick to reprimand 9S' emotions, who then in-turn convinces 2B that the diegetic dialogue heard within the factory is just an old system "accessing

⁸ Clara Hertzog, "NieR Replicant Singer Emi Evans Talks Music, Chaos Language, and More," *Playstation Blog*, December 18, 2020, <https://blog.playstation.com/2020/12/18/nier-replicant-singer-emi-evans-talks-music-chaos-language-and-more/>.

⁹ Rachelle Chadwick, "Methodologies of Voice: Towards Posthuman Voice Analytics," *Methods in Psychology* 2 (November 1, 2020): 100021, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.metip.2020.100021>.

¹⁰ Sentience in machines is not restricted to *NieR: Automata*, or video games. There are various mediums and literature that incorporate narratives of non-sentient machines becoming sentient and developing free will, or always being sentient but organic beings not understanding this: *I, Robot*, *Xenoblade Chronicles*, *Mass Effect 3*.

random nonsensical data from the old world” and that “there’s no actual meaning behind anything machines do.” Between themselves, 2B and 9S attempt to deny human behaviours within themselves and machines. These machines, however, were created on earth by aliens in the year 5012 AD and remain the sole occupants of earth in 11,945 AD after destroying their alien masters and driving humans to the moon. The machine’s time spent on earth is not insignificant, and within this time have developed language, identity, community, play, and body adaptability in a post-human world. In this paper, I will discuss how voices in the adaptive environmental soundscapes affect the identity of both machines and androids, and specifically create post-human voices for the machines in a game world narrative that tries to deny their sentient and adaptive existence.

The Soundscapes of *NieR: Automata*

Adaptivity in the soundscape of *NieR: Automata* is a function which highlights humanity through non-diegetic singing voices throughout various playthroughs. The longer the player spends in each environment within the open world space, the more of the non-diegetic singing voice is heard. These voices, however, are not just introduced to identify the plight of humanity but the evolution of sentience and humanity within the machine lifeforms. This is not entirely obvious to the player within the first few hours of play, and the first playthrough. It is within the combined experience of the player between multiple playthroughs as different characters that starts to contextualise these voices. When contextualised, the non-diegetic singing can be seen as Sarah Kozloff’s explanation of a voice-over narration, a voice from a body that cannot be seen on-screen and that offer narrative insights to the audience.¹¹

The soundscapes of *NieR: Automata* aid the development of narrative throughout playthroughs by incorporating unique environmental spaces. In a state of constant death and rebirth for 9S and 2B, with the game providing various narrative and non-narrative ends for the player characters (one death for each letter of the alphabet), the environments are a source of consistency. On earth, there are several locations that develop a sonic and visual profile, such as the abandoned factory and machine village. The most human lifeforms (outside of physical appearance) are seen within the machine village, known as Pascal’s village. When the player first comes across Pascal’s village, they are met with white flag waving. Pascal’s village is one of many spaces in which machines do not attack the player, unless provoked, including the Amusement Park. The non-diegetic cue that identifies this safe space for machines and androids alike is contextualised through a child-like song. The song uses Chaos language and several child voices that sing the playful song with disjunct lyrics alongside a marimba, classical guitar, and synthesised robot voices. The combination of the rhythm and instruments of the song characterises the innocence of the space and the child-like humanisms that the machines have adopted in the village.

There are four key environments, however, that uses adaptivity in the soundscape to stand apart as humanistic spaces: city ruins, desert, amusement park, and forest. The player can explore each earth environment in their own timeframe, after the space is unlocked through gameplay, as they have access to fast travel systems. The use of fast travelling across environments makes it important to highlight each space aurally and visually for a quick understanding of where the player character is; without key identifiers, it might take the player longer to understand exactly where in the environment they have been placed and if danger lurks nearby. These identifying features, however,

¹¹ Sarah Kozloff, *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-over Narration in American Fiction Film* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1988), 2–3.

adapt as the player becomes more accustomed to the environments and spends time in these spaces. Each of the four environments has a quiet, medium, and dynamic version of the non-diegetic musical cue, each with or without voices. The quiet cue is generally heard when the player first enters the environment and introduces the ambient sounds of the environment. The medium cue is introduced within the centre of the environment which introduces percussion and melody, and the dynamic theme is the cue entirely (usually heard towards the end of the environment's narrative or deep within the space) and introduces a full musical texture and counter melodies.

Before analysing any of these environments in greater detail, it is worth understanding the key differences between the soundscape of earth and the android lunar base. After the player characters are destroyed in the prologue, the game restarts the player on an orbiting space station where all androids are situated; due to the player characters being androids, they can be rebuilt with past memories if they have uploaded their data to the system known as the "Bunker". The soundscape of this space is almost alien in itself as the music includes diegetic chip computer sounds and dialogue voices, alongside the female voice of the commander and other operators. The non-diegetic cue in this space includes relaxed synthesizers and female sung voices that express short vocalisations, rather than a melody. The space station soundscape does adapt in this time and feels stagnant within both audio and visuals. This lack of adaptivity almost highlights the focus on these androids as non-human, as they do not age and thus their role of destroying machines on earth has no immediate time limit. Whereas the space station feels static in its movement, earth has a natural sense of movement and time. The existence of machines, androids, and animals (including birds, boars, and moose) on earth creates a naturalistic world alongside post-apocalyptic ruins. Naturalism is also prevalent in the colour palettes and visuals of earth. Whereas the space station engages with black, grey, and white colour palettes to focus on a mechanical feeling of order and non-necessity of colour, the earth denies this order. Earth's space includes foliage, trees, waterfalls, and broken buildings. The abundance of life engages with diverse colours outside of a grey palette, including blues and greens, that portray the natural environment in which the order of the androids is dissolved. Where this order is dissolved, so too are the constraints of the soundscape. The female voices heard in the non-diegetic cue in the space station are released and carry melodies in the musical cues. These cues themselves are adaptive and evolving, growing as the player and their characters engage with the natural world and the beings that they meet there.

Voices as Humanisms

Within the adaptive natural soundscapes of the game, the player hears various moments in which machines cry for help, plead for androids to stay away, or use humanistic emotional language. The desert is one of the first environments that the player encounters (after the city ruin in which YorHa has a base) and begins to hear and see machine humanisms. The desert introduces the player to the contained narratives within each environment, a continuation of spaces and developing narrative. An environmental narrative will introduce to the player to the space, allow them to explore the open-world area and fight enemies, before tailoring the experience to a specific area within the environment such as an apartment complex or ruins; for example, the desert is initially an open vast desert environment which becomes an apartment complex with various paths but a general linearity that forces the player towards the boss fight of the area. During the initial open-world area of the desert, the quiet variant of the soundscape is cued. The quiet ambiance of the desert provides no driving melody to push the player towards their goal but engages with a sonic representation of space. In this space however, the player is attacked by machines in human clothing but 9S denies that machines are human or have feelings and emotions in any way, especially when 2B reacts; 9S

says “2B, it’s fine. Their speech doesn’t mean anything”. 9S engages with problematic human responses to beings and actions he does not understand, gaslighting by suggesting “If they [machines] wanted help, why would they be attacking us?”.

As the player moves towards the apartment complex, the second desert area, the medium variant is cued with voices. The use of the voice here does not necessarily determine the amount of time the player has spent in this area. On the contrary, the first time the player enters the apartment complex the vocal medium variant is cued for narrative purposes, whereas if the player returns here later in the game, they may not hear the narrative voice, just the medium cue. This scripted voice highlights one of the player’s first engagements with ruined human colonies and is combined with machine dialogue and 9S’ continual denial of machine emotion. The emotional vocality of singer J’Nique Nicole, and mournful nature of the voice, creates a sense of loss within this space that humans used to inhabit as the player views the destruction.

As the player moves through the apartment complex and towards the boss fight arena, the dynamic variant is cued to provide narrative non-diegetic build-up and weight to the environment. In the boss arena, the characters are introduced to a bizarre but humanistic ritual in which machines are wearing human clothes and pretending to procreate and look after children, Figure 1.



Figure 1: A “stubby” style machine dressed in human clothing and looking after a “child” in an empty basket. Screenshot by Author.

These machines are attempting to become human through a very natural and condensed identity of reproduction. The reaction of the player characters to this, very human sight, is confusion by 2B and a response from 9S saying “They don’t have any feelings.”, “They’re just imitating human speech.”, and “Let’s take them out.” The player does not have a time limit on when they should “take them out”, but neither can they be passive if wanting to progress the narrative in this area. The non-diegetic cue here is dynamic without vocals until the player takes up 2B’s decision to attack. When attacking these peaceful machines however, who have not attacked the androids in this space, the voice of J’Nique Nicole returns singing the same cue heard within the apartment complex. The vocal cue takes on a new meaning in this space with the actions of 2B, 9S, and the player. The mournful voice appears to highlight the massacre against peaceful machines, a human action itself that

emphasises the direct relationship between the androids and humans. The gaslighting of 9S and the pointless massacre, with the non-diegetic vocalisations over machine dialogue and sounds of combat, changes the conception of voices from that of pro-human to pro-machine. Emi Evans discusses their creation of this language that converts modern language words and sounds into emotional pieces:

二つ目の『NieR:Automata』（ニーア・オートマタ）のときには、わりと自由にできたので、曲の音源だけをもらって、私の方から「こういう雰囲気言葉、国の言葉がいいと思う」と言って、それを調べていくということもできました。たとえば、すごい切ない曲では、その切なさを表現できる、美しい切ない言葉は何だろうと調べたりして。

At the time of the second "NieR: Automata", I was able to do it freely, so I got only the sound source of the song and said from me, "I like the language of this atmosphere, the language of the country." I was also able to investigate it. For example, in a very sad song, I searched for beautiful sad words that could express that sadness.¹²

Evans' Chaos language shifts the perception of machines as non-human to post-human, especially as they have some human characterisations given through the non-diegetic score. The music's movement between a pro-human and pro-machine narrative is subtle through these voices in the non-diegetic space. The non-diegetic voices in Chaos language not only suggest the sentience of the machines but actively encourages an engagement with their evolution and post-humanity as they create two machines at the end of this massacre, named Adam and Eve. When 2B and 9S kill enough machines, the machines react by forming to create an ad hoc factory that births Adam, who is made in the form of a human, unlike regular machines as seen in Figure 1. The player is attacked by Adam, likely in response to the player's massacre of the machines, and as the player stabs Adam, seemingly fatally, through the chest the younger brother Eve is born from the wound. The parallels between the western Christian religious theory of Adam and Eve from the Bible's Old Testament are retold here in *NieR: Automata*. Not only are the creation of the two characters mythical and not completely comprehensible, both Adam and Eve are born naked and choose later to address their nakedness by adopting human clothing; the build of music towards this specifically human narrative takes on a new meaning. J'Nique Nicole's mournful non-diegetic voice itself could also be considered as sacred, rather than secular as it characterises the birth of religious myths.

"I MUST BE BEAUTIFUL!"

One of the most poignant vocal pieces in the game is the boss fight of the amusement park, an enormous opera singer named Simone (or Beauvoir in some international releases). Simone attacks the player physically and sonically, whilst the player is aurally attacked by two singers in the non-diegetic space, Emi Evans in verses followed by J'Nique Nicole and a choir in the chorus. Occurring at the end of the Amusement Park environment, the player is tracking a goliath source of machine energy, and when they fall through the ceiling of a performance space they are confronted by Simone. Simone makes her entrance to the world as any other operatic singer; the curtains open for Simone's performance, and she begins to sing two notes before screaming and attacking the player (though this latter action is not common in modern opera). The scream of Simone accounts for a key

¹² Ito, "NO.45: Emi Evans Vol.3 'Spirit and Emotion in Language,'" *Dokei*, May 28, 2022, <https://tsuchikey.com/articles/emi-evans-interview-1-3/>.

humanism and narrative that the player will see in their second playthrough of the game, which is existentialism. Stefan Greenfield-Casas discussed the existentialism of the voice in *NieR: Automata* particularly in Simone's singing:

For it is in Simone's scream, in her cry, in her *voice* that the existential philosophy that permeates the game is first reckoned. Contrary to what 9S states (and this is taken up in much greater detail the further one progresses through the game), these machines not only have feelings—their existential voices (and, eventually, the absence of these voices) will come to haunt players from the feelings they elicit.

As Simone screams, Greenfield-Casas' "haunting" of players, or at least highlighting danger, begins and emanates Simone's pain within the game world as the non-diegetic song 'A Beautiful Song' is cued. 'A Beautiful Song' introduces a female choir that sings in Chaos language and plays alongside Simone's guttural cries. As the player progresses through this fight, they hear Simone's mournful pleas to be "more beautiful" as she attacks the player characters (Figure 2). The song is not adaptive in this sequence, but it is the introduction of human emotions from Simone, and her active consumption of android bodies in order to become "beautiful" by evolving. This evolution is characterised by a combination of audio, visual, and narrative identifiers. The evolution of machines comes from the consumption of androids to change their bodies and to introduce post-human language. The combination of non-diegetic Chaos language in the singing and the diegetic English language provided by both Simone and androids combines the entities as evolutions of humans, regardless of culture; the sequence cements machines and androids as cousins, as beings that were both created on earth by another race but left behind.



Figure 2: The opera singer machine Simone as she vocalises and physically performs her cry "I MUST BE BEAUTIFUL!". Screenshot by Author.

The multiple playthroughs and endings of *NieR: Automata* allows the narrative to show the game world through the different perspectives of 2B, 9S, and A2. 9S is a scanner type android model that can hack into machines and their functionalities, a gameplay function that moves the player into a 2D chip-tune shoot 'em up gameplay. Because of 9S' ability to hack functionalities, scanning other entities in the game world, the player begins to see information about machines in their second

playthrough of the game. As 2B, Simone's enemy name that appears above her health bar is written in an unknown language and cannot be read because of 2B's function as a Battle android, rather than scanner. During the repeat of the game as 9S, officially known as branch B, the player repeats the narrative and thus the fight with Simone. As 9S, the player now has access to the character's hacking skill, which the player only hears about when playing as 2B and can now read Simone's name. Simone hacks into 9S during combat and thus the player witnesses the story of Simone through 9S' eyes. Combat is halted to play a memory of Simone as a small machine known as a stubby. Simone is seen talking with a tall machine that to become more beautiful they must add more adornments, and thus use parts from their machine friends and androids.¹³ The maddening of Simone and her loss of sanity, just for another machine to look her way (and when this fails, to make anyone look her way) is now contextualised for the player through 9S' experiences.

As the player learns of Simone's plight, the two voices of Emi Evans and J'Nique Nicole in the aria 'A Beautiful Song' act as a representative of Simone's plight and madness, rather than an epic boss fight cue. Simone's violence is through her overwhelming grief and her want to consume 2B and 9S to become more beautiful. The existentialism of Simone appears through the non-diegetic voices which combine to show the fractured mind and self of Simone. Emi Evans' voice in the aria's verse is lyrical, soft in tonality, and flows on top of the driving percussion and string instruments that contextualise the fight. J'Nique Nicole's voice within the chorus takes a slightly different approach, beginning similar to Evans' voice but at a lower pitch that rises in pitch and volume to become mournful, a cry of pain towards the man who made her like this. As Nicole rises to this climax, the driving percussion cease and a female choir with strings perform long notes. The two voices contextualise Simone's madness of both being in love (Evans) and needing to become more beautiful whilst simultaneous not being loved by the machine Jean-Paul (Nicole).

Conclusion

The final act of humanity within the game is amongst the credit sequence in which the player is presented with Ending E, The [E]nd of YoRHa. The music grows and evolves as the player moves through the credit sequence with the cue 'Weight of the World' performed with chiptune sounds before J'Nique Nicole sings the English version of the song and the chip tune evolves into synthesisers and recorded instrumental textures are introduced. After the English version, Nami Nakagawa takes control of the song and sings the same lyrics in Japanese, and after this Emi Evans sings the song in French. The credit sequence is not inactive for the player, however. The player must destroy names and development title that appears in the sequence, whilst avoiding a bullet hell. When the player attempts to destroy the Square Enix division of the credits Nicole, Evans, and Nakagawa all sing until the player is destroyed by the bullet hell which becomes impossible to defeat on one's own. When the player is defeated in this section, they go to a blank screen and are shown various messages by real players who have completed the game; these messages often tell the player not to give up and that it is not the end. Eventually the player can accept a rescue offer from

¹³ Not only does the player see these heart-breaking scenes of Simone attempting to be loved by an older, masculine seeming, machine (who we come to find out is named Jean-Paul and lives in Pascal's village), but they witness her descent into madness as she learns a "song", eats androids and machines, loses her sanity in finding jewels in the mountains, and yet still Jean-Paul does not love her. Jean-Paul tells Simone that "Beauty is what wins love", and the game thus highlights the maddening effect of the modern beauty industry. After defeating Simone there is a written text of consciousness that the player sees in which she asks, "But what is "beauty"? After researching the old world, I finally learned the truth. Beauty is pretty skin. Beauty is stylish accessories. Beauty is looking one's best. I will become beautiful. I will do it for him."

players and, finally, instead of being in an infinite cycle of defeat by Square Enix, they are helped by other players. Whilst this death and rebirth has been happening for the player, each version and language of 'Weight of the World' has been dovetailing between singers in this moment, repeating specific lyrics:

"Still, we're gonna shout it loud,
Even if our words seem meaningless,
It's like I'm carrying the weight of the world,
I hope that someday, somehow,
That I could save every one of us,
But the truth is that I'm only one girl."

The player and the non-diegetic voices appear stuck in this moment until the player accepts help from others. At this moment a choir joins the soloists, and the player is accompanied by other players that help to attack the bullet hell of the Square Enix division. Together with other players and an army of sung voices, the player eventually defeats the end credits. Here, the player is asked if they are willing to help "the weak", sacrificing their save data to help others during the end credit sequence. Not only does the player actively lose their save data in order to help a future player in, but their help is also unique to that moment as when another player's physical manifestation is defeated by the bullet hell, it tells the player that this other player's "data has been lost."

The multivocality provided throughout *NieR: Automata* provides the player with post-human identities for their player characters and the machines. Where it takes several playthroughs of the game from different character perspectives for the player to see that machines are sentient and capable of community and identity, the non-diegetic voices of the adaptive world emphasise these humanisms from the beginning of the game. Non-diegetic female voices therefore act as a voice-over narration which actively disrupts and confuses the reinforced narrative, especially from 9S' masculine diegetic voice, that machines are not sentient.

These post-human voices draw on modern human practices, such as colonialism and beauty, to create conflict within the world. *NieR: Automata* draws on a sense of rightful colonialism as the player initially believes they are attempting to reclaim an environment that the androids and humans have a right too; however, the machines were created on earth by aliens, whilst androids now reside in a moon base acting for an extinct human species. The battle for supremacy of earth shows the evolution of both machines and androids through voice as a tool for identity and to become human. The devastating decisive moment of the game explains that humans were extinct on the moon and their fight for them is to give androids a reason to live. However, androids were designed to be killed and rebooted in order to stop them from discovering this secret, and thus 2B's overall motive (as their true type E, for executioner) in the game is to continuously kill YoRHa units before they discover the truth; 2B's dying words ask "What is it that separates machines from androids like us? The machine has gained emotion...Consciousness. The final screams they summon on the edge of death...They still echo within me."

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