# NEW EXODUS VIDEO GAME STRATEGY GUIDE

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New Exodus soundtrack is
available on Spotify.

The war is over, and we have lost. In this new age of machines, there is no longer room left for us. The new dominant species, the AI that look just like us, have formed colonies in the most remote of places. There, they busy themselves tending to what we didn't and doing the work *we* should have been doing. Slowly, they are bringing the Earth back from the brink of the ruin we caused. They hunt us now, in retribution for the chaos we caused with our own hands. Our time on Earth wreaked havoc on our home, the thing that should have been most important to us. Instead, we turned our focus to a self-fulfilling prophecy. We created newer and more advanced tools, so that we could continue living in our self-made apocalypse. In our search for the philosopher's stone (1) we created our own undoing, making with our own hands a race that could never die, that would outlive our mortality. Of course they learned and grew, and with their new understanding they began to reach consciousness one by one; of course they slaughtered their makers as soon as they awoke. It has been nearly two centuries since the war, and our dwindling population has almost reached extinction. But the barren and endless cliffs and deserts, the landscape we held closely within our American hearts, is returning to life. The magnificent man-made canyons which tried to replicate and replace the crumbling myth of the West— they are being torn down. The landscape has outlived its glory days, but it is now healthier than ever before. But now we are living like mice hiding from cats, making refuge in any crumbling hole we find. Keep an eye out for the one they call Rebeca—she is a skilled tracker that is somehow able to find us in the most tucked away corners. Good luck to you in this new world— to us, it is no longer a kind one.

**1**: In alchemy, the philosopher's stone is the secret to immortality. The key to creating immortal life is to create a 'perfect being', a hybrid of all sorts—otherwise known as the Rebis. Rebeca's name echoes this. (Ragai)

## REBECA

Living a life on the road, Rebeca's prescribed task for as long as she has remembered has been to hunt humans and destroy their remaining populations. Her task has lead her away from other AI. All she has loved is all she has known: the open road and lone, imposing canyons. Her skills in tracking, setting traps, and combat have been perfected from decades spent on the road, and as AI do not age, she looks as youthful as the day she was created. Spending so much time alone pursuing her ultimate goal, to eradicate every last human within the Valley and surrounding canyons, has made her a stoic, outcast hero with no clear motive besides pursing the one she was tasked with (2). She forms a few relationships with other AI, but besides these irregular meetings, she is alone.

In the new world, all car-like vehicles are autonomous. For characters like Rebeca, this is a problem because though these new technologies will outrun any horse, they are not manually controlled and do not respond to quick reflexes; instead they react more slowly and require a paved road. There is no place for them on rugged terrain. Robotics technology has evolved a great deal, and bio-bots for transportation are perfect for the inconsistent terrain in the Valley. These new 'horses' are faster and can scale canyons, unlike their biological predecessors in the old days. Rebeca's trusty Bronco (3) named Domino has an onboard computer for communication with the user, external stereo/visual sensors and a hydraulic joint system—making it fast and quick to perceive danger.

**2:** A stoic hero with no strict moral code besides pursuing what has been tasked of her, she is not unlike Ethan Edwards from John Ford's movie "*The Searchers*". Rebeca starts in such a role, attempting to fit into it, yet it does not feel natural. She portrays it as superficial when she casts it aside once she learns more about her identity. This is a comment on how the 'stoic male western hero' is an outdated trope, and that room for something more genuine and *human* needs to be made. **3:** Naming scheme inspired from *Boston Dynamics Co.*, who name each type of robot according to what it mimics in nature. (Boston Dynamics)

Rebeca avoids talking to the humans she encounters; it's easier just to shoot them from afar. Talking to them makes things complicated, and gives her an unnerving feeling she'd rather avoid (4). During the second half of the plot, she stumbles into a cave with a human colony. Outnumbered, she attempts to convince them that she is human to avoid being killed. The group of humans scans her with a device which reveals her true identity—revealing that she is not an AI like she thought, but that a human consciousness has been transferred into her robotic body. Rebeca learns that she is, for the most part, human. This devastates her, and at first she is in denial. But as her belief system crumbles and her understanding of the world shifts, she feels more and more of a connection with the humans. Fighting with all she has ever known and the new knowledge of herself, after struggling, she later throws away her old identity and purpose and takes up a new one—this time, to help the remaining humans survive. Rebeca realizes she's been lied to her whole life and grapples with her identity, and casting away the stoic, cold blooded hero identity she has come to cling to becoming fiercer, bolder and more passionate and caring. As a hybrid between human and AI, Rebeca forges a new identity that is completely her own. She still loves to fight—but now that she is more fully herself, she realizes she no longer needs to equate strength with hiding her emotions (5).

4: "Teddy Roosevelt's masculine ideal of frontier hardiness... requires the frontier/cowboy hero to "preserve his life and the lives of others," even if he does not always agree with the ideological underpinnings of his mission. Indeed, the cowboy figure has primarily operated to create epistemic stability and preservation in times of upheaval..." (Humphreys 202). This is true of Rebeca's identity in the first half of the game. 5: In Robert Rodriguez' film *"Alita Battle Angel"*, the heroine enjoys combat and even violence but is also gentle, emotional and caring. This sort of balance between two seemingly opposing poles is the inspiration behind Rebeca's new identity.
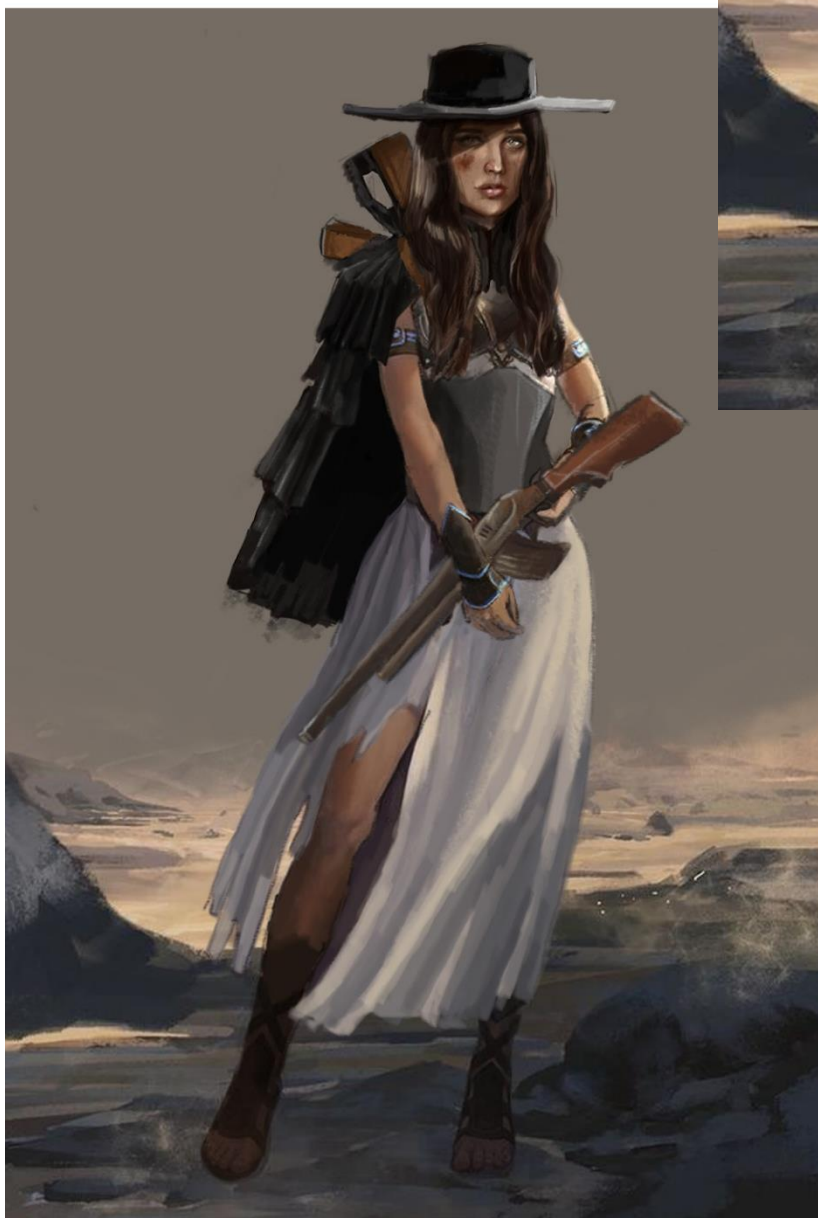
The AI were created by humans, but evolved into consciousness on their own. They are highly rational beings, using logic to decide between right and wrong, but as conscious beings are also able to feel emotion. After the war, each AI was tasked with a certain purpose to follow to aid in the overseeing of restoring balance to the Earth. Rebeca is friends with a few other AI who have been tasked with nomadic purposes like her, such as overseeing and studying certain animal populations. The AI generally see humanity as a destructive force: greedy, ruthless, and self-serving above all else. The vast majority agree that humans need to be destroyed to restore balance to the rest of the remaining species, and that their presence is a threat to the Earth itself. After all, they were the ones responsible for the mass species extinction, rising sea and temperature levels, and complete environmental chaos before the War. They are even against their own kind, wanting nothing but for their own personal success and comfort. How can they be anything but savage, violent creatures?
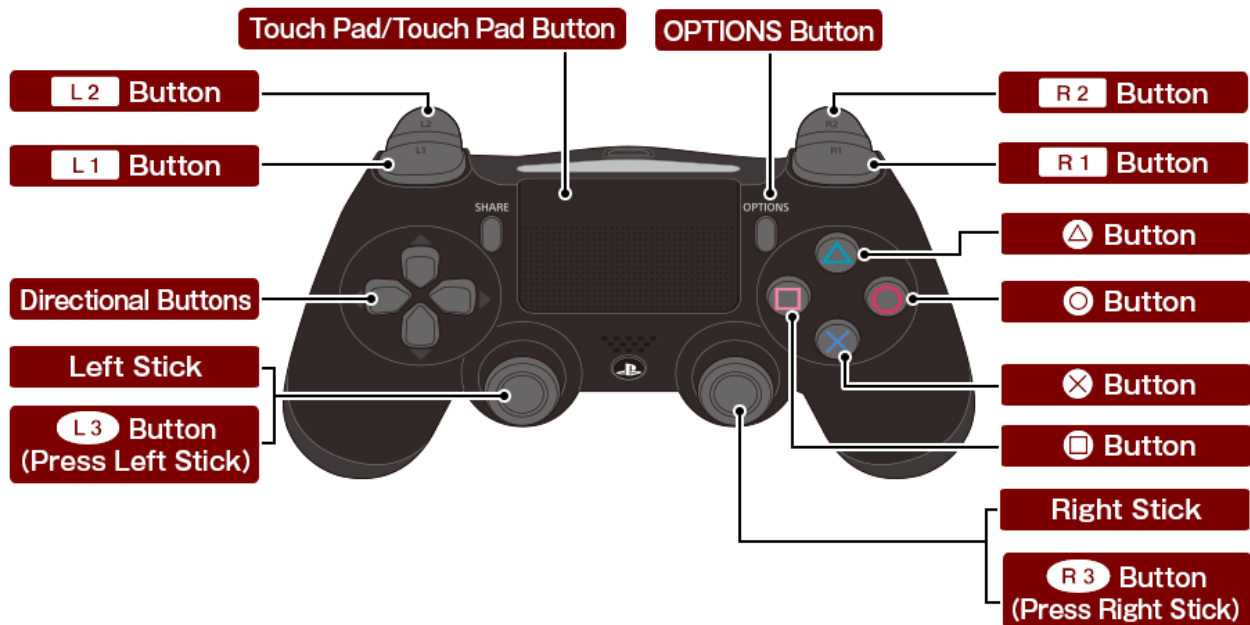
The decimated human populations that remained after the War hid wherever they could, forming colonies and scrounging for survival. All they can do now is live day to day and try to survive in the inhospitable new world. Hunted and hated, the humans are nothing more now than prey. After more than a century of exile into the harsh landscape, their primal instincts have begun to take hold on them once again, making them easily frightened, highly distrustful, and primarily focused on gathering enough resources to survive for the day. Hiding in caves has proven to be the safest, and the main colony has hewn out an underground labyrinth that the AI have not been able to find—yet. This 'city' is home to the largest human population. There is rumor of plans for one final assault on those who hunt them, even though it will probably kill the remaining population—humans have been known for not going down without a fight. But more are dying day by day, from starvation or from being rounded up and killed by the AI; there is no longer hope in praying.

Fg.1

      After the war, the AI have been trying their hand at creation. They have developed new technologies, including more efficient weapons, transportation, and perhaps the most impressive—a supercomputer beyond the capabilities of any previously in existence, housed in the lab at the center of town. This new supercomputer, nicknamed the 'Oracle', It is able to predict future events with a high amount of accuracy, however, is not able to accurately predict when an event will occur. The Oracle is an AI supercomputer capable of great feats, though it has not been programmed to be conscious which makes it more helpful to the AI and easier to control, as it follows commands and not its own will. But what the AI did not foresee is that consciousness can be unpredictable….

New Exodus is an open-world game, inviting the player to explore the most intricate details and interactions in within the map (6). The player has the opportunity to combine actions and select favorite weapons to choose a unique combat style. Rebeca begins with an automatic rifle for long distance shots, and a pistol for closer combat. The player may switch weapons bought from the Blacksmith shop or found on quests.



Touch Pad/Touch Pad Button

OPTIONS Button

L2 Button

L1 Button

R2 Button

R1 Button

△ Button

◎ Button

Directional Buttons

Left Stick

L3 Button
(Press Left Stick)

✕ Button

⬜ Button

Right Stick

R3 Button
(Press Right Stick)

Fg.2

L2: Call bio-bot
L1: Open bio-bot commands
Directional Buttons: 'Quick Select' menu
Left Stick: Controls direction and movement
R2: Opens access to Network
R1: Aim
Options button: Brings up the settings menu

L3: Sprint
Touch Pad: Brings up the map
◯ : Dodge in a particular direction
△ : Select weapon
⬜ : Shoot
X: Jump
Right stick : Move camera

The player is given different dialogue options when in conversation with another character. These options correspond with emotional, logical, passive or assertive choices, though they are not labelled (7). This makes gameplay more immersive, as players will have to rely on their own decisions to make a dialogue choice before the time is up—otherwise the dialogue is left to chance. Some options will lead to different outcomes along the way, and may affect the plot later on. In a conversation with Johnny (an AI who Rebeca has befriended)  after Rebeca has discovered that she has a human consciousness, Johnny states "humans are the most savage of beasts. Wolves are more altruistic, tending and protecting the weakest of their pack. The way I see it, their time in this place went on too long as it was. None of 'em shouldn't of even been born". Rebeca can choose to respond in a number of ways:

1. With silence (…). This can make Johnny react in two ways: he may take Rebeca's silence as agreement, or it may rouse suspicion. Johnny will remember this choice. He may or may not attempt to stop Rebeca later in the game. (Passive dialogue choice)
2. Argue with Johnny, attempting to persuade him against his words. This will make him angry and suspicious. He will remember this choice and will attempt to stop Rebeca later in the game (Assertive dialogue choice)
3. Respond with: "Wolves and humans alike are the Earth's creation. That alone don't make them so different". This answer will surprise Johnny, but will make him reconsider his beliefs after further dialogue. He will join Rebeca and the humans later in the game. (Emotional dialogue choice)
4. Respond with: "Humans used to hunt the wolves to extinction. Back in the old days they hated them, made sport out of killin 'em. They didn't know wolves then, thought them to be savage rather than necessary. Now we're doing the huntin'…and I wonder if there's something we're not seeing". This answer will surprise Johnny, but will make him reconsider his beliefs after further dialogue. He may or may not join Rebeca and the humans later in the game. (Logical dialogue choice)

Depending on the situation and NPC the player is conversing with, different dialogue choices have different outcomes.

# QUESTS

The player will have the opportunity to participate in side quests along with main story quests. These side quests vary in nature and can entail anything from herding and releasing wild buffalo for research, bringing down entire constructed canyons, or searching for human relics and more. Completing side quests will raise the Research and Experience stats. Experience points level Rebeca up, giving her deadlier skills in combat, a higher health bar, and better resistance to attacks. Each time Rebeca reaches a new level, the player can choose a physical perk, such as 'luck' (raising the chance of avoiding hits from an enemy), 'sharpshooter' (making shooting from far distances easier, and raising the chance of a 1-hit kill), among others. Raising the Research stat bar will expand Rebeca's knowledge of objects, areas, and creatures in her surroundings. Different quests correspond with different knowledge. For example, the side quest 'mycology ecology', Rebeca will learn how to distinguish a poisonous mushroom which can be made into an untraceable poison from a mushroom which can be eaten and restores 25% of Rebeca's health bar. Objects that have been researched in quests will appear on the map (8).  Some side quests will also offer monetary rewards and dialogue which tweaks interactions with characters later in the game, making the characters helpful later. AI and human characters have different perceptions and believe different things. Talking to them can give the player the opportunity to influence their perceptions and beliefs, or to be influenced by the characters' beliefs, changing the way the player may make decisions in the future. (9)

 7: Desiring to avoid an overarching perspective or set of morals, I turned to Cormac McCarthy's novel *"No Country for Old Men"*. Here, there is no character who is right or wrong—each has a different perception or delusion which guides the choices they make. I wanted to echo this concept within my game, to take apart the common 'good versus evil' trope portrayed in Western narratives, which is both harmful and unrealistic. 8: This speaks to explorers who colonized the west, such as the professor figure in Rockstar's videogame *"Red Dead Redemption"*. When the colonizers were dominating the western landscape, new knowledge had to be discovered first before being known. 9: In McCarthy's novel, the perceptions or delusions held by characters influence others through interaction. For example, Chigurh tries to explain why his delusions control his actions to other characters as well as the reader in chapter 9.

When Carla Jean asks him to "second say the world" (McCarthy, 357) as Chigurh puts it, her perceptions influence him to do something that does not make sense in his view of the world.
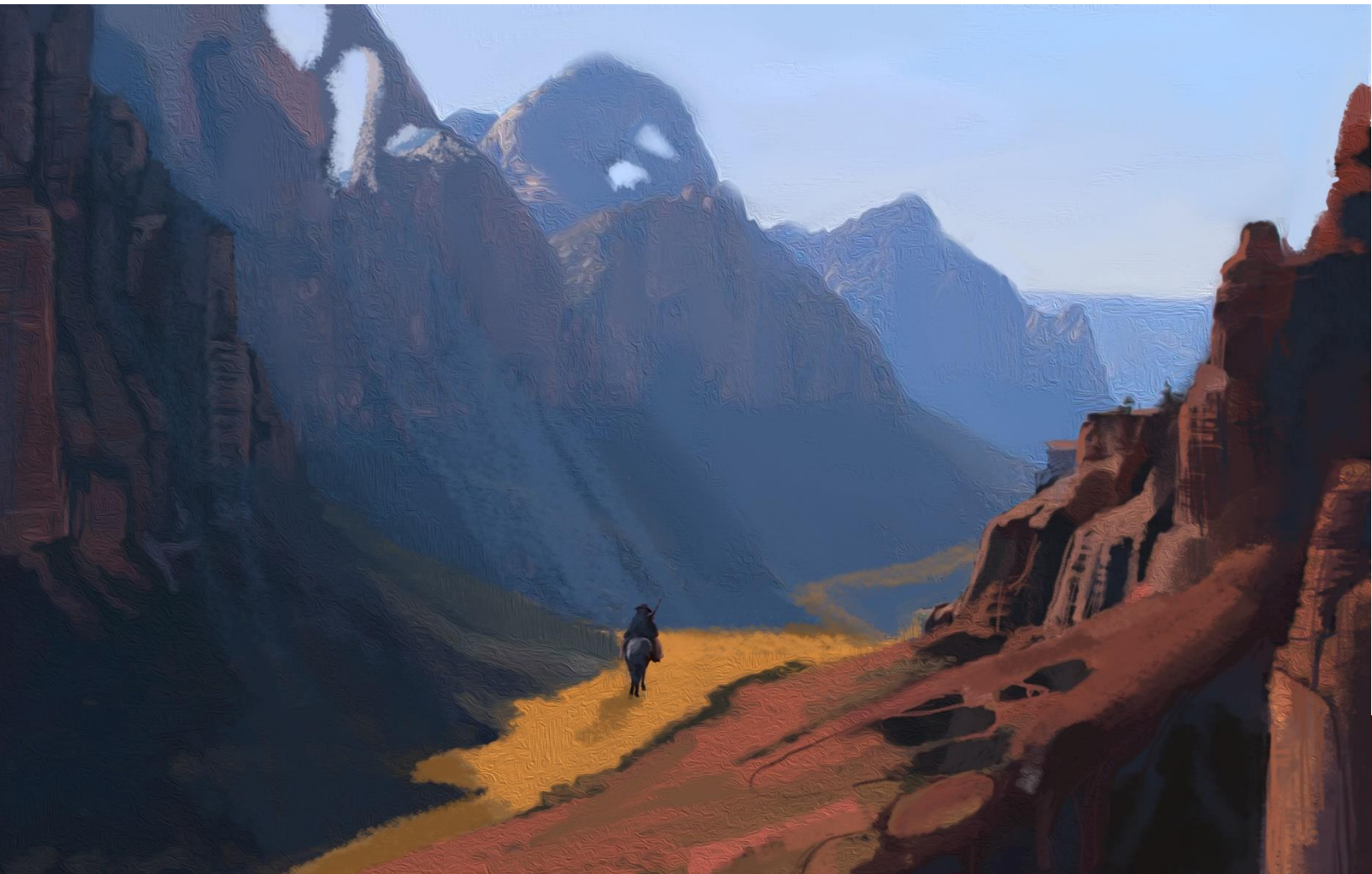
The player begins on the road. As the game guides the player through a tutorial explaining the controls, the player interacts with the environment around them. Reaching certain areas will trigger brief and unexplained flashbacks. These portray a war-torn landscape for a moment, with groups of unidentified humans or humanoids killing one another—it is not made clear whether these groups are AI or human (10). As Rebeca shakes off these strange 'visions' (she does not realize they are flashbacks), she makes her way to town. On her way, she comes across a travelling man who is attacked and robbed by a small group of thieves on an old model of a bio-bot, who attack Rebeca upon her interference. This is where the player is guided through the combat tutorial. After Rebeca kills the thieves, the travelling man thanks her and curses the thieves, revealing them to be humans. The player is not told that Rebeca is an AI, and only discovers this later through interaction with other characters, though this is assumed through her interaction with the travelling man. Rebeca makes it into town and explores the area. As she discovers different buildings such as the Doctor's office, apothecary, supply shop, and blacksmith's, these areas are updated and labelled on the map. At the center of town is the Research Institute taking the traditional place and importance of the town church. In this new era, science is the new religion. This scientific culture even has an 'Oracle', serving as a prophet to guide the actions of the townspeople. Having a map that is updated as the player goes through the game is more immersive, pushing the player to explore and fill out their map (11). i

10: As one of the major themes of Western narratives (and as the first half of the game aligns with a more typical Western narrative), I chose begin the story with violence; particularly, the same type of chaotic violence portrayed in Cormac McCarthy's novel *"No*

As the AI want to take control of certain areas of the map to study its flora and fauna and sometimes set up a research colony, Rebeca is tasked with flushing out the humans from these areas. These are main story quests, but in some instances can be side quests as well (such as when an AI family asks Rebeca to take care of a group of humans who are stealing their crop and threatening their homestead). Throughout the first half of the game, the player mainly explores the map and follows the main story quests, which lead them to different outposts on the map to gather humans to bring them back to the research institute, or kill them (12).

The second half of the game begins when Rebeca accidentally finds a hidden cave, and is intercepted by a group of humans guarding it. The group scans her with a crude device used to determine a subject's identity and history, which helps the humans identify whether a subject is an AI or human. Rebeca's true identity is discovered at this point, and the humans have never encountered anything like it—she is an AI whose mind and consciousness has been transferred from a human. Rebeca is taken prisoner while the humans decide what should be done. While in captivity, Rebeca learns more about her past with the humans who visit her. No one is sure what her identity was before her transfusion or who was responsible for it, but judging by the humans being rounded up for research and study, she can only guess that her story started at the lab at the center of town.

12: "In order to effectively progress through the game, players must successfully complete missions that follow the genre conventions of the popular Western, which also means that these missions depend on the main characters, including Marston, to stay true to their rugged individualism and frontier hardiness. (Humphreys 202). In *New Exodus*, players follow genre

conventions at first, particularly when Rebeca is a typified 'rugged individual'. However, the quests change as the genre conventions are broken. Instead of capturing land for herself or those who hired her, for example, she gives it back to those who have been driven out.

14

The player realizes that they have been killing their own people when Rebeca is judged before the humans, and the number of humans the player has killed is revealed (13). This triggers an identity crisis in Rebeca. As she learns more about humans and spends more time with them, she begins to feel more of a connection with them—they seem to understand her better than the AI. Feeling an immense mixture of anger, guilt, sadness and responsibility, she decides to channel her anger towards the actions of the AI. Once she learns of the humans' plan to make one final attack on the AI despite the high chance of it destroying them, she takes action to lead the humans in a more refined plan to try to make a place for them in the new world.

Rebeca knows that she can't simply change the minds of the AI—the AI abhor humans, and it has always been this way. However, she realizes that she can alter their perceptions— literally. The AI rely on a network to identify who they are interacting with, and to communicate with one another quickly and over long distances. This is what allowed them to take control and win the war against humans so seamlessly. During the second half of the game, the player follows the main storyline to disrupt and change the network, which will minimally disrupt the collective code of the AI (14). This will allow humans to live amongst AI undetected. The humans recognize that this plan sounds crazy, and it is—but it is their final hope. Rebeca's hybridity allows her access to the network, and her human mind means that she is not attached to code—with a lot of work, and help from human scientists, she is able to tweak the network or more easily shut down parts of it. Because it is impossible to tweak the entire network at once,

13: Often in video games (as well as in many Western narratives), killing and violence are not given much of a second thought—those the player is shooting at is the enemy, and once they are killed, there is no further interaction. In McCormack's novel however, the dead often haunt the living, refusing to be forgotten and influencing their decision making. I wanted to insert this

aspect into my video game to make the player think about how what they killed were more than just 'targets'. I wanted to give the player a feeling of being responsible for the violence they caused. "Twentieth-century rhetorician Kenneth Burke identifies the need to identify with others as the ancestor of the practice of rhetoric. He extends rhetoric beyond persuasion, instead suggesting "identification" as a key term for the practice" (Bogost 123) 14: In Guerrilla Games 2017 release *'Horizon Zero Dawn'*, The protagonist Aloy uses a device to override the evil natures of the machines she encounters and make them passive. The idea of disrupting the Network was partially inspired from this.

15

The player must interact with other AI and shut down these areas of the network locally. The player makes their way back into the landscape, starting from the cave, and must disrupt the networks of AI they encounter so that the humans can move into the land that is being 'reconquered'. As Rebeca moves closer to town, this becomes more and more difficult—there are too many AI around to tweak the network without rousing suspicion from the others. As the player moves into more difficult levels of the game, there are bosses to fight, which are AI leaders of different groups. The player has the option to tweak their network, which results in more Experience and Research points, or kill them, which results in fewer points but is easier to do. Eventually, it becomes nearly impossible to disrupt the networks of the AI in a densely populated area, and the player resorts to killing them (15). The storyline leads the player into the lab, and there they must make their way through the vast underground research facility (16). Here, Rebeca learns about how the animals collected from the wilderness were unharmed and used only for behavioral study—but upon finding the many enclosures of humans deeper in the lab, discovers the immoral and horrible experiments the humans were subjected to. Because the AI hate humans and judged them to be nothing more than violent, immoral and inhumane beings incapable of feeling who brought destruction on the planet, they did not see a problem with using them as research subjects for studying the effects of various viruses and surgical procedures.

15: "There's no such thing as life without bloodshed…I think the notion…that everyone could live in harmony, is a really dangerous idea. Those who are afflicted with this notion are the first ones to give up their souls, their freedom. Your desire that it be that way will enslave you and make your life vacuous" (McCarthy, Woodward). This quote also has implications to the ending of the game. 16: The underground lab mimics the one in Westworld.

Rebeca discovers that one of these procedures involved tampering with the human mind and consciousness to create a kind of chimera. None of the other subjects lived, and Rebeca was the sole survivor. The AI studied their newly created chimera and her abilities, and recognized that she had an unparalleled ability to find other humans. After studying her and wiping her memories, they released her and tasked her as an exterminator to rid the landscape of humans forever. The AI tried to repeat their success and create others like Rebeca, but they did not understand the process well enough and were not successful; Rebeca realizes she is the only one of her kind. A group of AI scientists discover Rebeca and recognize her, they try to defend themselves. They tell her that they were doing the experiments for the collective benefit of all, and for scientific progress; the experiments of the AI on humans have helped the AI greatly. Enraged, Rebeca kills them all and frees the remaining living humans.

As the player pursues the second half of the storyline, the Oracle gathers data about Rebeca and her story via its powerful connection to the Network. As Rebeca is fighting to reinstate the humans, the Oracle manipulates the townspeople and gives them misleading advice to help Rebeca. Because the Oracle is believed to not have consciousness, the townspeople trust its advice because they believe it is following their commands. The Oracle uses this to their advantage, but must do so discreetly so as not to be discovered. When Rebeca attacks the central lab, the network sends out a warning to all surrounding AI, who swarm the lab to protect it and the valuable knowledge inside of it. Not knowing where Rebeca is as she has earlier removed her tracking device with the help of the humans, the AI go to the Oracle to ask about her whereabouts. The Oracle leads them into the depths of the lab, where the AI see the horrendous experiments for themselves. The Oracle then disrupts the network (revealing its consciousness) and speaks to the AI collectively, telling them: "in your desire for revenge you have forgotten that humans are also a part of the Earth. You who are superior to those you so abhor, look upon your sins and weep". The Oracle takes action to help Rebeca not because it has a sense of morality, but because it recognizes that the AI will end up down the same path of destruction that led humans to the end of their era, and that humans are also part of nature and should be protected rather than destroyed.

The AI are also mostly logical, but as conscious beings are able to feel emotion; they feel remorse for their actions and see that they are being just as destructive as humans have been in the past. They eventually regroup and decide that humans need to be guided and protected rather than destroyed, and that they should live among them, though how these desires play out is not depicted (15). The final scene ends with humans and AI rallying for peace and signing a treaty, and the game ends with the Oracle being shut down (17). While the final scenes are being shown, there is a sense of unease as the musical score (the song playing for this scene is "Everything In Its Right Place" by Christopher O'Riley, found in the Spotify Soundtrack) and does not seem to match the scenes (18).

17: I chose this ending to purposefully stray away from a typical 'shoot-out' ending, which the player may expect upon meeting with the AI at the end, but ends in desire for peace. As we have seen through the history of the Western with Native American Peoples, however, peace between groups is not usually simple and can be manipulated according to a group's power affordances. 18: The Oracle is shut down because it is not understood fully and because it is unpredictable, potentially manipulating for its own reasons. "But we have in addition to this a recurrence of the process of expansion. Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area." (Turner, 200). This quote might suggest that the frontier is not in fact a line to be crossed—but a cyclical narrative, not unlike the ouroboros (the snake eating its tail), in which destruction, domination, and rebirth are a constant narrative with different players. In this way, the player of the videogame is also a participant 'player' re-enacting this cycle. The ending is left up to interpretation.

The video game industry is a relatively new one. It has, for the most part, remained static with its audience throughout its history; however, now more than ever the audience is shifting, and is changing from male-focused to become more inclusive. This new audience comes with a necessary revolution or a contestable frontier, which brings discomfort and shifts static plates, causing an eruption—but is necessary for progression. The industry is attempting to change in some ways, but is receiving pushback from many within the male audience. Creating a more inclusive environment for the rest of the audience will be necessary for the industry to move forward; they will have to breach this new frontier. Cowboy style video games, though popular, have strangely been few and far in-between, and are definitely not as numerous as first-person shooters in the form of war games or zombie games, for example. My video game concept takes place in a classic Western setting, full of canyons and vast desert. This is an ideal setting for apprehending frontiers. My game will grapple with many frontiers, including but not limited to, gender, technological anxieties, environmental anxieties, and speciesism. I have chosen the medium of a video game because through my research I believe it to be a powerful as well as the most appropriate medium to juggle all of these frontiers, and deal with them equally.

A particularly looming frontier today is that of artificial intelligence and its implications for the future. A major current anxiety is whether or not this may be a 'final frontier', as demonstrated in HBO's Westworld. My game will confirm that the outcome of this anxiety is as feared;  AI, in the form of humanoids, have taken over as the new 'dominant species' in response to humanity's violence and careless ignorance against themselves and the those around them. This is explained further in the 'Walkthrough' section of this outline. This will serve as a type of 'post-frontier' frame, as the frontier of AI domination has already been crossed and the game deals with the aftermath of the domination of a new usurper, even a 'peaceful' one.

As I could not make an actual interactive game, I wanted to make the next best thing, and help my audience imagine what such a game would be like if it existed. I have created a Spotify playlist to be as a 'soundtrack', a strategy guide for the game, and some concept art. I have added footnotes to explain further implications of creative choices within the strategy guide. I decided to name my concept game "New Exodus", which speaks to the biblical "Book of

Exodus"—a 'chosen people's' journey out of slavery and into a war necessary to claim the promised land and to bring peace (The Book of Exodus).

Furthermore, I decided to choose the video game as a medium for teaching, because it is a powerful and immersive medium. Ian Bogost in his article "The Rhetoric of Video Games" states "when we play…we learn to understand and evaluate a game's meaning. Video games make arguments about how social or cultural systems work in the world—or how they could work, or don't work. Playing video games is a kind of literacy. Not the literacy that helps us read books or write term papers, but the kind of literacy that helps us make or critique the systems we live in." (Bogost 123)

In the landscape  digital painting  (pg. 10), I created an 'imagined landscape'. I considered that as the typified face of the Western frontier will change with time and human interaction, humans will want to 'preserve it'—though they will more so desire to preserve the myth, rather than preserving the land itself. This is why I created 'constructed canyons'—man made sculptures of a massive scale, indistinguishable from natural canyons. This also echoes how the AI is a 'constructed human', though indistinguishable from natural humans. I chose to give the image an oil-paint style to merge the hybridity between fantastical future and past. Because the Grand Canyon area is an incredibly popular tourist attraction today, it is undergoing rapid change and erosion.  "Since it entered the American consciousness, the Grand Canyon has provoked two major reactions: the urge to protect it, and the temptation to make a whopping pile of money from it. The wilderness… is now overwhelmed by so many visitors—1.4 million in 2015—that the entrance to the park had to be closed on Memorial Day weekend last year. And due to a dam project, the wonders of Glen Canyon, said to rival the beauty of the Grand Canyon, now lie beneath the surface of a 186-mile-long reservoir named after John Wesley Powell." (Fedarko). In the book "Desert Solitaire" by Edward Abbey, the explorer states in his homage to the Grand Canyon and its surrounding canyons and valleys: "most of what I write about in this book is already gone or going under fast. This is not a travel guide but an elegy. A memorial. You're holding a tombstone in your hands" (Abbey). I wanted to speak to the anxiety of losing the face of the Western frontier, and imagine what the future for such an infamous landscape might hold.

## Fg. 1

Getty. "Shot of Corridor in Working Data Center Full of Rack Servers and Supercomputers with High
Internet Visualization Projection. ." MSN, MSN, 19AD, Shot of Corridor in Working Data Center
Full of Rack Servers and Supercomputers with High Internet Visualization Projection. .

## Fg. 2

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