NieR:Automata
EnemY SysteM

The enemies in Nier Automata have different **characteristics** and **combat patterns**, making the combat system (explained here 📄 **System: Nier Automata - Combat System**) as **less monotonous as possible**, giving the player **challenges** of different types, **pace and difficulty** during **exploration** in the open world and **progression** in the gameplay . The main aspects that allow the player to approach the open world in the correct way and that insert opportunities into the structure of the map are analyzed.

Enemy Type Macro-categories

Small Enemies

Nier Automata contains a **range of enemies** that contribute to the game's immersive combat experience. **Small machines** swarm the player, testing his ability to manage **multiple threats in the same moment** (*Bullet Hell for ranged enemies, Hack n' Slash for melee enemies*).

Their attacks aim to **keep the player's attention by focusing on dodging and movement during combat**. Their function is to reduce the pace during boss fights, marking the boss phases with moments of minor challenge and breaking the fighting pattern.

Small enemies allow the player to **grind during his explorations**, providing resources with the least amount of effort (less resources than other types of enemies).

Large Enemies

Large enemies are characterized by an **imposing size and different and more challenging attack patterns**. These enemies serve as mini-bosses or main bosses and the player has to observe their states and react strategically to their attacks.

They can make **sweeping melee attacks, AoE abilities and charging maneuvers**. Large enemies have specific **weaknesses** that the player can exploit (*discovery in the choice of equipment and upgrades to use against them*) to **gain an advantage in battle** (*the player is encouraged to observe the fights and the enemies, also giving depth to a possible bond between him and the encounters he will face*).

Large enemies have **multiple phases or forms**, becoming **increasingly challenging** as the battle progresses and defeating them yields **rewards, experience points, currency and valuable loot** (**progression** and **accomplishment**).

The player has to think of **strategic approaches** to defeat large enemies (**logic**, **excitement** and **fiero**) such as **dodging incoming attacks (excitement)**, **varying ranged and melee weapons** (*Mist Combat System*), and timing **counterattacks** for maximum impact.

Specialized Units

The inclusion of specialized units adds **depth** and **variety** to the combat system (**[pattern breaker](#)**) in Nier Automata requiring players to **adapt their approach based on the composition of enemy forces**. These enemies contribute to the **game's replayability,** as players **experiment with different strategies** to overcome them in subsequent playthroughs.

- **Reconnaissance Drones:** Excel at scouting and surveillance, patrolling areas and **alerting nearby enemies to the player's presence**. They may possess enhanced mobility and the ability to detect hidden players, making **stealth approaches more challenging**.

- **Shielded Units:** Equipped with **defensive barriers or shields** that provide them with increased protection against player attacks, who have to find ways to **bypass or disable these shields to damage them**.

- **Sniper Units:** Specialized in **long-range attacks**, targeting players with precision accuracy.

- **Bomber Units:** Deploy explosive devices or projectiles creating areas that the player has to navigate carefully to avoid taking damage. Their attacks may also **stagger the player or force him into vulnerable positions**.

- **Support Units:** Provide **assistance to other enemies on the battlefield**, buffing their allies with enhancements as increased speed, damage resistance, or healing.

Motion Number : -/1

🔃 Rotate   Ⓐ Animation   Ⓨ Change Equipment   Ⓑ Back

Flying Enemies

Flying enemies **introduce a new dimension to combat**, challenging the player to adapt to aerial engagements. These enemies hover above the battlefield and make them **harder to reach with melee attacks.** This dynamic requires the player to use **ranged weapons or aerial combat techniques**. Flying enemies mobility allows them to dart around the area evading attacks and launching aerial assaults from different angles.

The addition of verticality in combat provides the player with the **opportunity to experiment with combat in the air** and gives him a new **task to carry out during combat**, namely the **management of the entire game area**.

With the target system the player still has a vision of what surrounds the targeted enemy. By targeting a flying enemy the player **completely loses sight of all the actions of enemies on the ground and vice versa**, giving more **agency** to the player's control of the camera and reducing reliance on targeting.

The choice is made for the effort put into the production of a **branched camera system** (📄 System: Nier Automata - Camera System) in all game interactions. **Environmental hazards and obstacles** may come into play during aerial combat encounters, adding an additional layer of **challenge** for the player.
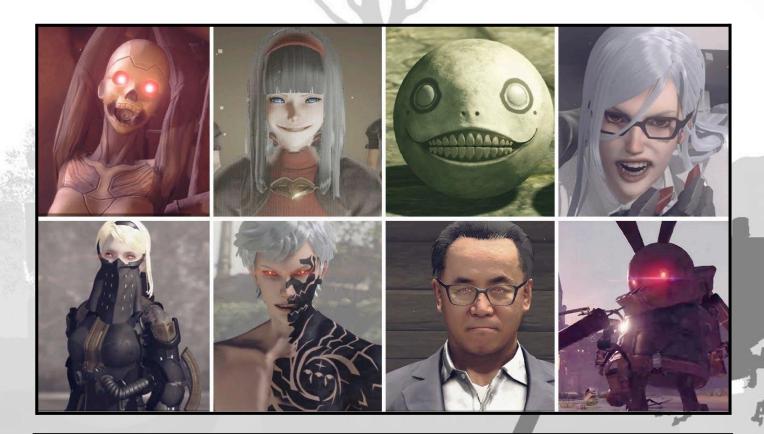

Unique Bosses

Each unique boss possesses its own **backstory, personality, and thematic significance**, enriching the game's **world building and storyline**. These enemies serve as **key milestones in the player's journey (hard gate)**, marking significant moments in **character development** and **plot progression**. Their battles are highlights that offer intense challenges (**fiero** when he beats them) that **test the player's skills** and strategic thinking.

The design of unique bosses reflect their thematic elements and narrative roles and their battles serve the player to **put into practice all the skills he has learned by facing all the types of enemies** mentioned and after having taken advantage of all the opportunities that the open world offers.
Boss battles consist of **multiple phases**, each introducing **new mechanics (***new **challenges** *for the player, breaking the monotony and patterns***)** and **escalating the level of mastery needed to overcome them.**

Defeating unique bosses yields **substantial rewards, including experience points, rare items, and progression in the game's storyline**. These rewards incentivize the player to challenge them and then invest in his characters' growth and development (*stats boost, equipment, upgrades*).

Encounter Locations

The player encounters enemies in the **different biomes of the map** (*urban ruins, deserts, forests, industrial facilities, and submerged areas*). These landscape elements **influence combat tactics and navigation,** offering **opportunities** for the player to **cover** and use environmental interactions of the enemies to **take advantage of them.**

The environment around enemies may contain different hazards that pose threats to the player. These hazards include crumbling terrain, toxic substances, electrical discharges, and natural disasters.
The addition of these elements aims to **exploit the dynamic behavior of the enemies with the environment that surrounds them**, in order to offer emerging dynamics for the player and make him correctly exploit the combat area to his advantage, a **lesson that will be reused during boss fights**.

Throughout the open world the player can use **interactive objects such as crates, barrels, machinery,** and **debris** to destroy them and obtain loot or cover from enemies attacks.

Enemy AI (Pattern and Pattern Breakers)

General Patterns

- **Attack Patterns**: **Specific attack patterns for every category of enemies**, including melee strikes, ranged attacks, area-of-effect abilities, and evasive maneuvers. These patterns dictate **how enemies engage the player in combat and provide opportunities for him** to anticipate, dodge or counter their moves.

- **Aggression Levels:** Specific Enemies exhibit **aggressive behavior while others may adopt defensive tactics**. Understanding enemy aggression levels lets the player determine the right approach to combat encounters (*stealth, ranged or melee Attack Mode*).

- **Movement Patterns:** Enemy AI governs movement patterns deciding *how enemies navigate the environment, pursue players, and position themselves during combat*. **Agile enemies** use evasive maneuvers and flanking tactics to outmaneuver players, while **larger and slower enemies** prioritize ground control and area denial.

- **Targeting Priorities:** Enemy AI decides **which player characters enemies prioritize during combat**. Some enemies target the player character closest to them, while others focus on characters with lower health or higher threat levels.

Pattern Breakers

- **Adaptive Behavior:** Enemies exhibit **adaptive behavior, dynamically adjusting their tactics and attack patterns based on player actions**. He can exploit the enemies' reaction by taking them to specific points to **distract them** and attack by surprise, or he can exploit their **inability to target him behind a possible cover.**

- **Counterattacks:** Specific enemies possess counterattack abilities that **punish players for predictable or repetitive actions (operant conditioning)**. These counterattacks can be triggered by specific player behaviors (*spamming the same attack, leaving themselves vulnerable to retaliation*).

- **Environmental Interactions: Enemies utilize environmental elements to their advantage**, breaking established patterns and forcing players to adapt to changing circumstances. *They can trigger environmental hazards, manipulate terrain features, or use enrichment elements in the environment as weapons or shields*.

- **Randomized Elements:** Enemies incorporate **randomized elements** into their behavior. This is used to introduce unpredictability and variability into combat encounters and can **include random attack patterns**, **timing variations**, or **environmental events** that keep the player's attention up and prevent him from relying only on memorization or repetition (**adaptability input**).