How do game maps reveal and impact narrative in narrative open world video games?

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Introduction

Maps are made with intent. Whether consciously or subconsciously, cartographers apply their own filters over land, inscribing what they perceive as relevant, omitting the rest, telling a story (Wood, 2015).

      Game maps are typically viewed as a tool for navigation rather than for narration. While their function in exploration cannot be denied, the information game designers choose to layer onto a map is telling of how they wish their game worlds to be experienced. Maps can direct a player's attention towards, or away from components of a game, such as an area, or even a mechanic. In fact, games are extremely selective with regards to information on maps, as they rely on players interacting with their systems and progressions rather than spending large amounts of time sifting through information. Players only need to be aware of relevant information, and many game maps are therefore dynamic systems that change gradually as the game state progresses.

      Narratives in open world games face additional challenges related to maps as they rely equally heavily on timing: information given too early will spoil the audience's experience, and information given tardily will confuse them. If a map contains information relevant to the whole game, it may risk spoiling plot points and consequently impair pacing. It is thereby worth analysing how game maps impact narratives in narrative open world games to find a framework for game designers to create their maps with a lens suitable for players.

Definitions

- *Game maps*: In this paper, game maps will refer to the image of the game world's map given to players, not level design.
- *Initial map*: In this paper, the initial map will be used to refer to the first iteration of the map the player is presented with
- *Final map*: In this paper, this term will refer to the last iteration of the map players can view.

Further terms and definitions can be found in Appendix A.

Methodology

The four case study games were chosen according to the following criteria:

- All games feature an open world across all or most moments of gameplay.
- All games contain and centre around linear, or at the least linearly playable narratives.
- All games enable or encourage exploration of the world.

First, the game maps will be introduced and evaluated with regards to the following questions:

- How do players view the map in the game?
- How much and what type of information is visible on the initial map in comparison to the final map?
- How is the initially redacted information unlocked?

This comparison will establish a base for the analysis. While initial maps will likely reveal what kind of information was deemed relevant to the player and which elements designers wish to reserve for later impact, the manner in which redacted information is revealed is excepted to influence narrative pacing. It should be noted that user interface elements with no relation to story will not be accounted for.

Following this, the comparative analysis of the maps will proceed thematically around two key points pertaining to narrative:

1. The extent and effect of the **foreshadowing** done by the initial map
2. The manner in which maps can **pace** narratives by unlocking information

Each point will be analysed and compared across all four games.

Finally, findings of the analyses will be summarized in an attempt to establish a framework for game designers to aid in tuning maps to their intent and filtering the information on their maps appropriately according to the desired impact on the narrative.

Case Study Games & Maps

Using annotated figures, this section will present how and what kind of information is displayed on the game maps. For story summaries of the games, see Appendix B.

Kena: Bridge of Spirits (2021, Ember Lab)

Kena: Bridge of Spirits (Kena) uses a non-diegetic map menu (Figure 1).

Figure 1 : Kena Map Menu Elements
Annotated Screenshot from MKIceandFire (2021, 21:23)
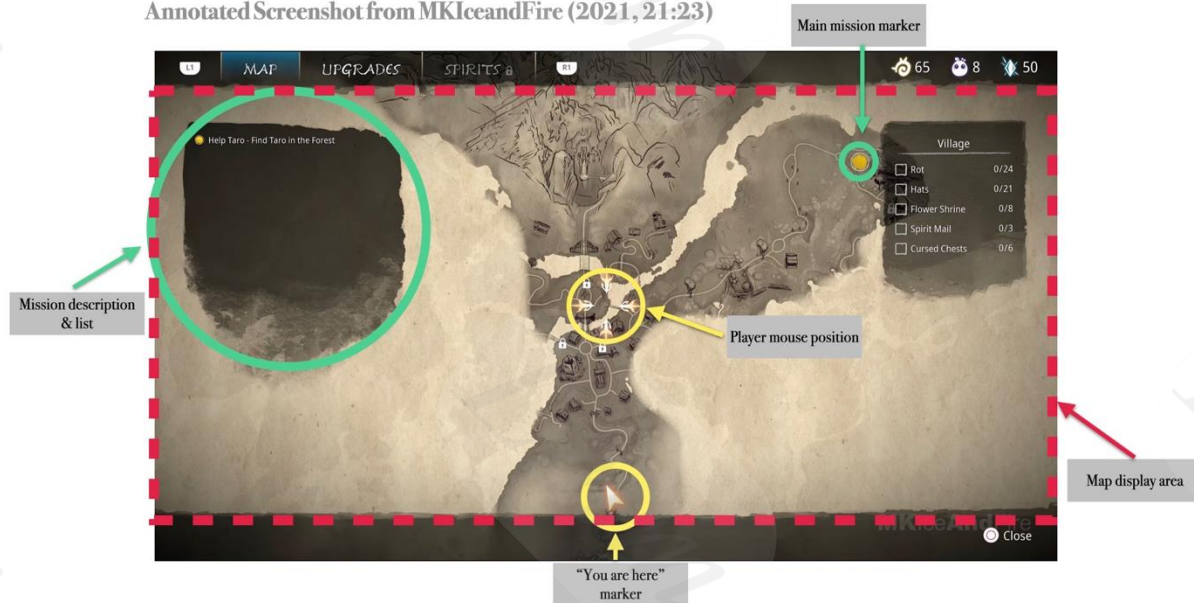
The initial map, displayed below (Figure 2), that players are presented with becomes accessible after clearing the tutorial area. Four areas are initially visible.

Figure 2 : Kena Initial Map
Annotated Screenshot from MKIceandFire (2021, 21:23)

The final map consists of nine fluidly connected areas which are roughly outlined on the picture below (Figure 3):

Figure 3 : Kena Final Map

Annotated Image from Ember Lab (2021)
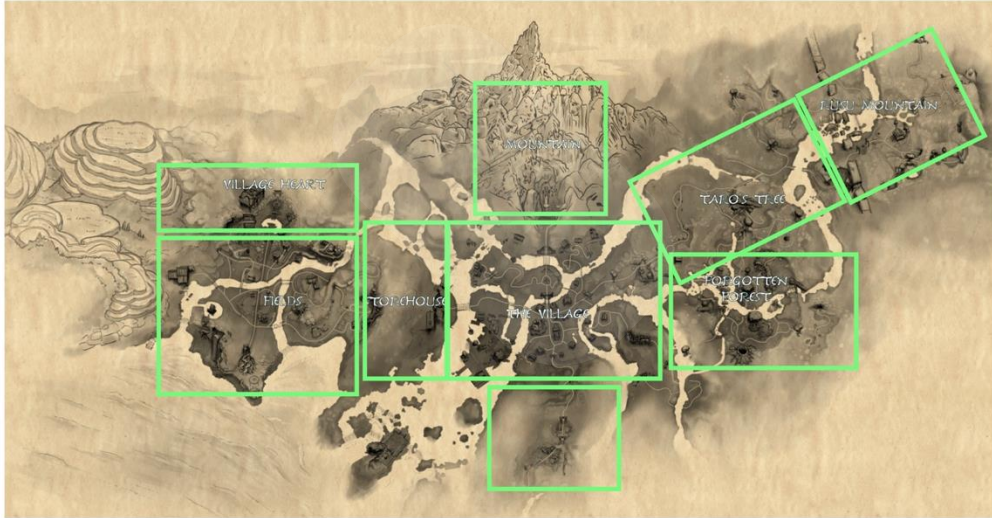
Comparing the initial and final maps, it can be seen that large portions of the initial map are filled by negative space. Areas are unlocked and marked on the map as a whole unit whenever they become relevant to the story (Figure 4).

Figure 4 : Kena Area Unlocking

Annotated Screenshots from MKIceandFire (2021, 3:21:46-3:21:49)

Firewatch (2016, Campo Santo)

Firewatch's map is diegetic as the player observes it through the first-person perspective (Figure 5). Opening the map means that the player character, Henry, holds the map in his hands, and players must zoom in to view details (Figure 6).

Figure 5 : Firewatch Map in World
Annotated Screenshot from Encrypted Duck (2020, 19:14)

Mission description

Map key & notes area

Map display area (zoomable)

Compass as navigation aid

Figure 6 : Firewatch Map Zoomed in
Annotated Screenshot from Encrypted Duck (2020)

Timestamp: 19:14

"You are here" marker

Henry's map annotation key

Timestamp: 2:42:11

On the initial map (Figure 7), players can see the entirety of the accessible world as well as the location of cache supply boxes that roughly partition the different areas, and Cave 452.

Figure 7 : Firewatch Initial Map & Areas

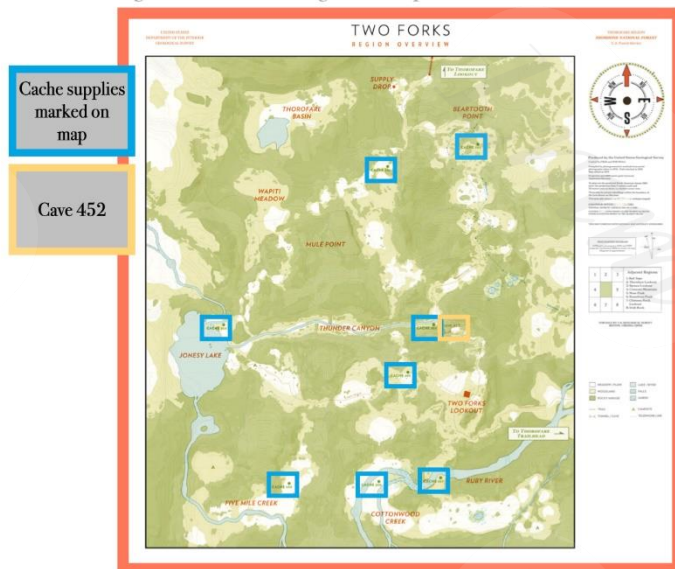Figure 8.1: Annotated Image from Campo Santo (2016)

Figure 8.2: Annotated Screenshot from Encrypted Duck (2020, 3:17:02)

The final map differs drastically as it is heavily annotated with information the player receives over the course of the narrative (Figure 8).

Figure 8 : Firewatch Final Map Zoomed in & out
Annotated Screenshots from Encrypted Duck (2020, 3:17:02-3:17:07)
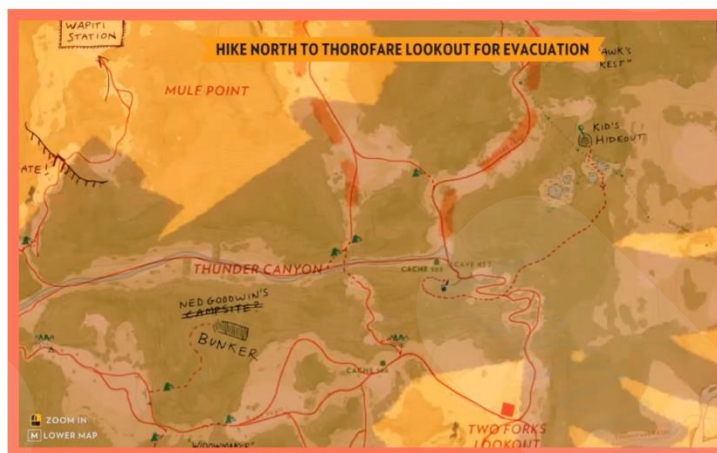
Supply caches, marked on the initial map, are boxes found in the world that contain map segments which Henry copies onto his own to fill in new areas with details (Figure 9). New information can also be discovered and noted when exploring, or during conversation (Figure 10).

Figure 9 : Firewatch Cache Supply Mechanic
Annotated Screenshots from Encrypted Duck (2020, 19:50-22:23)

Map segment found in supply cache 306

Interaction prompt:
MAP
COPY INFORMATION

Map BEFORE finding supply cache 306

Map AFTER finding supply cache 306

Figure 10 : Conversation Information on Map
Annotated & Transcribed Screenshots from Encrypted Duck (2020, 1:59:36-1:59:55)

Transcript:

Delilah: It's in the southeast corner of your map. The scout camp where the firefighters were stages should be on your map. It looks like a little triangle with a flat bottom.

Henry marks the spot

LOOK FOR CONTROLLED BURN SOUTH OF RUBY RIVER

Everybody's Gone to the Rapture (2015, The Chinese Room)

Everybody's Gone to the Rapture's (Everybody's Gone) maps are entirely diegetic and only viewable through the first-person lens. They can be found by bus stops and the town hall, for example (Figure 11).

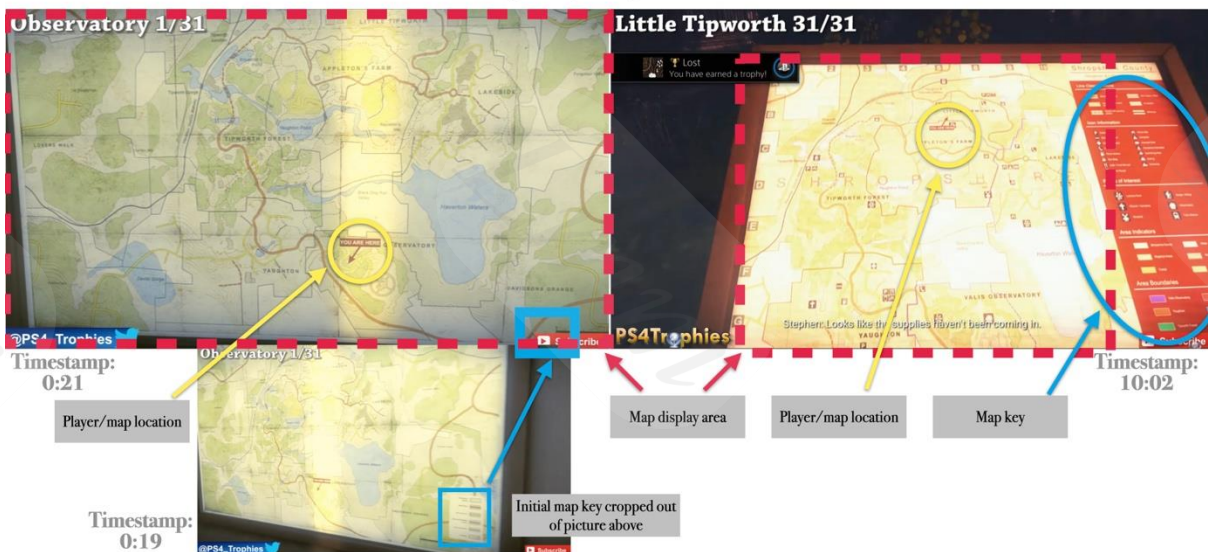**Figure 11 : Everybody's Gone Maps in World**
Annotated Screenshots from Full Playthrough (2016)
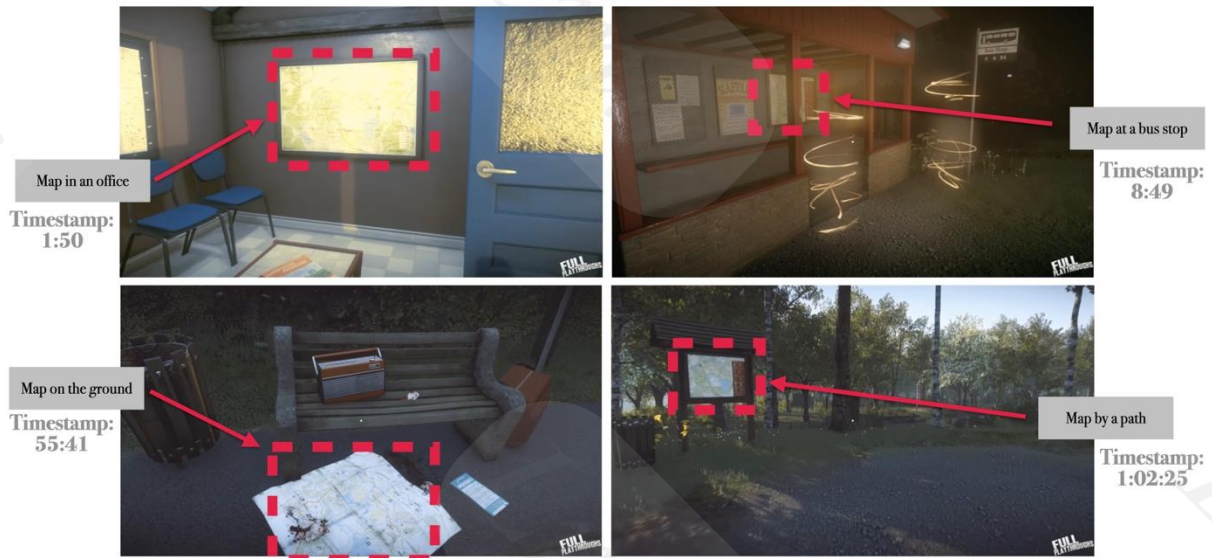
Most maps show the entirety of the game's world and all its areas. The initial map is thereby practically identical to the final one (Figure 12).

Figure 12 : Everybody's Gone Initial vs Final Map
Annotated Screenshots from PS5 Trophies (2015)

Xenoblade Chronicles X (2015, Monolith Soft)

<u>Xenoblade Chronicles X</u>'s (Xenoblade X) map is highly complex, as it is interactive, multi-layered, and extremely large. Individual regions can be zoomed in and out of, broken into smaller segments, and contain multiple layers. Information acquired about the map throughout the game is unrelated to the main story and is only marked on the zoomed in regional maps. For this reason, only the macroscopic world map will be analyzed in this paper.

The game uses the handheld Wii U screen to display its map in menu form (Figure 13).

Figure 13 : Xenoblade X Map on Wii U Handheld Screen
Annotated Screenshot from Nintendo of America (2015, 2:24)

The world consists of six borderless areas, which are outlined on the initial map. Besides the survey rates displayed next to each area, the initial and final map are nearly identical at the macroscopic level (Figure 14).

Figure 14 : Xenoblade X Initial vs Final Map

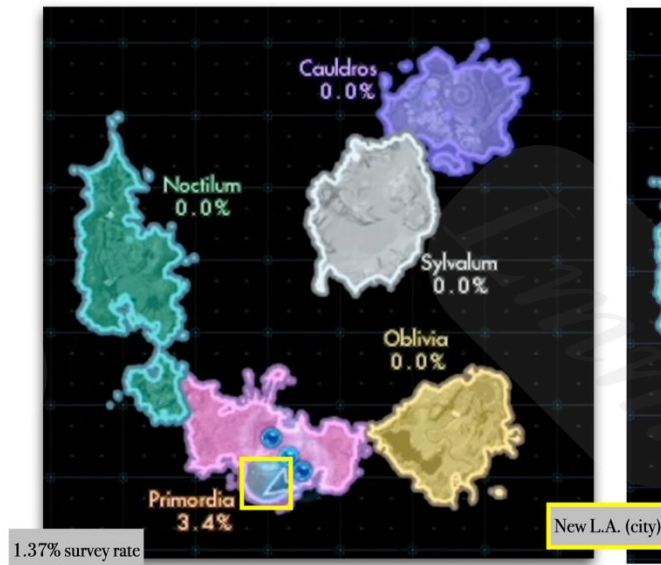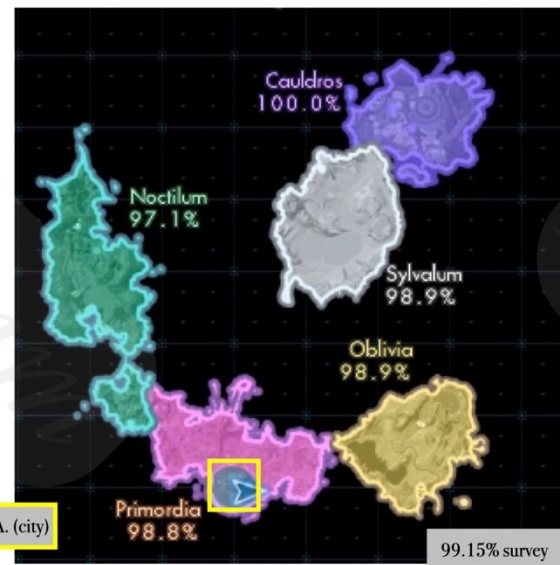Figure 14.1: Annotated Screenshot from Nintendo of America (2016, 2:24)   Figure 14.2: Annotated Image from sandman (2016)

Comparative Analysis I

Foreshadowing

In literature, foreshadowing is used to heighten the audience's anticipation and the suspense to keep them engaged until the tension is dispersed through a revelation (Gottlieb). Similarly, narrative games can employ foreshadowing to keep players engaged in and remind them of the story. The following analysis will examine how and to what effect the case study games use, or purposefully refrain from foreshadowing elements of their plot via their maps.

Kena & Firewatch

Kena and Firewatch use similar foreshadowing techniques:

The most evident instance of foreshadowing on Kena's map is the order in which areas are revealed on the map. On the initial map players can see the following four areas; the ruins, which serve as the tutorial area, the village which serves as the hub, Taro's Forest where the first mission is located, and the mountain. Although the first three areas become immediately accessible to players, the mountain is the last area to be unlocked and where the final boss fight occurs (Figure 15).

Figure 15 : Kena Area Visibility vs Accessibility Order
Annotated Image from Ember Lab (2021)

By displaying the final area on the initial map, the designers communicate their intentions clearly and ensure that the player is persistently aware of the ultimate goal of the game—reaching the mountain shrine—which is also explicitly stated during the game's exposition. Further, <u>Kena</u> is themed around death, and players are tasked with helping regretful, angry and grieving spirits ascend (Figure 16). The mountain, where players face the last mission which is titled "Letting Go", thus acts as a beacon and a symbol for ascending and overcoming the pain. The initial map may thereby be thematically filtered.

Figure 16 : Kena Finale Conversation
Transcribed Screenshots from Ember Lab (2021, 6:24:24-6:24:43)
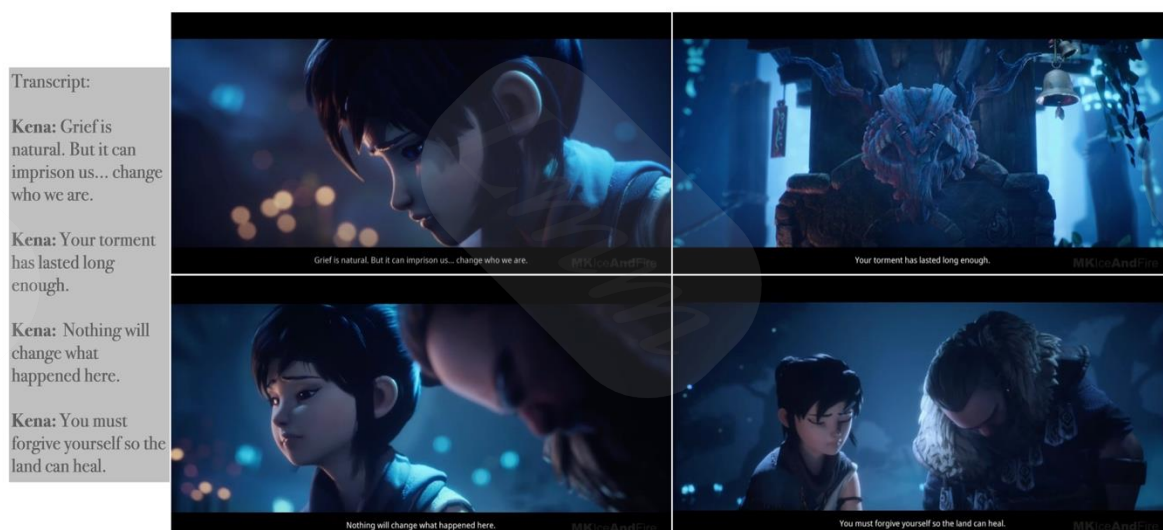
Similarly, on <u>Firewatch</u>'s initial map, players can spot Cave 452, the location in which they encounter a dramatic revelation towards the end of the game. The labelling of the cave stands out significantly as, besides it, the map exclusively shows region names, landmarks, and cache supply points. The locked gate in the cave can only be unlocked on the last day of the story. Its inclusion on the initial map and its proximity to the hub "Two Forks Lookout" reveals the designers' intention to foreshadow its significance and to perpetually remind players of its mystery.

Furthermore, one of the themes explored in <u>Firewatch</u> is that of facing fears. The events revealed in the cave are alluded to throughout the entirety of the game (Figure 17), and the cave thereby becomes a symbol for discernible but regrettable truths. Marking it on the initial map can hence also be considered a means for underlining and foreshadowing themes.

Figure 17 : Firewatch Foreshadowing Conversations

Timestamp: 2:01:47-2:02:30

Day 76 Conversation Transcript:

Delilah: It just struck me that if anything weird like this happened to them, happened to Brian... just how scared he would've been.
Henry: I'm sure he's fine, Delilah. Don't you think if this started happening to them he or his dad would've said something?
Delilah: I don't know. Ned was a weird guy.
Henry: Nobody is THAT weird. [...]
Henry: Brian's fine.
Delilah: I hope so.
Henry: It was three years ago. He's in high school now. He's on summer break.
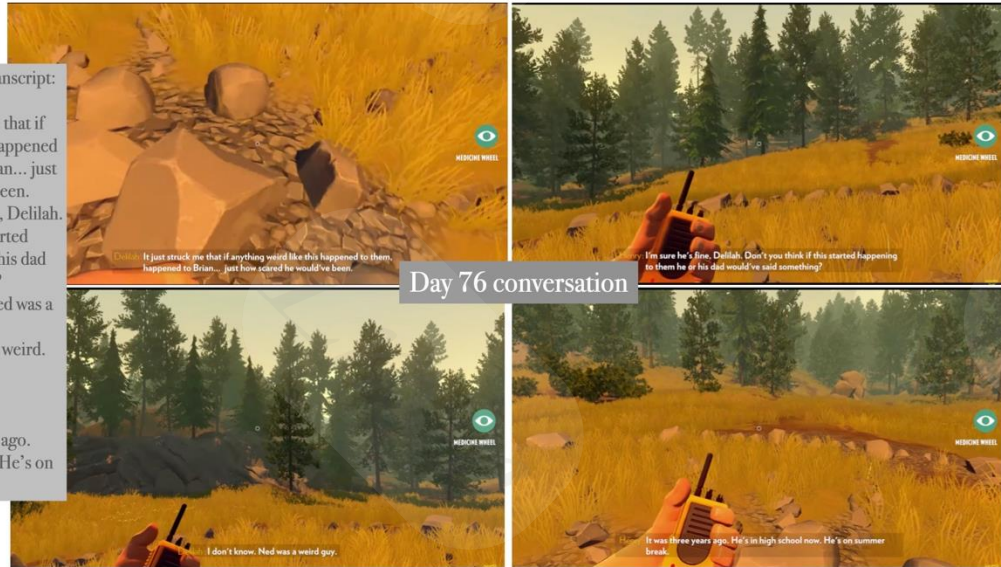
Day 76 conversation

Day 78 conversations

Timestamp: 3:01:36

Transcript:

Henry: You're Brian Goodwin.

Timestamp: 3:04:44

Transcript:

Delilah: He'd be alive had I told someone he was out here.

Kena and Firewatch displaying their final, symbolic locations on their initial maps could result in revelations seeming cumulative, leading players to the end through strong thematic subtext. Individual revelations will all be associated with what players interpret as the final or most significant location, and both games fulfil player expectations accordingly.

Everybody's Gone

Comparatively, the initial map of <u>Everybody's Gone</u>, which displays all areas and information from the start, takes a more subtle approach. Still, the overtly designed "you are here" marker's location as well as the layout of the map hold two implications for players:

Firstly, players start right beside the observatory, as is explicitly displayed by the marker on the initial map. However, players discover after following the path on the map that access to the premises is barred by a locked gate. As a result, the clear demarcation of player position on the map combined with the inaccessibility of the observatory can be considered as a form of foreshadowing, since player interest in the observatory is peaked but not satisfied (Figure 18).

Figure 18 : Everybody's Gone Foreshadowing Trajectory
Annotated Screenshots from PS5 Trophies (2015, 0:21)

Secondly, the lake in the center of the map, labelled "Haverton Waters", along with the bold orange lines showing roads may lead players to believe that they will navigate the map clockwise, meaning they will return to the observatory at the end (Figure 18). Although players are actually teleported from the penultimate area, "Little Tipworth", to the observatory, skipping "Davidson's Grange", the implications of the layout are fulfilled.

Additionally, players learn that the state of the world they explore was caused by the interference of an alien species, which was first discovered in the observatory. Pointing players towards the observatory hints at the story's supernatural elements. Its function is

thereby less symbolic than in <u>Kena</u> or <u>Firewatch</u>, but it signposts the direction of the story clearly and encourages players to infer a conclusion early on.

Xenoblade X

<u>Xenoblade X</u> stands in stark contrast to the three games analyzed previously, as it purposefully hides the location of the final plot point until the end to heighten the suspense. It is stated in the story's exposition that the player's ultimate goal is to locate the "Lifehold", a vessel which contains most spaceship passengers in stasis (Figure 19).

Figure 19 : Xenoblade X Exposition Conversation
Transcribed Screenshots from Gamer's Little Playground (2022, 38:10-38:42)

Chapter 1 Exposition Transcript:

Elma: But the vast majority [of passengers] were in the Lifehold – ARE in the Lifehold.
[…]
Elma: We know now the Lifehold broke apart along with the rest of the ship when we came down on Mira.
Elma: What we don't know is exactly where all the pieces landed.
Elma: BLADE's [organization player is a part of] top priority is locating the missing units.

However, regardless of how closely players explore the world, the location of the Lifehold (Figure 20) and access to it is only given in the last chapter of the game.

Figure 20 : Xenoblade X Location of Lifehold
Annotated Image from WizPigOP (2016)
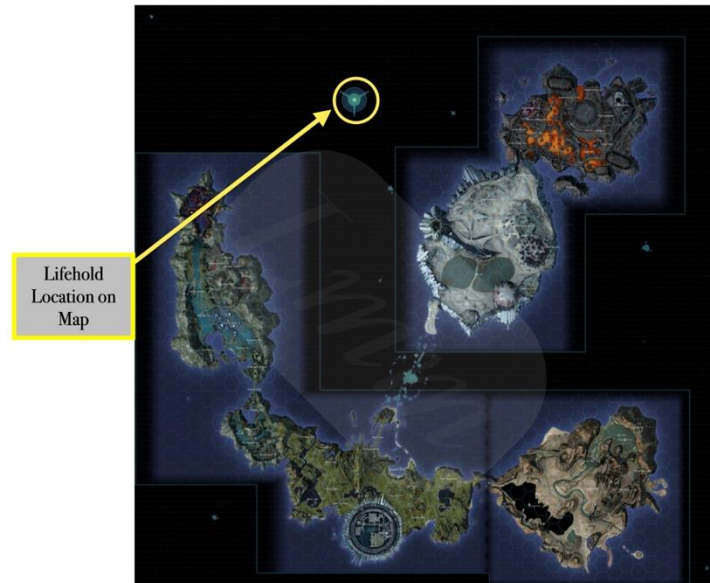
The area in which the Lifehold is located consists of negative space on the map, but is totally accessible. Flying over the exact spot the Lifehold is located in does not cause the map to fill in, and there are no in-world visual cues in the location (ReddShope, 2015). Leaving players no means to discover the Lifehold before they reach the designated plot point shows the designers' insistence on maintaining the location a mystery until the end and prioritizing players' adherence to the plot over player initiative. The game thereby is designed to do the opposite of foreshadowing by gatekeeping information and excluding it from both the initial and the final map (Figure 21).

Figure 21 : Xenoblade X Initial & Final Map Lifehold Estimated Location

Figure 21.1: Annotated Screenshot from Nintendo of America (2016, 2:24)   Figure 21.2: Annotated Image from sandman (2016)
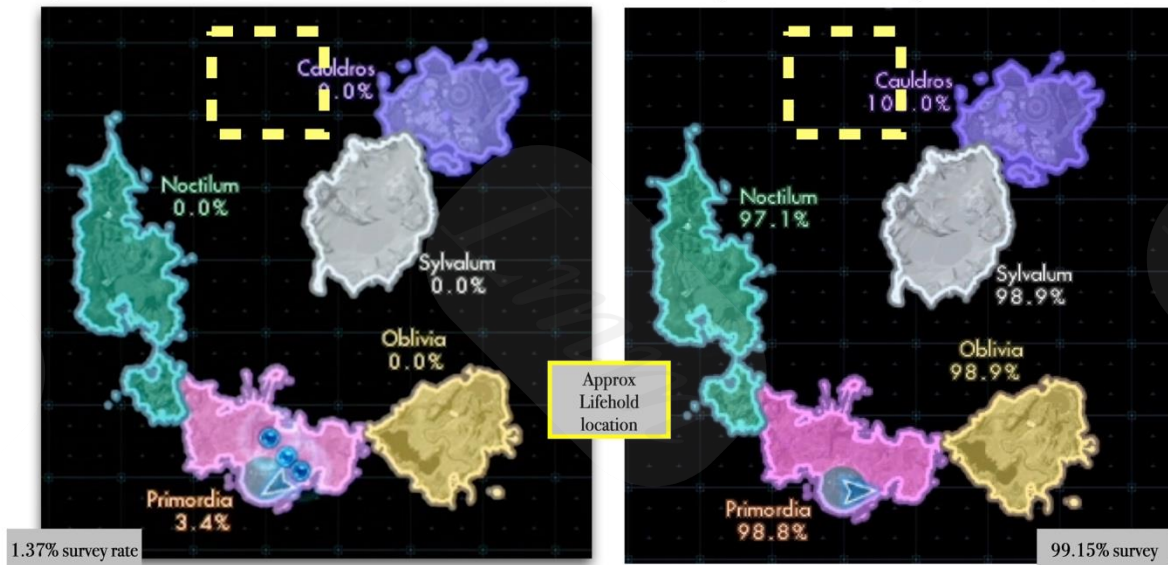
The Lifehold not being a landmass could be the reason for its absence on the map, but its qualification as a region in the game (Figure 22) and not just a landmark or an area would suggest that, along with all other regions, it should be visible at the very least on the final map after having been discovered.

Figure 22 : Xenoblade X Region vs Landmark Classification

Annotated Screenshots from RedmondStache (2015-2016)

Whereas <u>Firewatch</u>'s revelation is about the events that occurred in Cave 452, <u>Xenoblade X</u>'s revelation is the Lifehold's location itself. It hence does not use its map to foreshadow, and instead builds suspense differently, for example through dialogue. Arguably though, in a game that encourages exploration and asks its players to find the Lifehold during its exposition, this choice diverts from the expectations it constructs for itself.

Comparative Analysis II

Pacing

So far, the map's impact on players' initial knowledge of the narrative has been analyzed. It is now worth considering the manner in which the map dynamically changes to reveal narrative and the impacts on pacing.

Kena

<u>Kena</u>'s system of areas being invisible before unlocking and fading in as a unit whenever they become relevant has the following effect on pacing:

While knowing the story will conclude at the mountain shrine, players are otherwise unable to anticipate events (with the exception of two boss fights) via the map. The amount and subject of areas and plot points that lie between the beginning and the end is undiscernible until the map is completed (Figure 23).

Figure 23 : Kena Initial Map Negative Spaces
Annotated Screenshot from MKIceandFire (2021, 21:23)

Since each area contains plot points, having a filled in map is equivalent to reaching the narrative's conclusion. Therefore, when areas unlock, players are temporarily focused on the relevant plot points and new information rather than on the roughly predictable end, which may be an intentional design choice to slow the narrative's pacing.

Firewatch

<u>Firewatch</u>'s map fills in as Henry annotates information he discovers. Again, the narrative

pace is moderated through the gradual unlocking of information and players' foresight of the most immediate plot points is limited in part by missing information on the map.

In contrast to <u>Kena</u>, <u>Firewatch</u>'s initial map displays the entire outline of the world. Players are aware of the amount of regions that are unexplored and may be able to speculate on the location of the next plot point and the implications thereof (Figure 24).

Figure 24 : Firewatch Notes on Day 2
Annotated Screenshots from Encrypted Duck (2020, 46:58)

The map is used to both encourage players to hypothesize and prevent them from thinking too far ahead, which aligns with the narrative's focus on solving mysteries.

Everybody's Gone & Xenoblade X

Neither <u>Everybody's Gone</u> nor <u>Xenoblade X</u> redact any information from the initial map, impacting pacing as follows:

<u>Everybody's Gone</u> features no pacing tools. While the average playthrough may take over four hours (HowLongToBeat, n.d.), it is entirely possible to finish the game in just over three minutes via a popular glitch (TrohyHunt3rs, 2020), and otherwise in around twenty minutes (HowLongToBeat). This is because clearing or discovering plot points is not mandatory to reach the finale, and players are almost entirely free to navigate the space they are shown on the map. This tactic undermines narrative – players will miss information found in the world and on other maps (Figure 25) – but gives players a feeling of control in the game's otherwise potentially restrictive genre of walking simulators.

Figure 25 : Everybody's Gone Map Symbols

Figure 25.1: Annotated & Edited Screenshot
from PS5 Trophies (2015)   Figure 25.2: Annotated Screenshots from Full Playthrough (2016)

Sign annotated on
maps and world

Timestamp: Timestamp:
0:45   1:36
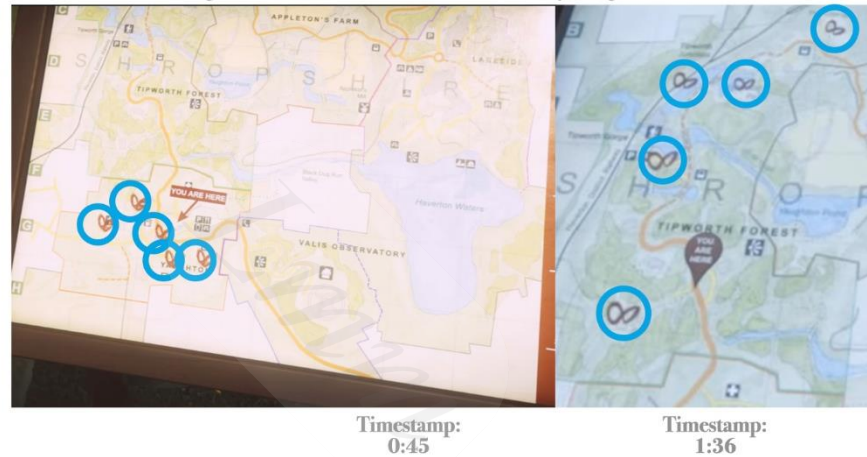
Xenoblade X makes heavy use of level gating to prevent players from entering areas containing information about future plot points and chapters. These areas are often populated by high level enemies or require means of transportation unlocked in later parts of the narrative. Notable, however, are the survey rate percentages beside each continent, which often serve as prerequisites for main story quests (Figure 26).

Figure 26 : Xeno X Survey Rate Prerequisites for Story Missions

Chapter #	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Survey Rate Requirements to	N/A	N/A	N/A	Primordia Region 15%	N/A	Noctilum Region 20%
Chapter #	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10	Chapter 11	Chapter 12
Survey Rate Requirements to	Oblivia Region 25%	Mira (Name of Whole World) 10%	N/A	Sylvalum Region 10%	Cauldros Region 10%	N/A

Though the map is not advertently used to pace players, it reflects pacing through variables which are closely tied to narrative progression, arguably pushing players to advance through the story.
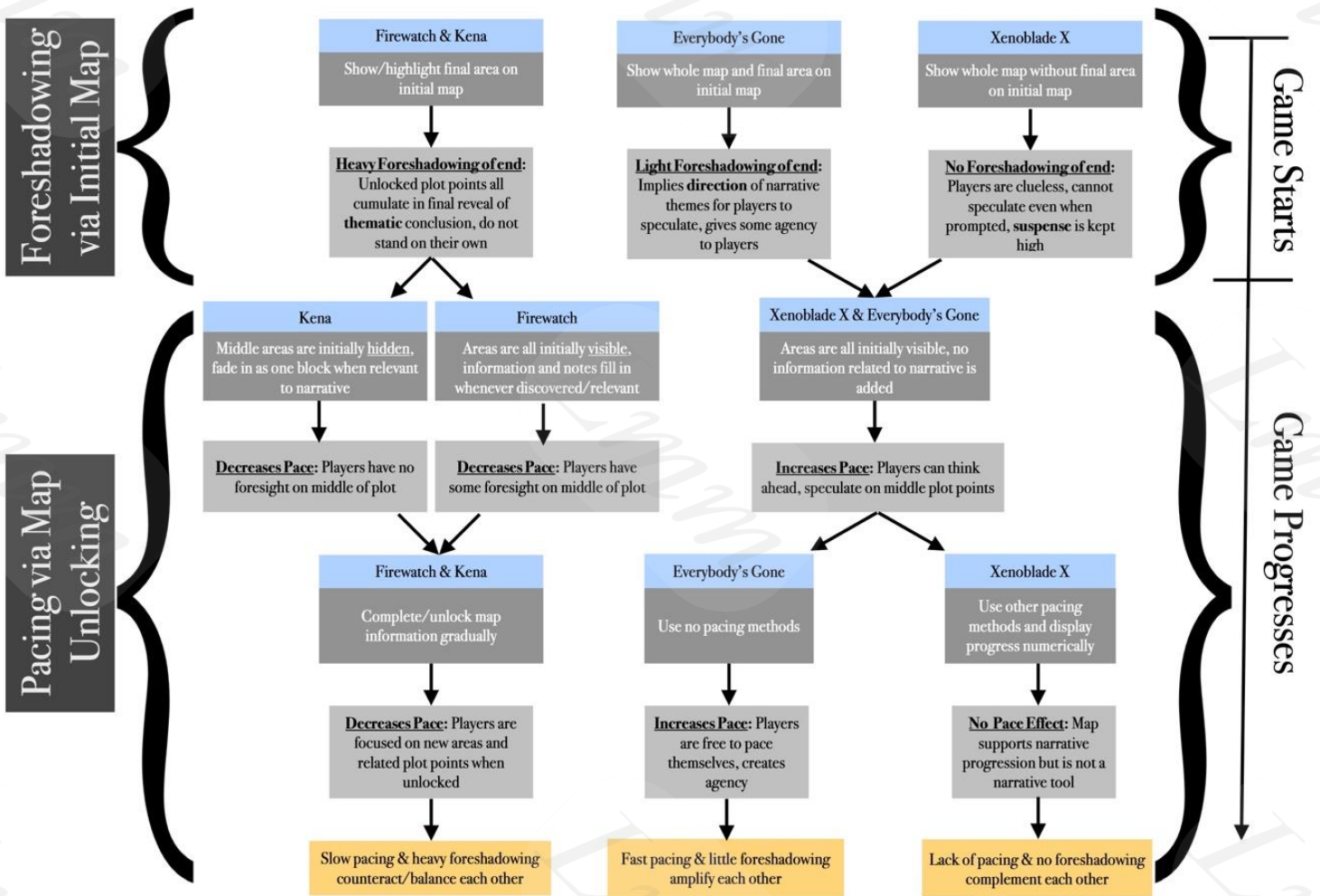
Framework

In a game, design choices made about the initial map and the pace of revealing information on it can have a significant impact on how players experience the narrative. The following framework (Figure 27) summarizes the cause-and-effect relationships of the case study findings for designers looking to create maps with narrative significance:

Figure 27 : Design Framework

Key

| Design Aspect | Case Study Game | Design Choice/Technique | Effect | Combined Effect |

Foreshadowing via Initial Map

Game Starts

Firewatch & Kena
Show/highlight final area on initial map

Everybody's Gone
Show whole map and final area on initial map

Xenoblade X
Show whole map without final area on initial map

Heavy Foreshadowing of end: Unlocked plot points all cumulate in final reveal of **thematic** conclusion, do not stand on their own

Light Foreshadowing of end: Implies **direction** of narrative themes for players to speculate, gives some agency to players

No Foreshadowing of end: Players are clueless, cannot speculate even when prompted, **suspense** is kept high

Pacing via Map Unlocking

Game Progresses

Kena
Middle areas are initially hidden, fade in as one block when relevant to narrative

Firewatch
Areas are all initially visible, information and notes fill in whenever discovered/relevant

Xenoblade X & Everybody's Gone
Areas are all initially visible, no information related to narrative is added

Decreases Pace: Players have no foresight on middle of plot

Decreases Pace: Players have some foresight on middle of plot

Increases Pace: Players can think ahead, speculate on middle plot points

Firewatch & Kena
Complete/unlock map information gradually

Everybody's Gone
Use no pacing methods

Xenoblade X
Use other pacing methods and display progress numerically

Decreases Pace: Players are focused on new areas and related plot points when unlocked

Increases Pace: Players are free to pace themselves, creates agency

No Pace Effect: Map supports narrative progression but is not a narrative tool

Slow pacing & heavy foreshadowing counteract/balance each other

Fast pacing & little foreshadowing amplify each other

Lack of pacing & no foreshadowing complement each other

From the analysis, the following strategies have been identified:

- To highlight the theme or direction of the narrative, final locations can be signposted on the initial map to **foreshadow**. If location in itself is a mystery, suspense can be built through other **foreshadowing** devices, and the final location can be redacted from the initial map.

- To slow down **narrative pacing**, information about unexplored areas should not be given prematurely to avoid players predicting the middle section of the plot. To speed up **narrative pacing**, map information can be given early to give players the power to speculate about the plot's middle section.

- Not all maps need to be designed to pace the narrative. Some may simply encourage players to advance by hinging their narrative progression on displayed variables.

Conclusion

Maps are filtered guides, both in reality and in games. The potential to optimize a map's purpose should not be overseen by game designers. The information players receive or are denied upon initially discovering the map provides an opportunity for designers to imply strategies and encourage players to focus on particular aspects. Initial maps become a pitch that succeeds or fails to maintain player interest until the narrative conclusion. Since the map is also a companion throughout gameplay, its development and changes can impact player behaviour significantly and continuously draw parallels between navigation and narrative. If maps can be used to guide players through stories, they could help to overcome ludonarrative dissonances in narrative open world games. The expansion of the suggested framework of this case study may unveil further connections between narratives and maps, and grant designers more control over the stories they wish to tell.

Word Count: 2967

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Figures

Figure 1: Kena Map Menu Elements

MKIceAndFire. (2021) *KENA BRIDGE OF SPIRITS Gameplay Walkthrough Part 1 FULL* [Screenshot]Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXBJXnExl0U&t=12109s&ab_channel=MKIceAndFire> (Timestamp: 21:23)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 2: Kena Initial Map

MKIceAndFire. (2021) *KENA BRIDGE OF SPIRITS Gameplay Walkthrough Part 1 FULL* [Screenshot]Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXBJXnExl0U&t=12109s&ab_channel=MKIceAndFire> (Timestamp: 21:23)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 3: Kena Final Map

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Figure 4: Kena Area Unlocking

MKIceAndFire. (2021) *KENA BRIDGE OF SPIRITS Gameplay Walkthrough Part 1 FULL* [Screenshot]Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXBJXnExl0U&t=12109s&ab_channel=MKIceAndFire> (Timestamp: 3:21:46 – 3:21:49)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 5: Firewatch Map in World

Encrypted Duck (2020) *Firewatch – Full Game (No Commentary)*[Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2snk0zU018&ab_channel=EncryptedDuck > (Timestamp: 19:14)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 6: Firewatch Map Zoomed In

Encrypted Duck (2020) *Firewatch – Full Game (No Commentary)*[Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2snk0zU018&ab_channel=EncryptedDuck > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 7: Firewatch Initial Map & Areas

Figure 7.1

Campo Santo (2016) *World Map (Clean)*. Available at : < https://firewatch.fandom.com/wiki/Map_and_Compass?file=WorldMap_Clean.jpg > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 7.2

Encrypted Duck (2020) *Firewatch – Full Game (No Commentary)*[Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2snk0zU018&ab_channel=EncryptedDuck > (Timestamp: 19:14)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 8: Firewatch Final Map Zoomed In & Out

Encrypted Duck (2020) *Firewatch – Full Game (No Commentary)*[Screenshot] Available at : <
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2snk0zU018&ab_channel=EncryptedDuck >
(Timestamp: 3:17:02-3:17:07)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 9: Cache Supply Mechanic

Encrypted Duck (2020) *Firewatch – Full Game (No Commentary)*[Screenshot] Available at : <
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2snk0zU018&ab_channel=EncryptedDuck >
(Timestamp: 19:50-22:23)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 10: Conversation Information on Map

Encrypted Duck (2020) *Firewatch – Full Game (No Commentary)*[Screenshot] Available at : <
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2snk0zU018&ab_channel=EncryptedDuck >
(Timestamp: 1:59:36-1:59:55)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 11: Everybody's Gone Maps in World

Full Playthrough (2016) *Everybody's Gone To The Rapture | PC HD 60^{fps} | Full Gameplay Walkthrough | No Commentary* [Screenshot] Available at : <
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuG87lRK1uo&t=3s&ab_channel=FullPlaythroughs > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 12: Everybody's Gone Initial vs Final Map

PS5 Trophies (2015) *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture - Lost Trophy Guide - All "You Are Here" Maps* [Screenshot] Available at : <
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfiIqTrhfws&ab_channel=PS5Trophies > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 13: Xenoblade X Map on Wii U Handheld Screen

Nintendo of America (2015) *Ennobled Chronicles X Survival Guide: Mining Your Own Business* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5GMD_-y6Iw&ab_channel=NintendoofAmerica > (Timestamp: 2:24)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 14: Xenoblade X Initial Map vs Final Map

Figure 14.1

Nintendo of America (2015) *Xenoblade Chronicles X Survival Guide: Mining Your Own Business* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5GMD_-y6Iw&ab_channel=NintendoofAmerica > (Timestamp: 2:24)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 14.2

landman (2016) *Xenoblade Chronicles X 99.15% Survey Rate Map* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://i.imgur.com/p2FUHTs.jpg > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 15: Kena Area Visibility vs Accessibility Order

Ember Lab (2021) *Kena: Bridge of Spirits Interactive Map*. Available at: <
https://mapgenie.io/kena-bridge-of-spirits/maps/world > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 16: Kena Finale Conversation

MKIceAndFire. (2021) *KENA BRIDGE OF SPIRITS Gameplay Walkthrough Part 1 FULL* [Screenshot]Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXBJXnExl0U&t=12109s&ab_channel=MKIceAndFire> (Timestamp: 6:24:24-6:24:43)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 17: Firewatch Foreshadowing Conversations

Encrypted Duck (2020) *Firewatch – Full Game (No Commentary)* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2snk0zU018&ab_channel=EncryptedDuck > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 18: Everybody's Gone Foreshadowing Trajectory

PS5 Trophies (2015) *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture - Lost Trophy Guide - All "You Are Here" Maps* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfiIqTrhfws&ab_channel=PS5Trophies > (Accessed Nov 2022)(Timestamp: 0:21)

Figure 19: Xenoblade X Exposition Conversation

Gamer's Little Playground (2022) *XEONBLADE CHRONICLES X All Cutscenes (Game Movie) HD* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVx8eXi6o5E&ab_channel=Gamer%27sLittlePlayground > (Accessed Nov 2022)(Timestamp: 38:19-38:42)

Figure 20: Xenoblade X Location of Lifehold

WixPigOP (2016) *Xenoblade Chronicles X Map HD* Available at : < https://www.deviantart.com/wizpigop/art/Xenoblade-Chronicles-X-Map-HD-584704401 > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 21: Xenoblade X Initial & Final Map Estimated Lifehold Location

Figure 21.1

Nintendo of America (2015) *Xenoblade Chronicles X Survival Guide: Mining Your Own Business* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5GMD_-y6Iw&ab_channel=NintendoofAmerica > (Timestamp: 2:24)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 21.2

landman (2016) *Xenoblade Chronicles X 99.15% Survey Rate Map* [Screenshot] Available at : <https://i.imgur.com/p2FUHTs.jpg > (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 22: Xenoblade X Region vs Landmark Classification

RedmondStache. (2015-2016) *Let's Play Xenoblade Chronicles X - RedRun* [Playlist] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5ow4j8rMR2reoA_wDF8Gc-DGzDwOtgHU> (Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 23: Kena Initial Map Negative Spaces

MKIceAndFire. (2021) *KENA BRIDGE OF SPIRITS Gameplay Walkthrough Part 1 FULL* [Screenshot]Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXBJXnExl0U&t=12109s&ab_channel=MKIceAndFire> (Timestamp: 21:23)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 24: Firewatch Notes on Day 2

MKIceAndFire. (2021) *KENA BRIDGE OF SPIRITS Gameplay Walkthrough Part 1 FULL* [Screenshot]Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXBJXnExl0U&t=12109s&ab_channel=MKIceAndFire> (Timestamp: 3:21:46 – 3:21:49)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 25: Everybody's Gone Map Symbols

Figure 25.1

Full Playthrough (2016) *Everybody's Gone To The Rapture | PC HD 60ᶠᵖˢ | Full Gameplay Walkthrough | No Commentary* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuG87lRK1uo&t=3s&ab_channel=FullPlaythroughs > (Timestamp: 45:02)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 25.2

PS5 Trophies (2015) *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture - Lost Trophy Guide - All "You Are Here" Maps* [Screenshot] Available at : < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfiIqTrhfws&ab_channel=PS5Trophies > (Timestamp: 0:44)(Accessed Nov 2022)

Appendix A: Vocabulary

Story	Narrative and plot combined, "what you tell" (Nicklin, 2020)
Narrative	How content of the story is told, "how you tell it" (Nicklin, 2020)
Narrative Pacing	The speed and rhythm at which plot points are delivered
Plot	Sequence of events, "the events in time linear order" (Nicklin, 2020)
Plot Point	One event of the narrative
Foreshadowing	"the organization and presentation of events and scenes in a work of fiction or drama so that the reader or observer is prepared to some degree for what occurs later in the work" (Britannica, n.d.)

Appendix B: Case Study Games Story Summaries

Kena: Bridge of Spirits

Kena: Bridge of Spirits follows the story of Kena, a spirit guide, looking to cross the sacred mountain shrine on her pilgrimage. She comes across an abandoned and corrupted village and must discover what happened to its inhabitants whilst freeing their grieving souls before proceeding.

Firewatch

Firewatch tells the story of Henry, who is grieving the loss of his relationship. He applies to work as a fire watch in a national park and unveils the grim causes behind the mysterious disappearance of Henry predecessor and other happenings in the park.

Everybody's Gone to the Rapture

In Everybody's Gone to the Rapture, the player navigates in first-person mode, trying to understand what bizarre events at the local observatory led to the abandonment of the village Yaughton and its surroundings.

Xenoblade Chronicles X

The story of Xenoblade Chronicles X begins with Earth being destroyed in the battle between two foreign alien species. After fleeing, the human spaceship is once again attacked and crash lands on the planet Mira. The player must aid the crew in creating safe living conditions on the planet, ensuring human survival, and discovering the mysteries behind the alien battle.