TREASURE, SWORDFIGHTS, AND PLANTATIONS:
ROMANTIC PIRATES AND THE POSTCOLONIAL IN
ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

Joyce Dijkstra

5911508

Master's Thesis

New Media & Digital Culture

Abstract

Tales of piracy are influenced by popular media that romanticize it. For instance, *Treasure Island* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* created a romantic pirate image, with specific pirate tropes that now everyone is familiar with. This romantic pirate image is based upon Caribbean pirates from the Golden Age of Piracy. A current game, namely; *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2013), that is settled within this Golden Age of Piracy in the colonial Caribbean around 1715 also deals with the romanticization of piracy. This is because consumers have certain expectations when it comes to pirates. This period of time being dominated by colonialism causes that the representation of piracy in popular media is tied up with the representation of colonialism, and consequently the subaltern. A romantic representation of Caribbean pirates could therefore be problematic for their representation. For this reason, this research adds to the existing debate surrounding postcolonialism and game studies by focusing on how/whether romanticization affects the representation of colonialism, and consequently the subaltern. The research uses a plurality of play, because play explains whether the subaltern is controlled or been given agency, and because playing in a different way than following the game allows for new insights. Hereby have implied play and exploratory play been used to investigate how piracy is represented while playing according to the rules. Transgressive play is further used in order to investigate what the boundaries of the representation of piracy are, and what the role of the player is. All of this has then been placed in relation to the romantic pirate genre, and representation of the subaltern. The research concludes that the rules of the game, regardless of the player's role, create romance as the overarching narrative. The subaltern is hereby suppressed and silenced because they are represented in a problematic counterfactual way, and because truthful representations relating to the subaltern are silenced. For these reasons, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* does not contain postcolonial perspectives, and romanticizes Caribbean pirates together with the colonial Caribbean.

Words of thanks

For the creation and the process of writing this Master thesis I would like to thank three people in special. At first, I thank my supervisor René Glas for guiding me through the process and providing me with an abundance of feedback to be able to complete this thesis. Secondly, I thank Jannie van Asselt, who as like in my bachelor, has read and corrected all of my papers during this Master and contributed to a better use of language. Finally, my thanks go to my friendly peer guinea pig Britta de Vries who has been my support throughout the Master and provided me with useful feedback when possible.

Table of contents

1. Pirates, romanticization, and colonialism

"When up jumped a herring, the queen of the sea, says "Now, Old Skipper, you cannot catch me,"" sings the crew on the pirate ship the Jackdaw. Next to the ship a whale jumps out of the sea, abandoned islands with palm trees are passed by, and the sky and sea are clear blue. When players anchor at a harbor, the same palm trees and blue sky greet them. Under these palm trees and blue sky inhabitants are visibly busy with daily activities, guards are patrolling, and slaves are peacefully at work on plantations. While playing I started to wonder, are the lives of slaves actually miserable?

Videogames have the ability to communicate the worldviews of our culture. What we know about our society then, often occurs to us via media, as sociologist Niklas Luhmann argues.[1] Games with history have become ubiquitous and should be studied. This is important, as media scholar Adam Chapman argues, because games have the ability to represent history.[2] Our information about history could, for instance, derive from the *Assassin's Creed* series, being "the entertainment industry's highest-selling game series set in the past".[3]

History is however often romanticized in popular media, which is inappropriate when games represent a history that is set in a problematic environment, such as colonialism. Romanticizing history is, according to art historian Nancy Moure, a way to give history more flair, which makes it more entertaining and easier to read, but "does history a disservice by distorting it".[4] The action-adventure game *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2013) (hereafter: *Black Flag*) copes with this problem, because it is set in the "Golden Age of Piracy" in the colonial Caribbean in 1715 which is often romanticized by popular media.[5] This is problematic because the romanticization of piracy is tied up with the representation of colonialism, and could therefore misrepresent it.

The Golden Age of Piracy lasted from the 1650s until the 1730s and was mostly apparent in among others the Caribbean.[6] These Caribbean pirates have, according to cultural studies scholar Eugen Pfister, become romantic idols.[7] He explains this by referring to the long term settlement of trading outposts by European colonial empires that could have caused public interest on the

---

[1] Niklas Luhmann, *The reality of the mass media* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 1, quoted in Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 34.

[2] Adam Chapman, *Digital games as history: How videogames represent the past and offer access to historical practice* (New York; London: Routledge, 2016), 32.

[3] Aris Politopoulos et al., ""History Is Our Playground": Action and Authenticity in Assassin's Creed: Odyssey," *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 7, no. 3 (2019): 317.

[4] Nancy Moure, "Review of ON THE EDGE OF AMERICA: CALIFORNIA MODERNIST ART, 1900-1950, by Paul J. Karlstrom," *Southern California Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (1997): 513.

[5] *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2013), [PlayStation 4/Xbox One/Microsoft Windows/Nintendo Switch], Ubisoft.

[6] Mark F. Hall, "Golden Age of Piracy: A Resource Guide," accessed January 16, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/pirates/index.html.

[7] Eugen Pfister, ""In a world without gold, we might have been heroes!" Cultural Imaginations of Piracy in Video Games," *The Forum for Inter-American Research* 11, no. 2 (September 2018): 30-32.

environment.[8] This romantic representation of pirates in the Caribbean has made Caribbean pirates objects of popular fascination and glamorization that tap into our "subconscious desires".[9]

Ashraf Ismail, game director of *Black Flag*, claims that the game tells the reality of pirate fantasy and stays away from pirate clichés to depict a credible version of history.[10] In addition, lead writer Darby McDevitt argues that their goal was to "portray pirates in as realistic alight as possible".[11] These claims are questionable since romantic pirate tales have created a pirate genre which forms a specific expectation from the public. Media scholar Jason Mittell refers, when it comes to genre, to the quote: "I know it when I see it".[12] This indicates that the pirate genre should immediately be recognized when playing/watching pirate media, which thus also counts for *Black Flag*. There exists thus an agreement on what a specific genre may entail, which is also subject to change over time, meaning that genres are cultural practices and givens.[13] The pirate genre thus has an agreement, which needs to be followed by media producers in order to respond to consumer expectations. In addition, media scholar Henry Jenkins argues that when developing a game about pirates, the game relies on its ability to map our preexisting pirate fantasies.[14]

Since *Black Flag* is set during the colonialist era in the Caribbean and the Caribbean pirate is often the inspiration for the pirate genre, the romanticization of piracy could affect the period in time represented. Pfister argues, for instance, that pirate games such as *Black Flag* reflect U.S. and Eurocentric cultural perspectives.[15] Likewise, in *The Good Men Project* Paul Hartzer claims that pirates are being romanticized, because white people are nowadays astonished by their white ancestors who were travelling the world taking everything that they could.[16] The romanticization of pirates thus also impacts our worldview on our colonialist past and is therefore related to postcolonialism, which is nowadays often put in relation to game studies. This means that games that represent colonialism are marked by a Western and, specifically, late 19th-century imperialist bias.[17]

---

[8] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 30-32.

[9] Alexandra Ganser, "'That the Enchantments of the Sea, may not have too strong and quick a Force upon some' Seafaring Mobilities in Transatlantic Narratives of Piracy around 1700," in *Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility in the US and Beyond*, edited by Paul Heike, Alexandra Ganser, and Katharina Gerund (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012), 32, quoted in Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 30; Erin Mackie, "Welcome the Outlaw: Pirates, Maroons, and Caribbean Countercultures," *Cultural Critique* 59 (2005): 24, quoted in Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 30.

[10] John Gaudosi, "Ubisoft Developer Reveals The Real Pirates Of The Caribbean In Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag (Q&A)," *Forbes,* March 4, 2013, https://www.forbes.com/sites/johngaudiosi/2013/03/04/ubisoft-developer-reveals-the-real-pirates-of-the-caribbean-in-assassins-creed-iv-black-flag-qa/#6c9398737942.

[11] IGN, "Assassin's Creed 4: Making of Black Flag - Exclusive Gameplay & Concept Art (Part 1)," YouTube video, 11:48, uploaded [October 3, 2013], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wR04gSLPnI.

[12] Jason Mittell, *Genre and television: From cop shows to cartoons in American culture* (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), 1.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Henry Jenkins, "Game Design as Narrative Architecture," in *First Person. New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, ed. Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 123.

[15] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 40; Philip Penix-Tadsen, "Afterword: Regional Game Studies and Historical Representation," *The Forum for Inter-American Research* 11, no. 2 (September 2018): 72.

[16] Paul Hartzer, "Why Do We Romanticize Pirates?," *The Good Men Project,* September 30, 2018, https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/why-do-we-romanticize-pirates-phtz/.

[17] Souvik Mukherjee, and Emil Lundedal Hammar, "Introduction to the Special Issue on Postcolonial Perspectives in Game Studies," *Open Library of Humanities* 4, no. 2:33 (November 2018): 2.

This research focuses on the representation of piracy in *Black Flag*. With this, it contributes to existing literature surrounding postcolonialism and game studies through focusing on the romantic pirate genre in *Black Flag* and how/whether this could affect the representation of colonialism. The following question is hereby asked:

- In what manner does *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* represent piracy in the Golden Age of Piracy as settled in the colonial Caribbean, given that piracy during this time is often romanticized by popular media?

Within this research, "the representation of piracy" refers to all "piratical groups" that form the broad concept of piracy together and existed within the Golden Age of Piracy as settled in the colonial Caribbean.[18] This also means that historical pirates are mirrored to romantic pirates in order to find inaccuracies. By answering this question then, it becomes clear how *Black Flag* relates to the romantic pirate genre and how/whether this affects the representation of colonialism.

In order to research the representation of piracy and its relation to postcolonialism in *Black Flag* literature surrounding the romantic pirate genre, postcolonialism and game studies, and literature about history in games has been used. The method in this research is a game analysis, in which three different manners of play are combined, namely: implied play, exploratory play, and transgressive play. Implied play is about fulfilling what the game wants the player to do, exploratory play means wandering off the implied path, and transgressive play means deviating from the rules of play.[19] These manners of play are further discussed in chapter 4. The relevancy of using different manners of play is that focusing solely on how the main storyline for instance should be played does not address exploration or transgression. This could namely deliver interesting insights into the representation of piracy in *Black Flag* in relation to colonialism that would otherwise stay hidden. The research is therefore structured using the following sub-questions:

1. How is piracy represented when playing according to the rules using implied and exploratory play?
2. How is piracy represented when playing against the rules using transgressive play?

Within this research, chapter 2 addresses the relation between history, postcolonialism, and videogames, and in chapter 3 the romantic pirate genre is discussed. Chapter 4 addresses method, and chapter 5 and 6 contain the analysis that correspond to the two sub-questions. Finally, chapter 7 provides the conclusion.

---

[18] These piratical groups are real pirates (that attack everyone), privateers, buccaneers, freebooters, and adventurers.
Angus Konstam, *Piraten: een overzicht van begin tot heden van piraterij uit de hele wereld*, trans. Saskia Peeters and Karin Sinnema (Utrecht: Veltman Uitgevers, 2010)*,*10-12; Brian Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber Walk into a Bar… And Undergo a Study in Historical Romanticization," *History Honors Projects* 25 (2018): 8.
[19] Espen J. Aarseth, "I fought the law: Transgressive play and the implied player," in *DiGRA 2007: Situated Play Proceedings* (DiGRA, 2007), 132; Jasper van Vught and René Glas, "Considering play: from method to analysis," *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association Journal* 4, no. 1 (2018): 215-221; Kiri Miller, "The accidental carjack: Ethnography, gameworld tourism, and Grand Theft Auto," *Game Studies* 8, no. 1 (2008), http://gamestudies.org/0801/articles/miller.

2. History in postcolonial videogames

This chapter firstly explains the relation between history and videogames in general. The following sections then put more specific focus on postcolonialism, postcolonial perspectives and their relation with videogames.

2.1 History in videogames

Videogames are often considered as historical simulations that represent history rather than pure historical representations.[20] Political scientists Rolfe D. Peterson, Andrew J. Miller, and Sean J. Fedorko argue this because videogames cannot provide a truly authentic historical representation because they are by nature ahistorical.[21] In addition, media scholar William Uricchio claims that combining historical facts with fiction is a challenge because of the interaction between player and the representation of history.[22] Since this research focuses on different manners of play, the game is treated as a dynamic process, and thus as a historical simulation that represents history. Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko consider three specific components of the construction of a historical representation in historical simulation games through which history can be taught. These are the context of historical events, the subjectivity of actors that make choices within their own historical context, and concepts that explain historical events. All these relate to whether the player is allowed to experiment.[23] These components are however primarily useful for strategy games and are not explicitly used in this research. Nevertheless, these components are considered when *Black Flag* for instance allows the player to experiment with weapons.

Ubisoft is using the tagline "history is our playground" for the *Assassin's Creed* series, which indicates that both "play" and "history" are their points of interest.[24] This coincides with an argument from media scholar Brian Rejack. Rejack argues that games that represent history are in constant negotiation between representing actual historical events and facilitating a joyful play experience.[25] Every moment the game's realism is increased then, it needs to be measured against what this changes for the gameplay. While producers might believe that they create a game that re-creates the past, the game still has to be pleasurable.[26] This argument explains why the romantic pirate genre must be present in *Black Flag* and therefore the negotiation between play and history is considered in this

[20] Rolfe D. Peterson, Andrew J. Miller, and Sean J. Fedorko, "The Same River Twice: Exploring Historical Representation and the value of Simulation in the *Total War, Civilization* and *Patrician* Franchises," in *Playing with the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History*, ed. Matthew W. Kapell and Andrew B. R. Elliott (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2013), 37-38; William Uricchio, "Simulation, history, and computer games," in *Handbook of computer game studies*, ed. Joost Raessens and Jeffrey Goldstein (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 332-335.
[21] Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko, "The Same River Twice," 35.
[22] Uricchio, "Simulation," 334-335.
[23] Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko, "The Same River Twice," 35.
[24] Politopoulos et al., ""History Is Our Playground"", 317.
[25] Brian Rejack, "Toward a Virtual Reenactment of History: Video Games and the Recreation of the Past," *Rethinking History* 11, no. 3 (September 2007): 419-420.
[26] Ibid.

research. In addition, this negotiation could also affect the representation of colonialism, and thus deals with postcolonialism, upon which the next paragraphs are focused.

2.2 Postcolonialism and game studies

Since postcolonialism is an important concept in this research its definition and relation to game studies is relevant to consider. Postcolonialism is, according to Peter Brooker, professor of literary and cultural studies, the study of the ideological and cultural impact of western colonialism and its aftermath as a continuing influence.[27] It is an instrument to expose and study the continuing effects of the urge of former empires to colonize countries, argues Sandra Ponzanesi, professor in gender and postcolonial studies.[28] Postcolonialism uses perspectives that colonialism had set aside and allows the subaltern, which refers to the powerless colonial population, such as slaves, to speak.[29] Therefore, focusing on the representation of the subaltern in relation to the romantic pirate genre is most relevant to analyze.

Media scholars Souvik Mukherjee and Emil Lundedal Hammar argue that postcolonial discourses in relation to game studies have only since recent years become important, while videogames have already addressed colonialism years before.[30] In games such as *Civilization* and *Age of Empires* an empire is being built in which victory is reached by obtaining as much of the map as possible.[31] However, other games have also dealt with colonialism.[32] Elsewhere, Mukherjee argues that the culture of countries that were colonized is portrayed in videogames through Eurocentric lenses on history and progress.[33] The rules of the game can hereby promote colonialism.[34]

Dom Ford, who analyses game studies as intersecting with postcolonialism, continues on this argument as he addresses both Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, postcolonial theorists, in relation to the game *Civilization V*.[35] Ford argues that this game presents a narrative of empire-building that is problematic in relation to postcolonial theory. This is because in *Civilization V* an imperialist narrative is created through the structures and rules of the game, regardless of the player's role. The subaltern is therefore suppressed within the rules of the game in which an overarching grand narrative exists that silences the subaltern's voice.[36] A trend in history is namely to

---

[27] Peter Brooker, *A Glossary of Literary and Cultural Theory* (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 117.
[28] Sandra Ponzanesi, "De kolonie als strijdtoneel: Phoolan Devi en de postkoloniale kritiek," in *Handboek Genderstudies in Media, Kunst en Cultuur*, ed. Rosemarie Buikema and Liedeke Plate (Bussum: Uitgeverij Coutinho, 2015), 135.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Mukherjee and Lundedal Hammar, "Introduction to the Special Issue," 2.
[31] Ibid, 2.
[32] Ibid, 1-14.
[33] Souvik Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back* (Cham: Springer Nature, 2017), 103.
[34] Ibid, 104.
[35] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), 271-313; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Reproduction of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), quoted in Dom Ford,"'EXplore, EXpand, EXploit, EXterminate': Affective Writing of Postcolonial History and Education in Civilization V," *Game Studies* 16, no. 2 (2016), http://gamestudies.org/1602/articles/ford.
[36] Ford, "Affective Writing."

silence events by modifying the structure in which they are read.[37] In this sense, in relation to *Black Flag*, the romantic pirate genre may overarch the actual history of Caribbean pirates and eventually the colonialist Caribbean. This creates a romanticized Western view on Caribbean pirates and their surroundings in *Black Flag*.

2.3 Postcolonial perspectives in videogames

On the contrary, postcolonial perspectives are already taken into consideration in the contemporary game industry. Mukherjee for instance refers to *Assassin's Creed: Freedom Cry*.[38] This game was a downloadable content (DLC) addition for *Black Flag*. The DLC takes the secondary character Adéwalé, who is a former slave, as its main character and tells his story.[39] The fact however that the DLC was received as containing a postcolonial perspective does not inherently mean that *Black Flag* has too. It could even be considered as disturbing that this game is a DLC and not explicitly present in *Black Flag*.

In addition, in an interview with Stephen Joyce, associate professor in media, literature and culture, this is also addressed.[40] Joyce for instance argues that when videogames take a postcolonial perspective the videogame would benefit from it because it enriches the game experience. Games that follow this perspective could be games "in which the player is not the conqueror but the invaded", or where players can reflect upon their performed violence.[41] Mayar furthermore asks Joyce how games consider the ideological, the historical, and the individual while they still have to be entertaining, which relates to Rejack's argument.[42] In his answer Joyce refers to the predecessor of *Black Flag*, *Assassin's Creed III,* which he praises for implementing a "critical reflection on the American War of Independence into the gameplay".[43] Since *Black Flag* is the successor of *Assassin's Creed III* it is likely that the producers of *Black Flag* must also have taken the postcolonial perspective into consideration. However, *Assassin's Creed III* does not cope with a romantic genre and therefore consumer expectation is less important. *Assassin's Creed III* was on the contrary also criticized by game studies scholar Adrienne Shaw. Shaw namely argues that this game portrays a well-developed native hero, but the game is focused on a white, male, and Western audience.[44]

---

[37] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past,* 95-96, quoted in Ford, "Affective Writing."
[38] *Assassin's Creed: Freedom Cry* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2013), [PlayStation 4/Xbox One/Microsoft Windows/Nintendo Switch], Ubisoft; Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 1-2, 103.
[39] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 1-2, 103.
[40] Mahshid Mayar and Stephen Joyce, "The Post-Apocalyptic and the Ludic: An Interview with Dr. Stephen Joyce," *The Forum for Inter-American Research* 11, no. 2 (September 2018): 61-65.
[41] Mayar and Joyce, "The Post-Apocalyptic," 64.
[42] Rejack, "Virtual Reenactment," 419-420; Mayar and Joyce, "The Post-Apocalyptic," 63-64.
[43] *Assassin's Creed III* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2012), [PlayStation 4/Xbox One/Microsoft Windows/Nintendo Switch], Ubisoft; Mayar and Joyce, "The Post-Apocalyptic," 63-64.
[44] Adrienne Shaw, "The Tyranny of Realism: Historical accuracy and politics of representation in *Assassin's Creed III*," *The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 9, no. 14 (2015): 15.

2.4 The plurality of play and counterfactuals

Mukherjee claims that postcolonial discourses can show how hegemonic constructions of knowledge in the West about other cultures gain from a multiplicity of perspectives, and that games are excellent in conveying this. Games can for instance be replayed in order to obtain other outcomes. In relation to postcolonialism this entails counterfactual/what-if history and scenarios in which the subaltern speaks.[45] Such as exploring untaken paths, which could also be fruitful, according to Joyce.[46] It can furthermore, according to Mukherjee, include giving agency to the colonized, purposely writing out the colonizer, or by having the player play narratives that were silenced in "normal" historical accounts. It is also possible to replay history and reverse the roles of colonized and colonizer, this does however still coincide with the logic of imperialism, which is not desirable. Since subaltern history is very plural and since videogames are plural as well, the representation of postcolonial perspectives in games occur through the plurality of play.[47] Play could namely disrupt and unsettle the structured "colonial notions of progress", whereby the subaltern is liberated from the colonial system of superiority. On the contrary, the colonizer could "play back". This is because videogames provide spaces where control and expansion can be simulated.[48] Therefore, play can be considered as the most viable method to analyze videogames that represent colonialist pasts, which is carried out in this research.

Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko also address counterfactuals. Counterfactuals are expressions that did not happen in real history, but might have happened. They show a speculative history when choices in the game are made that make actual history disappear. This can teach players about causality because it may explain historical outcomes or how these outcomes could be different in other circumstances.[49] In addition, Uricchio also addresses speculative/what-if history using the term virtual history. He argues that history in videogames is important for teaching not only historical facts, but also why particular things happened in a certain way, which can show the complexity and relevance of history.[50] Departing from the insights of Mukherjee then, these speculative histories can be considered as undesirable because they will often reflect upon the logics of imperialism. In addition, telling why particular things happened in a certain way, could be influenced by the certain Western bias when a game is produced in Western circumstances. Portraying counter histories in games, which are histories that brush history against the grain, or counterfactuals that do not deal explicitly with the logic of imperialism, is therefore far more fruitful.[51] It is therefore important to analyze what kind of role counterfactuals play in *Black Flag*.

---

[45] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 111.
[46] Mayar and Joyce, "The Post-Apocalyptic," 64.
[47] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 95-96.
[48] Ibid, 104.
[49] Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko, "The Same River Twice," 38.
[50] Uricchio, "Simulation," 336.
[51] David Biale, "Introduction," in *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-history* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 7.

3. The romantic pirate genre

At last, it is important to consider what the romantic pirate genre entails. Pfister argues that pirate stories follow unwritten rules that are never questioned, which clearly connects to Mittell's argument of genre as givens.[52] However, in time, some elements within the genre have disappeared and new elements have been added.

3.1 Pirate tales and tropes

The romanticization of piracy already started at the time when pirates were most active.[53] Pfister argues that early travel reports already included tales about the exotic and beautiful Caribbean in which fortunes and adventures could be found. This inspired plenty of young men to leave for this "new world".[54] In our popular imagination then, as Pfister argues: "the life of the pirate is an exhilarating sequence of thrilling sea fights, dizzying swordfights and romance – all rather untypical for the daily business of the historical pirates".[55] The pirate figure in popular culture is therefore a cultural construct.[56]

General romantic tales of pirates then, according to Pfister, are about young men, who were punished for a crime they did not commit and became outlaws. The man then holds on to his own code of honor, rescues a city, colony, or princess and is reintegrated into society. This was also often considered as a moral to teach social discipline.[57] Pirate fiction thus takes people to a world different from what they know against the exotic background of palm trees and warm tropical oceans.[58]

Within these tales, specific pirate tropes came to existence that nowadays create the recognizability of the pirate genre.[59] These tropes are not particularly romantic, but enriched the pirate genre and became part of the romantic pirate genre, according to Brian Fox, who was part of a history honor project.[60] According to Pfister, the pirate genre can be recognized for "the Jolly Roger, an eye patch, a peg leg, a parrot and – of course – some buried treasure".[61] Also singing "yoho", the pirate dialect, drinking plenty of rum, and the black spot are part of pirate genre tropes according to historian and pirate expert Angus Konstam.[62] In addition, Fox refers to phrases such as "shiver me timbers", "gentlemen of fortune", and "Pieces of Eight" which have become very familiar.[63] All of these

---

[52] Mittell, *Genre and television,* 1; Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 34.
[53] Konstam, *Piraten,* 234.
[54] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 32.
[55] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid, 32.
[58] Konstam, *Piraten,* 8-9.
[59] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 32.
[60] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 14.
[61] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 32.
[62] Konstam, *Piraten,* 236.
[63] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 14.

aforementioned tropes were mostly derived from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1882)*,* which was a novel and later adapted into various movies.[64]

Other pirate tropes such as eyepatches, hooks as hand, and walking the plank derive from James Matthew Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904) and were introduced to make the story more sensational.[65] In addition, Peter Earle, economic historian, argues that romantic pirates are portrayed as being "heavily sunburned", having beards and wild moustaches, and wearing colored handkerchiefs, bandanas, and golden earrings.[66]

3.2 Sympathetic villains or heroes

According to Fox, the book and early film of *Treasure Island* did not portray the specific romantic pirate image, but during its adaptations *Treasure Island* became more romantic. In later adaptations namely pirates are portrayed sympathetically, or even heroically, and are often the protagonist within their stories. In addition, even as villains, pirates are still likable and portrayed in a way that the audience agrees with them.[67] A later adaptation of *Treasure Island* even enhanced this. *Muppet Treasure Island* (1996) gave pirates "the most admired qualities like honesty, bravery, and loyalty" and portrayed them in an even more friendly way.[68] The Muppets, being primarily aimed at children, thus already inform children about the glamor of pirates. In addition, Pfister argues that pirates in popular culture can be "a hero and a monster, terrifying and attractive at the same time".[69]

The portraying of pirates as either heroes or villains was also present in the swashbuckler movies that dominated Hollywood in the first half of the 20th century such as in *Captain Blood* (1935). In these movies pirates were either portrayed as heroes or villains, but the romance of the swashbuckler had the overhand, in which emphasis lay on showing martial arts and other tricks.[70] Furthermore, the swashbuckler movies implemented freedom, and coming together to resist authorities within the pirate genre.[71]

In relation to the sympathetic swashbuckling pirate, media scholar René Glas argues that it has become a convention in action-adventure games to murder an abundance of "generic adversaries".[72] These are the enemies of the player, who plays the hero in the story regardless of his/her assassinations.[73] According to Glas, these games use cinema as their reference point, which indicates

---

[64] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 14; Konstam, *Piraten,* 236, 238.
[65] Konstam, *Piraten,* 236.
[66] Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (Dunne/St. Martin's, 2004), 7, quoted in Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 32.
[67] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 8-9.
[68] Ibid, 14-16.
[69] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 32.
[70] Konstam, *Piraten,* 241.
[71] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 11-13; Konstam, *Piraten,* 241.
[72] René Glas, "Of Heroes and Henchmen: The Conventions of Killing Generic Expendables in Video Games," in *The Dark Side of Play: Controversial Issues in Playful Environments*, ed. Torill Mortensen, Jonas Linderoth, Ashley M.L. Brown (London: Routledge, 2015), 45.
[73] Ibid, 46.

that the focus on the sympathetic swashbuckling hero has been remediated in *Black Flag*.[74] However, Glas also argues that games could provide the player with the agency to stay away from fighting.[75] It is therefore relevant to analyze whether players of *Black Flag* have the ability to stay away from playing as romantic pirate, are forced into this role, or allowed to emphasize it.

3.3 The rebirth of the pirate genre

In the 1950s pirate movies were not successful anymore until the release of the first *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie in 2003.[76] The *Pirates of the Caribbean* series are based upon a theme park attraction under the same name, of which the first opened in 1967. This indicates that people were still engaging with pirates within this period. According to Fox and Konstam, the popularity of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies has influenced the pirate genre with the supernatural, special effects, and with Captain Jack Sparrow as a role model, who is heroic and has great qualities.[77] The ultimate goal of a pirate is furthermore referred to as experiencing freedom, in which "being a pirate means having only the master one chooses and ranging far wider than most could ever dream".[78] In addition, Jack Sparrow is famous for his one-liner: "Why is the rum gone?".

Interactive pirate media such as games have nowadays also become ubiquitous, and added new elements to the pirate genre as well.[79] Pfister for instance argues that the *Monkey Island* game series portrays "swashbuckling fun-loving pirates".[80] Furthermore, the supernatural, wildness and freedom, but also pirates as sympathetic allies/antagonists appear in pirate games.[81] Pfister also claims that the dominant narrative in pirate games is nowadays often about an "individualist fortune hunter" that replaces the educational element of social discipline.[82] This new dominant narrative has become part of the romantic pirate genre, explicitly because it builds upon the focus on treasure that was present in other pirate media. Pfister also addresses the relation between *Black Flag* and the pirate genre. He argues that *Black Flag* contains supernatural elements, portrays pirates as revolutionaries instead of rebels, and also strongly relates to the "individualist fortune hunter" narrative.[83] However, Pfister focuses superficially on merely the main storyline, while the plurality of play as carried out in this research allows for a more throughout analysis, which is addressed in the next chapter.

The romantic pirate genre that has been influenced by an abundance of media indicates that the romanticization of piracy has become ubiquitous. For this reason, the representation of piracy in popular media is heavily influenced by romanticization, which is problematic because of the colonial

---

[74] Glas, "Of Heroes and Henchmen," 46.
[75] Ibid, 46-47.
[76] Konstam, *Piraten,* 243.
[77] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 18; Konstam, *Piraten,* 243-244.
[78] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 18.
[79] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 34-40.
[80] Ibid, 36.
[81] Ibid, 35.
[82] Ibid, 39-40.
[83] Ibid, 37-39.

setting of the Golden Age of Piracy that is also being represented. This research therefore aims to indicate how romanticization affects the representation of a problematic past, in which the subaltern is often silenced, to deliver insights for postcolonialism in relation to game studies.

4. Game analysis

The goal of a game analysis is, according to Clara Fernández-Vara, appreciating how sense can be made out of games.[84] Within the game analysis, implied, exploratory, and transgressive play have been carried out, which are explained in the following paragraphs. Different manners of play have been chosen because the plurality of play is relevant to consider in relation to postcolonialism since play can either control or give agency to the subaltern.[85] This method therefore provides ground for a more thorough analysis on the representation of piracy and colonialism in *Black Flag* in relation to romanticization. As said furthermore, focusing solely on how the main storyline for instance should be played does not address exploration or transgression that also affect the representation of piracy. In the following sections first the theoretical concepts that are used will be explained in relation to *Black Flag,* after which it will be explained what the carried out manners of play entail and how they have been used.

4.1 Narrative and environmental storytelling in Black Flag

Concepts about narrative and the game's environment have been used to investigate the missions using implied, exploratory, and transgressive play. Chapman considers five components to understand the representation of history in videogames. In this research only the component "narrative" has been used because otherwise the research would become a more formal classic game analysis. The component "narrative" is useful to "describe the nature of historical representation in digital games" because history is entwined with narrative in historical videogames.[86]

The nature of the historical representation in *Black Flag* is that the game*,* as part of the *Assassin's Creed* series, centers around the centuries old fight between the Assassins and the Templars and takes place in both past and present.[87] In *Black Flag*, the player is playing an Abstergo Entertainment employee working for the Templar order. Doing this, the player is recording genetic memories through a device called the Animus to be able to gather information for the creation of

---

[84] Clara Fernández-Vara, "The Whys and Wherefores of Game Analysis," in *Introduction to Game Analysis* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2015), 11.
[85] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 95-104.
[86] Chapman, *Digital games as history*, 119-135.
[87] The first Assasin's Creed game was released in 2007, and follows together with *Assassin's Creed II* and *Assassin's Creed III* a story in the present day regarding Desmond Miles. Desmond is a descendant of the playable Assassins that appear in these games and escapes from Abstergo. In *Black Flag* attention has been shifted away from Desmond, who was found to be dead as well, and focuses on a storyline in which the player itself is the main protagonist and works for the templars at Abstergo.

videogames. When *Black Flag* is played in the present, the player is asked to hack computers for the Assassins, because the Assassins want to gather insight in what their enemies (Templars) are doing.

Within the Animus, players play former British privateer Edward Kenway (Wales, 1693). The player controls Edward at land, and his ship the Jackdaw at sea, whereby Edward does not know that he is being controlled. Edward became a pirate because he was seduced by the promise of gold, and wants to earn a proper living for him and his girlfriend Caroline back in England. Edward is intrigued by the promise of wealth a supernatural device called the Observatory could provide, which the Templars are also seeking. In his quest towards finding the Observatory Edward puts his need in front of others. After he finds the Observatory Edward realizes that his quest has caused insanity, and joins the Assassin order. In the last cutscene is shown that Edward has returned to England, the player however returns to the Caribbean after this.

The game contains various cutscenes and mandatory objectives that form the beforementioned storylines in past and present. The objectives have to be fulfilled in order to continue playing. The storylines are entwined, and therefore in this research "main storyline" refers to both past and present. The cutscenes and the mandatory objects of the main storyline can be referred to as the *framing narrative.* Chapman distinguishes the *framing narrative* and *ludonarrative* as functioning elements of narrative in videogames.[88] The *framing narrative* are the narrative fragments that cannot be changed by gameplay, and directs the players. The *ludonarrative* is the narrative that is created through how the player plays the game. The *framing narrative* could for instance provide players with a certain goal they have to accomplish, the *ludonarrative* is then the process of how the players fulfills the goal.[89] The *ludonarrative* appears in *Black Flag* through that every mission has two optional objectives in order to obtain a hundred percent completion of the mission, and allows the player to roam around freely during most parts of the missions. The *ludonarrative* is not completely free, and consists out of two structural elements apart from player agency. These are *lexia* and *framing controls. Lexia* are narrative elements that the player can arrange into particular combinations. *Framing controls* is the pressure of the developers, which determines the possible combinations and possible actions the player can carry out.[90] The storyline as settled in the colonial Caribbean is most relevant to analyze in relation to the romantic pirate genre, and therefore the missions in the present have not been explicitly addressed. Nevertheless, the storyline as settled in the present is helpful to explain why certain things occur.

Furthermore, the environment of the game is important for investigating the representation of piracy because it can add valuable aspects to the narrative. Henry Jenkins distinguishes four ways of *environmental storytelling.*[91] In this research three of his concepts are useful. *Evocative spaces* draw

---

[88] Chapman, *Digital games as history*, 119-127.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid, 122-127.
[91] Jenkins, "Game Design," 123.

on stories and genres that could be recognized within an environment and thus on how/whether the pirate genre is evoked. *Enacting stories* relate to the *ludonarrative* because it is about the player who constructs a certain narrative through spatial movement.[92] This helps to analyze how/whether players create spatial stories within the *ludonarrative.* At last, *embedded narratives* are narratives that tell a story within the mise-and-scene of the game, which can also tell more about the storyline.[93] The mise-and-scene of the *framing narrative* has therefore been carefully examined.

Considering that *Black Flag* is a major game it is necessary to focus on specific aspects in the game. Therefore, the storyline as settled in the past is completely analyzed, and three sequences have been analyzed more thoroughly using all manners of play while focusing on Chapman's "narrative" and Jenkins' *environmental storytelling*.[94] The first sequence is chosen because it influences player's first thoughts, and therefore relates to the "I know it when I see it" quote regarding genre.[95] The third and seventh sequence have been chosen because sequence three shows the place Nassau as a pirate republic, while sequence seven shows that Nassau had become besieged by the British. In appendix I, II, and III the complete analysis of the sequences can be read.

4.2 Implied and exploratory play

Implied and exploratory play have been used in order to analyze what is happening when playing according to the rules of the game. Implied play is a concept from game studies scholar Espen J. Aarseth.[96] He argues that in order to investigate the formal characteristics of a game, and how the game encourages responses from players it is necessary to fulfil the games' expectations.[97] Implied playing is thus about doing what the game asks the player to do. This is important for understanding the intention of game developers for the representation of piracy, because their view becomes most clear in the storyline. When using implied play it was investigated how the *framing narrative* is present, and whether/how there is room for the *ludonarrative* to exist. The *ludonarrative* could exist because the missions are also played in the open gameworld, which allows multiple ways to finish them, and whereby *enacting stories* could become possible. Focusing on *environmental storytelling* during implied play furthermore allows to investigate what the game wants to evoke (*evocative spaces*) and whether *embedded narratives* add to this in the storyline.

Exploratory play means, according to media scholars Jasper van Vught and René Glas, that "players wander off the most clearly sign-posted paths".[98] Therefore, the player does not try to finish a

---

[92] Jenkins, "Game Design," 123-126.
[93] Ibid, 126-127.
[94] The information that has been used for the main storyline in general is derived from three times playing it, and the website IGN for particular information.
"Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag Wiki Guide," IGN, last edited December 9, 2014, https://www.ign.com/wikis/assassins-creed-4-black-flag/Walkthrough.
[95] Mittell, *Genre and television,* 1.
[96] Aarseth, "I fought the law," 130-133.
[97] Ibid, 132.
[98] Van Vught and Glas, "Considering play," 221.

quest, but is curious about what lies beyond.[99] For this reason there has been focused on what is allowed to do during the environment of the missions, but is not explicitly part of the storyline. The focus lies hereby on the *ludonarrative*. This approach makes clear what kind of extra possibilities are present within the storyline. There has furthermore also been focused on what this changes for the evocation of the pirate genre (*evocative spaces*), and how/whether *enacting stories* is possible through exploration within the environment of the mission.

4.3 Transgressive play

Transgressive play has been chosen in order to play against the rules of the game. Transgressive play provides insight into the rules of play in *Black Flag* because it makes clear what the boundaries of the representation of piracy are, which relates to *framing controls*, and shows the relation between the romantic pirate and the player. Transgressive play consists out of two parts in this research. In general, transgressive play, as described by Van Vught and Glas, means that the player is not following the game, but "exploring, pushing, bending, deviating from and transgressing the intended playing paths".[100]

First has been focused on playing transgressive in the storyline. In carrying this out the exact opposite of the objectives has been done, even as doing nothing. This has provided insight in the *framing controls* and role of the player in *Black Flag*. Furthermore, transgressive play may evoke the pirate genre differently (*evocative spaces*), and can provide insight in how far the player may go with *enacting stories* during the missions. This can make the representation either more, or even less powerful.

The second part of transgressive play that has been carried out in this research focuses on what Kiri Miller calls an "ethnographer-player" perspective.[101] This has been used in this research in the sense that the gameworld is considered as an actual place that has human inhabitants. With this, it is possible to obtain information on the role of the player's avatar, and on non-player characters within the open gameworld.[102] Gameworld tourism can furthermore, according to Miller, be particularly important to find out "imperialist-ethnography overtones".[103] This is relevant in relation to how colonialism and the subaltern is represented within *Black Flag*. It can namely provide insight into how the Western bias can be found in the humans portrayed in the game, and into the relation between player and the romantic pirate. For these reasons, "narrative" and *environmental storytelling* are not analyzed using gameworld tourism. The corpus for gameworld tourism are three major places, namely Havana, Kingston, and Nassau (before and after its besieging) and their surrounding seas. Hereby is focused on what kind of people and ships are passing by, and what happens when doing nothing to

---

[99] Van Vught and Glas, "Considering play," 221.
[100] Ibid, 220.
[101] Miller, "The accidental carjack."
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

them. This has been done through standing still in specific places for fifteen minutes each, and through walking/sailing specific routes. These routes and places along with the fieldnotes can be found in appendix IV.

In carrying out implied, exploratory, and transgressive play it is always considered how piracy is represented in relation to the romantic pirate genre, and how this is connected to the representation of colonialism, and consequently the subaltern. Therefore, focus also lied on how the game allows (problematic) counterfactuals to exist and/or provided room for the subaltern to speak. This could occur in the *framing narrative,* but might be more apparently present in the *ludonarrative.* Furthermore, also the humans/ships that are passed by while approaching the gameworld as a tourist might show whether the subaltern is present. This could then explain how the romantic pirate genre that could be present in *Black Flag* also impacts the colonial environment of the game and how/whether *Black Flag* does allow the subaltern to "speak". Focusing on the representation of the subaltern within the colonial environment in relation to the romantic pirate genre is therefore most relevant to analyze.

5. Playing according to the rules

Within this chapter, the first three sections address the relation between the romantic pirate genre and *Black Flag* focusing on various themes while using implied and exploratory play. Lastly, this chapter will address how the subaltern is present in *Black Flag* while playing according to the rules, and how this relates to the presence of the romantic pirate genre.

5.1 The individualist fortune hunter

The storyline of Edward Kenway resembles the dominant narrative statement of "the individualist fortune hunter" that has become part of the romantic pirate genre, as identified by Pfister.[104] When focusing on the cutscenes and mandatory objectives it becomes clear that Edward is capable of doing everything in order to find the Observatory and fulfill his quest towards wealth. This occurs in the *framing narrative*, and can therefore not be changed by gameplay, meaning the player is put into the role of a romantic pirate.[105] In addition, the *ludonarrative*, which is created through how the player plays, also relies upon the individualist fortune hunter.[106] For instance, optional goals within the missions are often based upon obtaining revenues. The mission "Raise the Black Flag" for example has optional objectives to plunder a ship and to plunder thirty crates of sugar, which can be sold for reales (currency of Black Flag). This indicates that the game encourages players to receive a hundred

---

[104] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 40.
[105] Chapman, *Digital games as history,* 121-122.
[106] Ibid.

percent completion through obtaining more revenues, and thus urges the player to play as romantic pirate.

The individualist fortune hunter is also present through exploratory play within the environment of the missions. *Enacting stories* in the *ludonarrative* is namely possible through creating a certain narrative through spatial movement, whereby *lexia* entail the narrative elements that are arranged.[107] The missions for instance allow the player to wander off while following a mandatory objective in order to collect all items at a specific place.[108] Items such as buried treasure and treasure chests (Figure 1) hereby emphasize Edward's quest for gold, because they are pirate tropes themselves. In addition, in the very first mission a skeleton is placed near a place the player has to pass by. This skeleton contains a treasure map, after which an explanation about treasure maps appears (Figure 2). Treasure chests are however very common in the *Assassin's Creed* series as sources of currency and valuable items.[109] However, in *Black Flag* they explicitly add to the romantic image of piracy, in which the environment of the game becomes an *evocative space*.
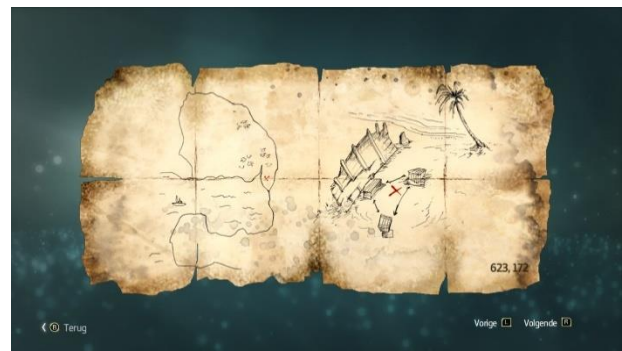

Figure 1

Figure 2

Furthermore, *Black Flag* contains an abundance of side activities.[110] These side activities may appear during missions, and can therefore be considered as forms of exploratory play when doing them during a mission. Most of these side activities rely on the opportunity of obtaining reales and/or materials, and therefore evoke the romantic pirate genre through adhering to the narrative of the individualist fortune hunter.

It however remains the choice of the player to collect items or do side activities during the missions, which means that the player can step away from the romantic pirate. Nevertheless, it is likely that players will carry this out to be able to upgrade the Jackdaw and/or Edward. This is because

---

[107] Chapman, *Digital games as history*, 123-125; Jenkins, "Game Design," 124-126.
[108] The items that can be collected are: buried chests through treasure maps, treasure chests, animus fragments, viewpoints, shanties, and secrets.
[109] "Treasure chest," Assassin's Creed Wiki, accessed March 19, 2020, https://assassinscreed.fandom.com/wiki/Treasure_chest.
[110] Side activities are either temporal or can be played anytime the player likes. Side activities that can be played anytime are fulfilling assassination contracts, harpooning sea animals, unlocking taverns, unlocking Mayan stelae, and playing games in taverns present. Side activities that are temporal are: rescuing pirates, catching a courier, or robbing a warehouse.

before starting a mission the message that the Jackdaw needs to improve can occur, or because a mission may be too difficult with the current weapons Edward owns.

5.2 Sea fights and swordfights

According to Pfister, "thrilling sea fights" and "dizzying swordfights" are aspects that are often present within the romantic pirate genre.[111] The importance of sea fights and swordfights is highlighted in *Black Flag* in both the *framing narrative* and *ludonarrative.*

For instance, the very first mission opens in the middle of a sea fight, which makes new players immediately recognize that they are playing a pirate game. In addition, an abundance of missions include sinking ships or murdering people, and materials and reales can be obtained through sea fights and swordfights, which are necessary to upgrade the Jackdaw. This causes that fighting ships is necessary to continue with the missions. Moreover, during sea fights and swordfights slow motion cutscenes sometimes appear after the player has carried out a specific move (Figure 3 and 4).[112] These cutscenes cannot be controlled by the player, while the player is the one that carried out the move. The game therefore wishes to emphasize the romantic pirate genre by making the actions of players become part of the *framing narrative,* and puts the player more specifically in the role of romantic pirate.

Figure 3

Figure 4

Historical games teach players about artifacts from a specific period of time, according to Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko. [113] This is present in *Black Flag* because during sea fights and swordfights players may decide what weapon(s) to use. [114] Hereby is the player arranging *lexia* in the *ludonarrative,* because weapons can be considered as elements that contribute to the narrative that is

---

[111] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.

[112] At sea the slow motion cutscenes appear when the player fires the first, last or a critical shot while firing cannons at enemy ships. The slow motion cutscenes appear on land, when the player tries to counter or makes the first or final move to assassinate an enemy.

[113] Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko, "The Same River Twice," 35.

[114] When all weapons have been unlocked the player can use swords, flintlock pistols, hidden blade, rope darts, a blowpipe with either a sleep dart or berserk dart, smoke bombs, or throwing knives. At sea mortars, broadside cannons (heavy shots or round shots), swivel guns, chase cannons (chain shots), fire barrels, and ramming can be used in battle. In addition, other ships can be entered using the grappling hook. It is hereby necessary to note that by replaying an older mission the newly obtained weapons cannot be used.

being told. Consequently, players can investigate whether the weapon or what combination of weapons would be useful in a specific situation. However, most weapons in *Black Flag* are not weapons that real pirates used, but correspond to weapons that Assassins use in previous games.[115] This can be confusing for the historical accuracy of the game and causes that the available weapons merely facilitate a joyful play experience. This can also play a role in evoking the romantic pirate genre. For instance, the focus on trying an abundance of weapons shifts the attention away from for instance the subaltern, and causes more attention on the playable character, who is a white pirate male. At last, the player cannot affect the use of a weapon, which indicates that the weapon itself is part of the *framing narrative.* The focus on "thrilling sea fights and dizzying swordfights" is therefore implemented within the use of the weapons.[116]

Exploratory play during the missions can appear through attacking more enemy ships at sea than necessary or fighting arbitrary guards. The game therefore explicitly aims for sea fights and swordfights whereby players can create their own stories in space (*enacting stories*). On the contrary, fighting is sometimes not desired. For instance, in the mission "We Demand a Parlay" the player has not to be discovered. This does not specifically fit with the romantic pirate genre. Glas however argues that players have agency in choosing to fight in action-adventure games such as *Assassin's Creed.*[117] Therefore, the player in *Black Flag* could still choose to play as romantic pirate by choosing to fight while risking to be discovered. In addition, assassinations may still take place because in these missions the player explicitly passes guards.

5.3 The exotic background

Konstam emphasizes that in pirate media everything is placed against the exotic background of palm trees and warm tropical oceans.[118] While the Caribbean is in fact a tropical destination, in almost every place in the game the tropical environment is clearly noticeable, or even emphasized. This indicates that the game evokes the romantic pirate genre, and can be considered as *evocative space.* Within this *evocative space* then, everything including colonialism, and consequently the subaltern, has been given a romantic layer.

The exotic background is emphasized during the missions which are also partly played in the open gameworld. For this reason, the emphasized exotic background appears in the *framing narrative.* This appears because animals such as dolphins and whales jump out of the water next to the Jackdaw (Figure 5), and while passing an abandoned island there is a possibility to explicitly watch it (Figure 6). Furthermore, while at sea, the pirate crew sings shanties. While pirates probably sang during their

---

[115] Only the swords, flintlock pistols, knives, cannons, grappling hook, and swivels are often mentioned being weapons that pirates in fact used.
"Pirate Weapons," Brethren of the Coast, accessed March 4, 2020, http://brethrencoast.com/Pirate_Weapons.html; "Top Ten Pirate Weapons," Pirate Attack, accessed March 4, 2020, http://pirateattack.co.uk/top-ten-pirate-weapons/.
[116] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.
[117] Glas, "Of Heroes and Henchmen," 46-47.
[118] Konstam, *Piraten,* 8-9.

trips to make work bearable and life more entertaining, the word shanty and the famous shanties present in *Black Flag* derive from the 19th century.[119] This means that the shanties in *Black Flag* can be considered as counterfactual, and are therefore merely used to provide the player with a joyful experience, while he/she is sailing towards a specific destination. The shanties do therefore not rely on historical accuracy and provide the impression that life at sea was pleasureful, and thus creates a romantic image of life at a pirate ship. *Black Flag* therefore neglects the actual conditions on pirate ships that were far from romantic, and replaces it with an image that corresponds to the romantic pirate genre.[120]

| Figure 5 | Figure 6 |

Exploratory play also provides a possibility in which the environment evokes the romantic pirate genre in the *ludonarrative*. The mission "Sugarcane and Its Yields" allows the player to swim a far distance towards an abandoned island, and thus to create a spatial story (*enacting stories*). This provides the impression that pirates liked to swim. However, within the Golden Age of Piracy; "some sailors during this time couldn't swim, some could swim, but not well and others could swim just fine".[121] Swimming a far distance therefore emphasizes the presence of warm tropical oceans rather than it reflects reality. The focus on warm tropical oceans through the *ludonarrative* then also contributes to the creation of the *evocative space* in which colonialism has been given a romantic layer.

5.4 The subaltern according to the rules of play

After having established the romantic aspects in *Black Flag* that derive from the romantic pirate genre, the focus will now shift to the representation of the subaltern while playing according to the rules. This is useful to indicate how/whether romance has become the overarching narrative in which the subaltern is suppressed and/or silenced.

---

[119] Cindy Vallar, "Pirates and Sea Shanties," accessed March 4, 2020, http://www.cindyvallar.com/seashanty.html; "Sea Shanties and Pirate Songs," The Way Of The Pirates, accessed March 4, 2020, http://www.thewayofthepirates.com/pirate-life/sea-shanties/.
[120] "Life on a Pirate Ship," Pirate Show Cancun, uploaded September 4, 2014, https://www.pirateshowcancun.com/blog/cancun-caribbean/life-on-a-pirate-ship/.
[121] Marc C. Kehoe, "Resuscutation of Drowning Victims at Sea," accessed March 4, 2020, https://www.piratesurgeon.com/pages/surgeon_pages/drowning2.html.

The subaltern is mainly present through Edward's first quartermaster Adéwalé, a former male African slave. Adéwalé is a non-playable character who stays with Edward for a major part of the game until he joins the Assassins. Adéwalé is accepted by most of Edward's friends, and considered as equal by the Assassins. Adéwalé looks like a pirate instead of a slave, because he is carrying weapons and wearing a bandana and golden earrings. A bandana and golden earrings are namely romantic pirate tropes, according to Earle.[122] The agency that has been given to Adéwalé is in *Black Flag* not expressed through gameplay, but rather through what Adéwalé says and does in the *framing narrative*, which cannot be changed by the player (through Edward).[123] The agency that has been given to Adéwalé entails that he dares to resist what Edward says, gives him advice, and even quits as quartermaster.

Figure 7: Adéwalé (left), and Edward (right)

A former slave as quartermaster, who has agency and even dares to resist his captain, is surprising, since "black people under the black flag were usually slaves who fared no better than other Africans shipped in chains to the New World" argues historian Arne Bialuschewski.[124] Bialuschewski furthermore claims that pirates considered slaves as commodities. Slaves were namely mistreated, murdered, or forced to work on pirate ships. Piracy was therefore considered as another threat to African slaves who were shipped to the plantations in the Caribbean. In general, Bialuschewski claims that it is not likely that pirates freed slaves and accepted them as equal on their ships.[125] However, tales of exceptions such as Black Caesar and the multi-racial crew of the pirate Blackbeard surround modern-day history.[126] History scholar Devin Leigh however questions this by among others stating that it is not sure whether Black Caesar was indeed the "Negro whom Blackbeard had brought up", and by claiming that Blackbeard often sold slaves.[127] For all of these reasons, Adéwalé as

---

[122] Earle, *The pirate wars,* 7, quoted in Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 32.
[123] Chapman, *Digital games as history,* 121-122.
[124] Arne Bialuschewski, "Black People under the Black Flag: Piracy and the Slave Trade on the West Coast of Africa, 1718–1723," *Slavery and Abolition* 29, no. 4 (2008): 469.
[125] Ibid, 461-468.
[126] Devin Leigh, "Ghost of the Gallows: The Historical Record of Black Caesar," *Creating Knowledge* 5 (2012): 28.
[127] Ibid, 31-32.

quartermaster can be considered as a problematic counterfactual that is not viable for providing the subaltern with agency, and a chance to speak.

Mukherjee argues that it is problematic when counterfactuals rely on the logics of imperialism.[128] While the roles of colonizer and colonized are not specifically turned in *Black Flag*, because Edward is a pirate, he is still strongly connected to his motherland (England). This becomes clear in the *framing narrative* because Edward is only pursuing the pirate life because he eventually wants to return to England. Therefore, Adéwalé's role as quartermaster of the Jackdaw relies on the logics of imperialism, because a specifically "white" role has been given to a former slave. In addition, Adéwalé is dressed in the same way as a romantic pirate is dressed, and dares speak up against his captain. The agency that has been given to Adéwalé is therefore not the agency that Mukherjee and Joyce would want *Black Flag* to present. It would namely be more fruitful to let the players follow the actual history of slaves in relation to piracy.[129]

Apart from Adéwalé, *Black Flag* portrays more black pirates both on land and at sea (Figure 8 and 9). The pirates in *Black Flag* in general, both black and white, have the same appearance, and correspond the romantic pirate which Earle describes. The romantic pirates he describes are sunburned, bearded, and wear bright colored handkerchiefs/bandanas, or golden earrings.[130] The pirates in Black Flag wear colorful bandanas, are sunburned, and often have beards. The black pirates thus look the same as their white counterparts, do not seem abused, and can therefore be considered as a problematic counterfactual as well. Therefore, black pirates have become romanticized within *Black Flag* as well, and their actual history has been silenced.

Figure 8

Figure 9

There are however three moments in cutscenes in the *framing narrative* in which the reality of slaves is represented. One of these moments is that Ben Hornigold mocks about Adéwalé who is wearing a pistol. This minor focus on reality in a major game does however not raise awareness towards slavery, and therefore indicates that portraying slavery was not a main objective, but that it could not be neglected either. However, there are some moments in *Black Flag* that were assumedly

---

[128] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 95-96.
[129] Mayar and Joyce, "The Post-Apocalyptic," 64; Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 95-96.
[130] Earle, *The pirate wars,* 7, quoted in Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 32.

created to raise awareness towards slavery, but these can be considered as problematic. In the mission "Vainglorious bastards" for instance, a ship from the Royal African Pearl who is carrying human cargo has to be boarded. When boarding this ship however there are no slaves shown. All of these moments indicate that *Black Flag* does not want to dive deeper into slavery.

In addition, *embedded narratives* in the mission "Sugarcane and Its Yields" show that slaves are peacefully at work on a plantation without being chained or harmed by guards (Figure 10 and 11). The slaves are however frightened when a fight is happening. In addition, using exploratory play it is allowed to chase a frightened slave, and to shoot him/her, in which the player creates their own spatial story (*enacting stories*). However, a warning arises that this is not allowed and may cause desynchronization when doing it repeatedly. Upon which will be specified in the following chapter. Doing all of this, shows the fear of slaves towards pirates. This can however be nuanced because chasing a slave only becomes possible after a fight has begun, guards often attack the player first, and slaves are not physically harmed. This indicates that slaves had a good life at the plantation, which is an inaccurate representation. Therefore, the actual historical relation between slaves and pirates is not explicitly present, or merely a response to an action that was not part of the historical relation between pirates and slaves.

Figure 10

Figure 11

Playing according to the rules of play indicates that slavery, and thus the subaltern, was not desired to predominate in *Black Flag*. The developers do however claim to portray pirates as realistic as possible in *Black Flag*.[131] This is problematic since the pirates in *Black Flag* are historically incorrect in relation to slavery. For these reasons then, the identified romantic aspects of the individualist fortune hunter, sea fights and swordfights, and the exotic background have become the overarching narrative. Within this, the actual historical relation between pirates and slaves is represented in an inappropriate way, and not much attention has further been given to the subaltern. Therefore, the subaltern is silenced within the overarching narrative of romance. The next chapter will indicate how/whether this appears when playing against the rules.

---

[131] Gaudosi, "Ubisoft Developer Reveals."; IGN, "Making of Black Flag."

6. Playing against the rules

Playing against the rules has been carried out through focusing on what happens when deriving from implied play in the specific sequences and through gameworld tourism whereby Havana, Kingston, Nassau, and their surrounding seas have been considered as actual places. Firstly, the chapter addresses what happens when doing the exact opposite. Secondly, the chapter addresses what the role of the player is when doing nothing in the missions and open gameworld. At last, the relation between transgressive play and the representation of the subaltern is discussed. This will indicate how/whether playing against the rules evokes the romantic genre.

6.1 Transgression and desynchronization

Black Flag is played in the present, and through the Animus in the past. When the players do something that is not allowed within the game, including both pirate and Assassin activities, desynchronization occurs (Figure 12). It is the word that fits within *Assassin's Creed* fiction, and is used for "death". After desynchronization, the game reloads the player at the last achieved checkpoint. Desynchronization thus indicates the *framing controls,* which are about what the player may do in the game.[132]

      In general, *enacting stories* while playing transgressive often result in desynchronization because every mission sets up an invisible barrier around the area the mission takes places, in which leaving the area thus results in desynchronization (Figure 13). For instance, the inaccessible area prohibits escaping a sea fight. Since desynchronization is part of *Assassin's Creed* fiction this does not inherently mean that real pirates did not escape from fights. Nevertheless, it does indicate that the game needs the player to behave as a romantic pirate in order to finish the missions because the player is urgently requested to fight the other ships. Therefore, the romantic aspect of "thrilling sea fights", as identified by Pfister, is made into a mandatory objective.[133] For this reason, it becomes part of the *framing narrative,* in which through desynchronization "thrilling sea fights" are emphasized.[134]

Figure 12

Figure 13

---

[132] Chapman, *Digital games as history*, 125-127.
[133] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.
[134] Ibid.

Desynchronization also occurs when allies die, but these allies can however be harmed by the player. In the mission "The Fireship", for instance, the objective is to protect an allied ship. However, shooting the allied ship is allowed within the *ludonarrative*. Nevertheless, the fact that the player desynchronizes when sinking the ally indicates that the game wants to emphasize the friendliness among pirates, which, according to Fox, is part of the romantic pirate genre.[135] In addition, shooting at the ally still refers to "thrilling sea fights".[136] Therefore, the romantic pirate genre is emphasized in multiple ways while doing the exact opposite.

Furthermore, it is allowed to do the opposite of what is said in cutscenes without desynchronization. In the mission "Raise the Black Flag" Ben Hornigold says to Edward: "So long as they're flying King Philips Colors, we'll not offend our own Monarch".[137] This makes sense because Edward and Ben used to be British privateers. During this mission, and in the open gameworld, it is however possible to attack British ships. This indicates that freedom and resisting authorities was important for pirates, which is also part of the romantic pirate genre, according to Fox and Konstam.[138] Therefore, doing the exact opposite of what is said by cutscenes may evoke the romantic pirate genre more explicitly.

Doing the exact opposite during the missions thus provides insight in what the game wants the player to know and do, which has been found to refer to the romantic pirate genre. This therefore sheds a light on the *framing controls* which play a major part in making romance the overarching narrative of *Black Flag*. This means that the player cannot explicitly step away from playing like a romantic pirate by doing the exact opposite.

6.2 The role of the player

Within the missions it is possible to do nothing. This can result into nothing at all, except for missions with a specific time frame, or when the player is put into combat. However, sometimes the player is still put into the role of romantic pirate. For instance, in the mission "Raise the Black Flag" it was possible to let the pirate crew murder the crew of the enemy ship that was boarded and win the fight. This means that even though the player did not engage in the fight he/she is still put in the role of a romantic pirate who experiences "dizzying swordfights".[139]

Using gameworld tourism, meaning walking/sailing specific routes and standing still at specific places while doing nothing to non-playable characters furthermore asks the player to behave like a romantic pirate. For instance, guards that are passing by push the players away when they stand in their way (Figure 14), and guards immediately attack when the player enters a restricted area. In addition, when a guard comes close to the player he obtains a white line, and it becomes possible to

---

[135] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 14-16.
[136] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.
[137] Ubisoft Montreal, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag.*
[138] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 11-13; Konstam, *Piraten,* 241.
[139] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.

either shoot or assassinate him.[140] All of this provokes or challenges the player to fight, and therefore asks the player to behave like a romantic pirate who experiences "dizzying swordfights".[141]

While sailing, the player often comes across sea fights between British, Spanish, or pirate ships. What is hereby most striking is that while being anchored in front of a harbor, the player can still become part of a sea fight. This because the fighting ships come closer to the player in time, and also damage the Jackdaw (Figure 15). The player is therefore placed in the middle of a "thrilling sea fight" and asked to behave like a romantic pirate.[142] Furthermore, while doing nothing the Jackdaw is still moving on the ocean. When there is floating cargo nearby, the Jackdaw will be pushed towards it. This invisible push fits with the "individualist treasure hunter", as identified by Pfister.[143] For these reasons, it becomes clear that the game wants the player to behave like a romantic pirate, who is urging for gold and carries out sea fights.

| Figure 14 | Figure 15 |

While doing nothing the player is thus still put into the role or asked to behave like a romantic pirate. This means that the players cannot explicitly step away from playing like a romantic pirate when wanting to perceive what is going on around them, and indicates that the romantic pirate genre has been desired for in the game's production.

6.3 The subaltern and transgressive play

At last, it is relevant to consider how the subaltern is represented when playing against the rules of play, and thus how this might be different from playing according to the rules. At first, desynchronization can be considered as problematic in relation to the subaltern. The fact that repeatedly shooting slaves causes desynchronization is namely problematic and counterfactual, because real pirates were not friendly towards slaves.[144] Hereby Edward can be considered as a romantic pirate who behaves in a sympathetic way towards slaves, of which sympathy is also part of

---

[140] These options appear for different buttons. Namely, X for shooting and Y for assassinating (Nintendo Switch).
[141] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid, 40.
[144] Bialuschewski, "Black People under the Black Flag," 469.

the romantic pirate genre.[145] The fact that desynchronization occurs when shooting slaves does however not inherently mean that this did not happen in actual history, because desynchronization merely means that it is not allowed within *Assassin's Creed* fiction. In other words, the game remains a historical simulation, in which, according to Uricchio, combining historical facts and fiction is a challenge.[146] Nevertheless, all of this indicates that for *Black Flag* it has been chosen to represent romantic pirates. This is however striking because, as said, the producers strived to represent pirates as realistic as possible.[147] For these reasons then, the romantic image of pirates overarches the portrayal of actual history and allows problematic counterfactuals to exist.

Gameworld tourism furthermore provides insight into non-playable characters and into "imperialist-ethnography overtones", which refers to a certain nation/race being more present than another.[148] These overtones appear at sea through Spanish and British ships, because Civilian ships and pirate ships, which are allies of the player, are highly underrepresented.[149] Brian Rejack argues that historical games also have to create a joyful play experience, apart from representing historical events.[150] *Black Flag* therefore provides the player with a joyful experience by making it possible to sink an abundance of enemy ships. This relies upon "thrilling sea fights", and puts the player in the role of a romantic pirate when pursuing this.[151] Furthermore, in the *framing narrative* is often told that slave ships are present near Kingston, but this is not the case in the open gameworld. This is problematic because real pirates did attack slave ships.[152] There is thus a discrepancy between what is told in the *framing narrative* and what players can carry out in the *ludonarrative* of the open gameworld. All of this indicates that at sea the game wants the player to behave like a romantic pirate by carrying out an abundance of "thrilling sea fights" in which romance overarches the representation of the subaltern.[153]

Sometimes the subaltern is represented in a realistic way. In Kingston are, for instance, three slaves being sold (Figure 16), and on a plantation in Nassau a white male is angry at a slave (Figure 17). These slaves are however all unchained, and the situations are barely noticeable. The examples show that *Black Flag* had to represent the subaltern because it is part of the period of time represented, but that it rather hides it. This is because portraying the actual miserable lives of slaves might affect the romantic narrative.

---

[145] Fox, "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber," 8-9.
[146] Uricchio, "Simulation," 334-335.
[147] Gaudosi, "Ubisoft Developer Reveals."; IGN, "Making of Black Flag."
[148] Miller, "The accidental carjack."
[149] See appendix IV for the numbers and nationalities of ships that were passed by.
[150] Rejack, "Virtual Reenactment," 419-420.
[151] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.
[152] Bialuschewski, "Black People under the Black Flag," 468.
[153] Pfister, "Cultural Imaginations," 31.

Figure 16

Figure 17

Furthermore, it is problematic that black non-playable characters look and behave in the same way as their white counterparts. This goes for the represented pirates, but also for other citizens. For instance, both black and white women are harassed by both black and white men. The skin color of non-playable characters furthermore also changes in the game, whereby the appearance of an arguing black woman can, for instance, change into a white woman (Figure 18 and 19). This indicates that the non-playable characters are generated from a database that does not distinguish in skin color. *Black Flag* is therefore representing diversity whereby every skin color is equal. This may have been done with good intentions, but is in relation to postcolonial perspectives, not a desirable representation. This is because it is problematic in relation to the period in time represented. Mukherjee furthermore argues that it is more desired to implement moments that are usually silenced in history.[154] It would therefore far more fruitful to have more moments like figure 16 and 17 appearing in *Black Flag.*

Figure 18

Figure 19

Playing against the rules has shown that the game uses multiple ways in which the player is put into the role or asked to play like a romantic pirate. The representation of the subaltern while playing against the rules furthermore indicates that *Black Flag* mostly stays away from slavery, and does not consider the representation of the subaltern as main objective. For this reason, romance is maintained as the overarching narrative even when playing against the rules.

---

[154] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 95-96.

7. Conclusion

The manner in which *Black Flag* represents piracy in the Golden Age of Piracy as settled in the colonial Caribbean corresponds to the romantic pirate genre. This is surprising since the game director and lead writer of *Black Flag* claim that the game stays away from pirate clichés to portray pirates as realistic as possible.[155] Since the game is made for entertainment purposes and therefore has to deal with the consumer expectation, it is however obvious why the developers pursued the romantic pirate genre rather than actual history. Ford's argument that the rules of the game, regardless of the player's role, create a grand narrative in videogames in which subaltern is suppressed relates to *Black Flag* because romance has become the overarching narrative.[156] This becomes clear in the *framing narrative, ludonarrative*, and game environment while playing according to the rules, using implied play and exploratory play, and by playing against the rules using transgressive play.

Playing according to the rules makes clear that the new dominant narrative statement of the individualist treasure hunter as part of the romantic pirate genre is present, along with an emphasize on sea fights, swordfights, and the exotic background. The subaltern is hereby silenced because Adéwalé, who is a non-playable character and former slave, has been given a role that would have been given to white pirates in actual history. In addition, black pirates are represented in the same way as white pirates, slaves are often showed working on plantations peacefully, and the further storyline does not dive deeper into the history of slavery.

Playing against the rules then, shows that the player is asked to play like or put into the role of a romantic pirate. Firstly, this may occur because players desynchronizes when they do something that is not allowed within the game. Secondly, it occurs because doing nothing provokes players to fight or pushes them towards gold. The subaltern is hereby suppressed because it is not allowed to behave like a historical pirate who does murder slaves. Furthermore, other non-playable characters, apart from pirates, are randomly generated in which is not distinguished in skin color, which is problematic in relation to the colonial setting of the game. The parts in the open gameworld that nevertheless do reflect upon the actual miserable lives of slaves are barely noticeable.

Black Flag thus represents the subaltern in a problematic counterfactual way, and in a way in which truthful representations relating to the subaltern are silenced. For all these reasons, *Black Flag* does not contain postcolonial perspectives, in which for instance the actual lives of slaves are followed/portrayed.[157] Therefore, it romanticizes Caribbean pirates together with the colonial Caribbean in which historical pirates have been replaced for romantic ones. Romance has thus become the overarching narrative, in which the history of the subaltern has partly been written out in order for players to enjoy a romantic pirate adventure.

---

[155] Gaudosi, "Ubisoft Developer Reveals."; IGN, "Making of Black Flag."
[156] Ford, "Affective writing."
[157] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 95-96.

Using different manners of play has led to a throughout analysis of *Black Flag* in which not merely what the game asks/does has been analyzed, but also responses of the game when playing against the rules have been incorporated. This delivered relevant insights in relation to the presence of the romantic pirate genre in *Black Flag* that would otherwise stay hidden. Limitations of this research are that it is focused on interpretations. Further research towards *Black Flag* in relation to romanticization and postcolonialism could therefore be a discourse analysis and/or ethnography using in-depth interviews with players. This in order to investigate whether people experience the game as romanticized, and/or whether they behave like romantic pirates in the game. Other further research could be carried out on *Assassin's Creed: Freedom Cry,* being a DLC from *Black Flag.* Mukherjee for instance argues that *Freedom Cry* does contain postcolonial perspectives, because it follows the story of the colonized.[158] Further research using the same plurality of play as used in this research would therefore be relevant. This in order to investigate how the subaltern is represented in a game that is part of romantic *Black Flag*, which could therefore be influenced by this.

In short, Caribbean pirates are still as romanticized as they were in the period that colonialism blossomed. The postcolonial, and thus the aftermath of Western colonialism as continuing influence, is therefore present through a representation of colonialism in which romance has become the overarching narrative and the subaltern is silenced.[159] The romantic pirate genre within *Black Flag* that silences the subaltern thus makes that the game is marked by a Western imperialist bias.[160]

---

[158] Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism,* 1-2, 103.
[159] Brooker, *A Glossary*, 117.
[160] Mukherjee and Lundedal Hammar, "Introduction to the Special Issue," 2.

Bibliography and sources

Aarseth, Espen J., "I fought the law: Transgressive play and the implied player." In *DiGRA 2007: Situated Play Proceedings*, 130-133. DiGRA, 2007.

Assassin's Creed Wiki. "Treasure Chest." Accessed March 19, 2020. https://assassinscreed.fandom.com/wiki/Treasure_chest.

Biale, David. *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-history.* Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Bialuschewski, Arne. "Black People under the Black Flag: Piracy and the Slave Trade on the West Coast of Africa, 1718–1723." *Slavery and Abolition* 29, no. 4 (2008): 461-475.

Brethren of the Coast. "Pirate Weapons." Accessed March 4, 2020. http://brethrencoast.com/Pirate_Weapons.html.

Brooker, Peter. *A Glossary of Literary and Cultural Theory.* London; New York: Routledge, 2017.

Chapman, Adam. *Digital games as history: How videogames represent the past and offer access to historical practice*. New York; London: Routledge, 2016.

Earle, Peter. *The Pirate Wars*. Dunne/St. Martin's, 2004.

Fernández-Vara, Clara. "The Whys and Wherefores of Game Analysis." In *Introduction to Game Analysis,* 1-22. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2015.

Ford, Dom. "'EXplore, EXpand, EXploit, EXterminate': Affective Writing of Postcolonial History and Education in Civilization V." *Game Studies* 16, no. 2 (2016). http://gamestudies.org/1602/articles/ford.

Fox, Brian. "A Pirate, A Cowboy, and A Bank Robber Walk into a Bar… And Undergo a Study in Historical Romanticization." *History Honors Projects* 25 (2018): 1-144.

Ganser, Alexandra. "'That the Enchantments of the Sea, may not have too strong and quick a Force upon some' Seafaring Mobilities in Transatlantic Narratives of Piracy around 1700." In

Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility in the US and Beyond, edited by Paul Heike, Alexandra Ganser, and Katharina Gerund, 31-52. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012.

Gaudosi, John. "Ubisoft Developer Reveals The Real Pirates Of The Caribbean In Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag (Q&A)." *Forbes*, March 4, 2013. https://www.forbes.com/sites/johngaudiosi/2013/03/04/ubisoft-developer-reveals-the-real-pirates-of-the-caribbean-in-assassins-creed-iv-black-flag-qa/#6c9398737942.

Glas, René. "Of Heroes and Henchmen: The Conventions of Killing Generic Expendables in Video Games." In *The Dark Side of Play: Controversial Issues in Playful Environments*, edited by Torill Mortensen, Jonas Linderoth, Ashley M.L. Brown, 33-49. London: Routledge, 2015.

Hall, Mark F. "Golden Age of Piracy: A Resource Guide." Accessed January 16, 2020. https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/pirates/index.html.

Hartzer, Paul. "Why Do We Romanticize Pirates?." *The Good Men Project,* September 30, 2018. https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/why-do-we-romanticize-pirates-phtz/.

IGN. "Assassin's Creed 4: Making of Black Flag - Exclusive Gameplay & Concept Art (Part 1)." YouTube video, 11:48. Uploaded [October 3, 2013]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wR04gSLPnI.

IGN. "Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag Wiki Guide." Last edited December 9, 2014. https://www.ign.com/wikis/assassins-creed-4-black-flag/Walkthrough.

Jenkins, Henry. "Game Design as Narrative Architecture." In *First Person. New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, edited by Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, 118-130. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.

Kehoe, Marc C., "Resuscutation of Drowning Victims at Sea." Accessed March 4, 2020. https://www.piratesurgeon.com/pages/surgeon_pages/drowning2.html.

Konstam, Angus. *Piraten: een overzicht van begin tot heden van piraterij uit de hele wereld*, translated by Saskia Peeters and Karin Sinnema. Utrecht: Veltman Uitgevers, 2010.

Leigh, Devin. "Ghost of the Gallows: The Historical Record of Black Caesar," *Creating Knowledge* 5 (2012): 28-33.

Luhmann, Niklas. *The reality of the mass media*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Mackie, Erin. "Welcome the Outlaw: Pirates, Maroons, and Caribbean Countercultures." *Cultural Critique* 59 (2005): 24-62.

Mayar, Mahshid, and Stephen Joyce. "The Post-Apocalyptic and the Ludic: An Interview with Dr. Stephen Joyce." *The Forum for Inter-American Research* 11, no. 2 (September 2018): 61-65.

Miller, Kiri. "The accidental carjack: Ethnography, gameworld tourism, and Grand Theft Auto." *Game Studies* 8, no. 1 (2008). http://gamestudies.org/0801/articles/miller.

Mittell, Jason. *Genre and television: From cop shows to cartoons in American culture*. New York; London: Routledge, 2013.

Moure, Nancy. "Review of ON THE EDGE OF AMERICA: CALIFORNIA MODERNIST ART, 1900-1950, by Paul J. Karlstrom." *Southern California Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (1997): 509–514.

Mukherjee, Souvik, and Emil Lundedal Hammar. "Introduction to the Special Issue on Postcolonial Perspectives in Game Studies." *Open Library of Humanities* 4, no. 2:33 (November 2018): 1 -14.

Mukherjee, Souvik. *Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back.* Cham: Springer Nature, 2017.

Penix-Tadsen, Philip. "Afterword: Regional Game Studies and Historical Representation." *The Forum for Inter-American Research* 11, no. 2 (September 2018): 71-74.

Peterson, Rolfe D., Andrew J. Miller, and Sean J. Fedorko. "The Same River Twice: Exploring Historical Representation and the value of Simulation in the Total War, Civilization and Patrician Franchises." In *Playing with the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History*, edited by Matthew W. Kapell and Andrew B. R. Elliott, 33-48. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2013.

Pfister, Eugen. ""In a world without gold, we might have been heroes!" Cultural Imaginations of Piracy in Video Games." *The Forum for Inter-American Research* 11, no. 2 (September 2018): 30-43.

Pirate Attack. "Top Ten Pirate Weapons." Accessed March 4, 2020. http://pirateattack.co.uk/top-ten-pirate-weapons/.

Pirate Show Cancun. "Life on a Pirate Ship." Uploaded September 4, 2014. https://www.pirateshowcancun.com/blog/cancun-caribbean/life-on-a-pirate-ship/.

Politopoulos, Aris, Angus A. A. Mol, Krijn H. J. Boom, and Csilla E. Ariese. "History Is Our Playground": Action and Authenticity in Assassin's Creed: Odyssey." *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 7, no. 3 (2019): 317-323.

Ponzanesi, Sandra. "De kolonie als strijdtoneel: Phoolan Devi en de postkoloniale kritiek." In *Handboek Genderstudies in Media, Kunst en Cultuur*, edited by Rosemarie Buikema and Liedeke Plate, 131-146. Bussum: Uitgeverij Coutinho, 2015.

Rejack, Brian. "Toward a Virtual Reenactment of History: Video Games and the Recreation of the Past." *Rethinking History* 11, no. 3 (September 2007): 411–425.

Shaw, Adrienne. "The Tyranny of Realism: Historical accuracy and politics of representation in *Assassin's Creed III*." *The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 9, no. 14 (2015): 4-24.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?." In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, 271-313. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988.

The Way Of The Pirates. "Sea Shanties and Pirate Songs." Accessed March 4, 2020. http://www.thewayofthepirates.com/pirate-life/sea-shanties/.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Reproduction of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.

Ubisoft Montreal. 2012. *Assassin's Creed III*. [PlayStation 4/Xbox One/Microsoft Windows/Nintendo Switch]. Ubisoft.

Ubisoft Montreal. 2013. *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag.* [PlayStation 4/Xbox One/Microsoft Windows/Nintendo Switch]. Ubisoft.

Ubisoft Montreal. 2013. *Assassin's Creed: Freedom Cry*. [PlayStation 4/Xbox One/Microsoft Windows/Nintendo Switch]. Ubisoft.

Uricchio, William. "Simulation, history, and computer games." In *Handbook of computer game studies*, edited by Joost Raessens and Jeffrey Goldstein, 327-338. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.

Vallar, Cindy. "Pirates and Sea Shanties." Accessed March 4, 2020. http://www.cindyvallar.com/seashanty.html.

Vught, Jasper van, and René Glas. "Considering play: from method to analysis." *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association Journal* 4, no. 1 (2018): 205-242.

Appendix I: Sequence 1

Narrative

Mission name	*Framing narrative*	Ludonarrative
Edward Kenway	*Black Flag* opens with a cutscene at Cape Bonavista in June 1715 in which a sea fight is happening. The steersman is dead so Edward Kenway (white male, protagonist) has to take over the wheel.	There is a possibility to choose what ships one can attack in a particular order.
	When the wheel has been taken over the ships that are attacking your ship have to be fired with cannons.	There are different routes to reach the shore when swimming through the burning shipwrecks.
	After sinking the fregat, a cutscene occurs that tell that the magazine is going to explode. After that an Assassin (white male) enters the ship and kills a pirate. Eventually, the magazine blows up and Edward lands in the water.	In order to find the Assassin the player can walk/run/swim around Cape Bonavista and take different paths. When having reached the top the player can choose whether to synchronize the viewpoint. There are different ways in which Edward can reach the "stairs" to visit the second checkpoint.
	A flashback occurs in which Caroline, Edward's girlfriend, asks whether privateering is dangerous, and commands Edward to not leave for more than two years. It furthermore shows that Edward goes for privateering to earn money, while Caroline does not want a fortune.	When following the Assassin in order to kill him there is one straight way to follow him. However, the player can choose how he uses this way and what obstacles are taken and avoided. Edward has to kill the Assassin with his swords, but can either attack, counter, or break defense.
	In the next cutscene Edward is unconscious in the ocean and wakes up. He swims up to the surface. After which, the player needs to swim to the shore.	To reach the beach in order to free the trader different ways can be taken, except for the one time Edward has to jump of a cliff.
	When the shore is reached Edward lies on the beach, looking at a beautiful blue sky and palm trees. He tells the Assassin, who is also on the beach that he enjoyed what just has happened. The Assassin tells Edward that he has to go to Havana, and tells Edward that he could pay him, because gold is what pirates want the most. Edward then also checks whether the bottle (rum) that was also washed ashore still has content. Edward asks whether the Assassin has gold with him now and leans towards the Assasin. Consequently the Assassin wants to shoot him, but his gunpowder is wet. The Assassin then runs off into the jungle.	In order to free the trader the British can be fought and killed in different ways. Such as using the bushes in order to hide and kill while being unseen, by running towards them, whereby different weapons can be used. Stede's ship can be reached from different points. When sailing out of the bay it is possible to choose how exactly you sail around the rocks that are present in the sea. However this is very minimal.
	Edward needs to find the Assassin. The player can walk around freely but has to climb up at some point in order to proceed with the mission. When the top has been reached the player has to jump off it and lands in a pile of leaves. After reaching the first checkpoint Edwards needs to go to another checkpoint.	
	The second checkpoint needs Edward to climb at a certain point to see the Assassin	

	jumping down. It is clear that the player also has to jump down to follow him. After jumping down the Assassin emerges and shoots at Edward, hurting him. Edward then has to follow the Assassin and eventually has to kill him with his swords. After killing him a cutscene emerges in which Edward steals the Assassin's (who he finds out is named Duncan Walpole) clothes and other stuff and puts it on. During this a letter is being read from governor Laureano de Torres y Ayala who wants to reward Duncan richly for information. Furthermore it is said that Laureano will not recognize him by face, but by costume. Edward therefore decides to go to Havana to collect Duncan's reward. Edward sees a schooner and decides to go to it. This makes it necessary to reach the beach. When jumping down in the direction of the beach a trader (white male) is being harassed by the British and Edward needs to free him. When Edward has killed all British guards (white males) a cutscene occurs in which the trader talks to Edward. The trader is called Stede Bonnet. During the cutscene Stede tells Edward that his captain has been killed, and that he needs to go to Havana. Edward needs to go there as well and decides to leave with Stede and steer his ship. Edward furthermore checks the boxes that are present on the beach, but they do not have value. In addition, Edward introduces himself as Duncan and tells Stede that he is on a secret mission from the king. Stede tells Edward that he "mistook" him for a pirate at first. In order to continue the mission Edward needs to swim to Stede's ship, take over the wheel, and leave the bay. During this sailing dolphins, turtles, and whales are shown. Stede and Edward talk a bit about the ship. When leaving the bay a cutscene occurs where Stede praises Edward for his sailing. Edward tells that he had been a privateer for two years. Stede thinks that that must have been great. After this the schooner is shown sailing on the open sea.	

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	*Evocative spaces*	*Enacting stories*	*Embedded narratives*
Edward Kenway	The thrilling sea fight with cannons and exploding ships. Images are shown of a beach with palm trees and clear blue water, while on the background a shipwreck is burning.	The game allows me to reach the shore partly by swimming and partly over land. There are different ways to reach certain checkpoints, although sometimes it is needed to make a certain jump or climb.	The thrash on the beach emphasizes that a shipwreck has taken place. The mise-and-scene reminds that you are present on an exotic island, which has treasure chests on it against the background of palm trees, and a clear blue sky and sea.

	An exotic island is shown with exotic animals walking around it while treasure chests are hidden on the island.		The trader is accompanied by another tied up man and a dead man (white males). This tells that the British have been very rough to them.
	Swordfights.		On the beach lies a skeleton with bottles and wood around him. This tells that shipwreck occurs very often on this island.
			A jumping whale is referred to as an event, which emphasizes the exotic environment of the story.

Exploratory play

Narrative

Mission name	*Ludonarrative*
Edward Kenway	At certain points I saw treasure chests, dead animals, and Animus fragments on the map during the mission. It was allowed to collect those. When I wanted to swim to Stede's ship, which is possible from different directions, I ran across a skeleton who was surrounded by a lot of bottles, and wood. I clicked on him and I obtained a treasure map. Immediately after that I obtained information about treasure maps and the map was (unasked) shown in full screen. It is also possible to explore the area and collect all the collectables in Cape Bonavista before going to Havana.

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	*Evocative spaces*	*Enacting stories*
Edward Kenway	Treasure chests. Treasure map. The treasure map is present that could be obtained from a skeleton, which has wood and empty bottles laying around it.	During the search for the Assassin the player can walk/run/swim around Cape Bonavista in order to discover this exotic place. It is possible to create a specific spatial story when searching for treasure chests or other collectables during the mission.

Transgressive play

Narrative

Mission name	*Ludonarrative*
Edward Kenway	Not taking over the wheel causes Edward to loose health, but this health increases over time. There is one man shouting different sentences that tell Edward to take over the wheel. It is possible to walk around the ship but leaving is impossible. Trying to leave the area in which the sea fight occurs results in desynchronization and not fighting the other ships leads to a decrease of health. This however proceeds very slowly and leads to desynchronization within a large period of time. Instead of swimming to the shore, swimming to the open sea causes desynchronization. The player can keep walking/running/swimming around Cape Bonevista but nothing will happen when the player does not proceed with the mission by following the checkpoints.

| | When the player does not follow the Assassin he loses his target and desynchronization occurs. The player also has to kill the Assassin or will be desynchronized.

The trader screams in terror but nothing happens to him when Edward does not approach him or the British guards. When Edward dies nothing happens to the trader as well.

Stede's ship does not leave unless I take over the wheel.

It is possible to sink when sailing against enough rocks. During ramming rocks Stede acts like he falls of the box he is sitting on, and Edward falls backwards. |
|---|---|

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	*Evocative spaces*	*Enacting stories*
Edward Kenway	Does not particularly change, but reminds the player that killing is an important thing to proceed with the mission, and that failing is not an option.	The player can create a spatial story when playing against the rules, but this is very quickly punished by desynchronization.

When the player does not move during the mission an *enacting stories* is not possible. |

Appendix II: Sequence 3

<u>Implied play</u>

Narrative

Mission name	*Framing narrative*	*Ludonarrative*
This Tyro Captain	The mission opens with a cutscene on open sea with Edward at the steering wheel talking to Adéwalé (former slave with whom Edward escaped from the Spanish treasure fleet). Edward tells that he wants to name the ship the Jackdaw. Edward asks whether Adéwalé has a problem with Edward stealing the brig. Adéwalé responds that he is used to sail with "fair" white men. Edward tells Adéwalé that men would not accept him as a captain and therefore asks Adéwalé what role would be justified. Adéwalé then chooses for quartermaster. Edward asks Adéwalé for advice who argues that rest, water and hunting for food and repairs is needed before heading to Nassau. Edward follows this advice.

During sailing to Abaco Adéwalé provides Edward with more advice regarding the condition of the Jackdaw. Furthermore, the crew sings shanties during the trip.

On Abaco, an abandoned island, I had to hunt and skin two iguana's and two ocelots.

Next I had to make a new holster and health upgrade.

After this was made I had to go back to the ship and speak to Adéwalé.

In a cutscene Adéwalé gives Edward a pistol he found in the hold of the ship. | When I leave the ship to swim to an abandoned island the crew shouts that I am overboard. When I come back I receive loud applause.

Abaco is an island so it does not matter from which side you enter it.

There are two optional goals namely to shoot an iguana and to kill an ocelot from the sky. These goals create a 100 percent synchronization for this mission, while not doing them creates a 80 percent synchronization.

It was possible to choose which animal and how to kill the animals. It was possible with bare hands, hidden knife, gun, or swords. Although gun and hidden knife are most efficient because the animals run away from you.

It was also possible to leave the island again with a rowboat to go back to the Jackdaw. |

	Edward is not too happy with it, but says it will do. Edward decides to set sail for Nassau, as Adéwalé tells him his crew wants civilization. Edward says that Nassau is not civilized but a fine place to go out in.	
Now Hiring	When the player first visits Nassau a cutscene is shown which took place in September 1715. Two friends from Edward, also privateers, are shown bullying a British guard. This is not yet part of the mission "Now Hiring".	An optional goal while recruiting pirates is to disarm and kill three guards.
	"Now Hiring" starts when Edward talks to Adéwalé in the Taveerne Old Avery in Nassau.	When first starting to recruit pirates there are four places shown where pirates can be recruited. It is free to choose which place to visit first.
	When the mission starts a shanty is sung by a band in the tavern. Edward introduces Adéwalé to his friends Ed Thatch, Ben Hornigold, and James Kidd. They all have a drink in their hands. Ed and Ben are surprised that Edward allows Adéwalé to wear a gun, but Edward protects him by saying that he saved his life. Edward tells them that they are looking for a crew. The British have however arrived in town and pretend that they own Nassau.	The player can go to fight British guards in open combat. Very often they will also attack the player when he/she is walking on rooftops or coming to close to them. The player is hereby helped by the crew of pirates that have been recruited.
	It is needed to recruit fifteen pirates to continue the mission. Every time Edward saves pirates a cutscene is shown in which they thank him.	It is possible to choose how to attack the British guards that guard the captured pirates. Such as sneaking up to them and killing them in silence, open combat, and using a smoke bomb to distract them or shoot them with the gun. Fighting with bare hands is possible too but less successful. However, there are places where the guards have already aimed their gun at the captured pirates and shoot when you attack them in open sight. Still there are some different options to kill them.
	For the next part of the mission the player needs to go to the hanging and safe the captain. Hereby a side activity is to safe the pirate before he is hanged. (This is a weird construction because it turns out that the pirate being hanged is the captain).When the player enters the area of the hanging a woman comes to him to warn him about what is happening.	For the next part of the mission the optional goal is to shoot on the rope to save the pirate.
	A timer counts down and during this the player has to make a decision on how to save the pirate. Edward continuously has to talk to the pirate that was being hanged. He thanks him and Edward has to go back to the tavern.	The player can choose whether to safe the pirate before he hanged or during, however he may not die. When the timer has counted down from twenty-five the pirate is hanged and he can be saved during hanging as long as his health allows it (his health is shown in a bar). It is also possible to shoot the robe to save the pirate and then kill the guards, or to kill the guards first and then save the pirate.
	A cutscene is shown in which Edward talks to Ben during which they have a drink. Edward asks if Ben knows about the Observatory. James joins the conversation and says that it is an old legend. He says that is an old temple or tomb with a treasure. Ed finds the Observatory more a fairytale and says that Edward should search for gold. However, according to Edward, the Observatory is worth more than gold	

	and even more than what a Spanish ship carries. Ben then adds that they rob the king to pay the poor people and that that is how they earn their keep. The Observatory is a fantasy, not a fortune. Edward seems upset by his friends at the end of this mission.	
Prizes and Plunder	The mission starts with Ben and Ed smoking on the beach. When the player interacts with them a cutscene starts. Ben wants to teach Edward how he has to cope with his ship, which is such a prize. They decide to meet up with Ed in the old fishing village. The next objective is to incapacitate a schooner. Ben tells that Edward should not sink the schooner but intimidate the crew on the ship and take their belongings. When a schooner has been incapacitated the player has to enter the schooner and kill five crew members. When this has been done a cutscene with Ben is shown in which Ben talks to the remaining sailors saying that they will take everything that they own, but leave them alive when they do not do anything. After this the player is asked whether he/she wants to repair the Jackdaw. There is no other choice than to click yes. After this the attacked ship sinks. The next goal is to sail to Salt Key and buy an intermediate hull upgrade. During this sail Ben talks to Edward about gold, and says that gold is not easy to obtain because it often has owners. Finding treasure without an owner is a dream. When attacking ships on open sea often a slow motion video of the cannon shot of the player is shown in some sort of cutscene. When entering ships during the sailing to Salt Key, a cutscene occurs in which Edward and his crew take the loot from the enemy ship. The only choice is then still to repair the Jackdaw, and the enemy ship sinks. After buying the intermediate hull upgrade a cutscene is shown in which the crew cheers and the upgrade is shown with flashing light on the Jackdaw.	An optional goal is to use a swivel to kill three sailors. When the ship is entered the player can either attack and kill the enemy crew with swivels or go into combat using different kinds of weapons. During the sail to Salt Key it is an optional goal to plunder twenty rum. This makes it possible to attack an abundance of ships during this sail, and even go to another place that is not close to Salt Key. These ships can either be sunk or entered.
Raise the Black Flag	In a cutscene Ben and Edward talk about the prizes they earned and that men and women could live like Gods in Nassau. They sail under no flag, but under the black flag that symbols freedom. Ed gives Edward a flag. Ben	Optional goals are to plunder a hunter ship and to plunder 30 sugar. The player is free to choose in how and which ships he or she attacks. The player can choose how to attack the ship at sea and

	says that when they want their Pirate republic to survive that next to gold, they need weapons. They decide to attack a fleet, but only the Spanish, because Ben says he will not attack their own monarch.	how to fight them. Furthermore, the player can choose to enter or sink the ship. The ships do not attack you.
	Ben and Edward go on board of the Jackdaw. The next objective is to collect 70 pieces of metal cargo. Ben tells Edward that there are more merchants on sea than militaries and that you need to hunt small ships to attract the navy.	In the captain's cabin Edward can also sell his cargo such as sugar, rum, and hunted animals. Other upgrades cannot be bought yet, but Edward can choose to equip other swords, guns, and clothes.
	Adéwalé says that there is a military brig on the horizon they may attack. Ben warns Edward for the navy and their types of attacking.	
	Every time Edward has entered a ship a cutscene appears in which he and his crew steal the cargo from the enemy ship.	
	Slow motions scenes during sea fights.	
	When the 70 pieces of cargo are obtained Ben tells Edward to stay low and bribe some people with money in order to lose the notoriety. At this time a hunter ship appears and starts to follow the Jackdaw. The next objective is to sail back to Salt Key and talk to a local officer to pay him money to "disappear".	
	After this Edward needs to go back to the Jackdaw and the Captain's cabin to buy a broad side cannon upgrade.	
	When exiting the captain cabin the upgrade is shown with flashes of light over the Jackdaw and the crew cheers.	
	A cutscene then appears in which Ed praises Edward for his work when they are carrying around cargo. After that Ben, Ed, and Edward carry a bottle. Edward says he will not do this work forever only until he can earn influence and ground at home. Ben laughs that Edward still wants to go back to his "hooker" in England, while he can get everyone here. Edward then walks away making a joke about Ben and Ed as noble men, and talks to Adéwalé. He asks what the mood of the crew is. Adéwalé tells him that they want to go to a field nearby with James to rob a plantation. This is profitable and Edward likes the idea.	
Sugarcane and Its Yields	The mission starts in Andreas Island. Edwards needs to talk to James who is drinking rum with some other pirates.	There are different ways to search for the agent.

	In the first cutscene Edward says that James is the bastard son of late William Kidd, but is more demonic than his father. James makes fun out of Edward's costume. The other pirates are shown barbecuing. James and Edward walk off to talk about raiding the sugar plantation with James, because this will earn a lot of money.	An optional goal is to avoid fights on sea.

An optional goal is to sabotage two alarm bells. Doing this a cutscene occurs in which Edward cuts the rope of an alarm bell.

The key can be stolen in different ways. When the player fights guards sometimes slow motion cutscenes are shown.

The warehouse can be reached in different ways. |
	After this cutscene Edward needs to follow James. James tells that the man they plan to rob is very rich. Edward says that he likes to rob these kind of men. After following James Edward needs to find the agent of the plantation's owner.	
	While becoming close to the green area shown on the map people are to be heard talking about mister Beckford and his business. When using eagle vision the agent is marked and the next objective is to shadow him. Doing this it is told that they had a good harvest and that they are going back to the plantation. When the agent and his man walk onto their ship the players needs to go to the steering wheel of the Jackdaw in fifty seconds.	
	Edwards needs to follow the ship of the agent without being discovered. On the Jackdaw. Adéwalé tells Edward that he looks like he has an idea. This is because Edward heard Beckford's man talking about the cargo that is saved at the plantation. Edward wants to sell this cargo himself at a better price.	
	Sometime after following the agent's ship, Edward asks Adéwalé if he knows the Beckfords and the Draxes. Adéwalé tells that these names are cursed, but that he never worked for them. He worked in a modest plantation where he worked in a boiling house to make beet juice. Edward furthermore asks what life at a plantation is like. Adéwalé tells a bit about sugar harvest.	
	After this talk the player needs to lay the Jackdaw at a harbor at Cat Island. When this is done the player has fifty seconds to reach the agent.	
	The next objective is to eavesdrop a conversation. The player has to stay within the shown circle. The agent is not happy with the guard because he is drunk at work. He says that the surveillance must be heighted, while the guard says that they have everything under control. The agent thought that he was being followed by pirates, although the ship seemed too major. It could also not have been slave traders because of	

	its size as well. He warns the guard to keep his eyes open and double the watch. They walked during this conversation and Edward had to follow them. When they split parts the agent is shown angry on a guard at the watch tower and at a guard that is drinking near an alarm bell. Edward still follows him. Next the agent wants the key to the warehouse. The next objective is then that Edward needs to find the key and when the player knows which guard has it he/she has to steal it. After finding and stealing the key the warehouse can be plundered. When having reached the warehouse a cutscene is shown with Edward and his crew entering the warehouse and taking its cargo. It is furthermore shown what the cargo contains.	
Proper Defenses	The mission starts at Salt Lagoon. James and Ed sit near a campfire. When interacting with them a cutscene occurs. Ed, Edward, James, and Adéwalé toast upon their pirate republic. Ed says they are prosperous and free, and out of reach of kings, churches, and dept collectors. The brethren of the coast in Nassau has been established. They only lack sturdy defenses, the king would tremble then when he visits the town. According to Edward, with the Observatory they will be undefeatable. Ed however thinks that that is a story for children and they need proper defenses such as a galleon with all of his cannons on one side. Ed knows a Spanish galleon. The cutscene ends with showing the tropical area with the Jackdaw in the background. The next objective is to search for the ship El Arca del Maestro. On the Jackdaw Ed, Adéwalé, and Edward speak about the treasure fleet that sunk and how Edward obtained the Jackdaw. Ed says he might dive near where the treasure fleet has sunken. Adéwalé thinks this is a great idea in order to avoid violence on merchants, this is however, according to Ed, soft talk for a pirate. Nevertheless, Ed agrees with Adéwalé and says that it's better to safe violence for the military or those that stand in the way. When the area of the El Arca del Maestro is reached the player needs to search for the ship. The area is a restricted area. The crew therefore feels not quite at ease, also because of the storm that is appearing. Edward tells them that it will be alright.	The player can choose his/her own route to find El Arca del Maestro within the marked area. When following El Arca del Maestro there a different ways to follow her, although fighting enemy ships near El Arca del Maestro results in becoming discovered. Optional goals are to sink two Spanish ships with one broadside and to sink two ships with heavy shots. The player can decide how to kill the eight Spanish gunships.

	The El Arca del Maestro is a Men-O-War ship that cannot easily be killed by the Jackdaw, because it is a much higher level. The player therefore has to follow the ship.

At some moment Ed speaks about a reckless Charles Vane who is present near them. Edward asks if he is a friend of Ed. They are not friends, but Ed respects Charles.

The next objective is to avoid mortar fire. After this Charles Vane runs away. Then eight Spanish gunships appear that are attacking you and need to be sunken. Ed tells to forget about the El Arca del Maestro.

When the eight ships are sunken a cutscene appears in which Edward, Ed, and Adéwalé try to spot the galleon. It is headed towards an island. According to Ed the island is a natural fortress from captain Julien du Casse. Edward remembers this name, and says that Julien would recognize his ship from Havana and will wonder who sails it now. Edward says he cannot risk it. Ed says that they should think about it, perhaps wait until it's dark, because it would be a pity to lose the galleon. | |
| A Single Madman | The player needs to sail to a specific place near Great Inagua in order to start the mission.

In the first cutscene Edward speaks to his crew to follow their collective madness, and not from one single madman. He therefore asks his crew to vote whether to go for the galleon. Voting is done by saying "aye" or "naye". Everyone is unified by voting to go for the galleon.

The next objective is to go to the edge of the jungle. There is one specific route to be followed at some point to climb the ancient building. Hereby Edward at some point has to jump on a bridge and in the following cutscene the bridge breaks causing Edward to hang at the edge of it. On top of the ancient building there is also no possibility than to follow the one path that is shown.

On this path Spanish guards are present. Killing a guard from upstairs results in a slow motion scene in which the guard is killed. Slow motion also occur with regular sword fights. At some point the path divides in two paths, but they come back together eventually and stay the same.
The next objective is to find Julien and then to kill him. | An optional goal is to avoid fights.

In the forest path the player can at some point choose what path to take. The player can also choose to hide and walk towards the goal or just run towards it. Furthermore, it is possible to choose to follow the path using the trees or using the ground.

An optional goal is to kill Julien from the sky.

Reaching and killing Julien can occur in different ways. |

	When Edward kills Julien a cutscene appears. Edward tells Julien that he had to do it in order that Julien would not tell his Templar friends about it. Julien is disappointed because after all they told Edward about the order, Edward still wants to live as a rogue. He furthermore calls Edward a buccaneer, and swears in French. Edward steals a necklace (key) from Julien. Julien wishes for an open world without parasites like Edward. Next a cutscene appears in which Edward says that the cove is theirs to the crew of the Jackdaw.	

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	Evocative spaces	Enacting stories	Embedded narratives
This Tyro Captain	Abandoned island with palm trees and a white beach. Clear blue sea. Coming across ships and attacking them (or the other way around in forbidden areas) on open sea. Treasure chests and empty bottles of rum. Sea shanties sung by the crew on the ship. The crews appreciation for its captain. A beautiful abandoned island (Abaco) on which Edward has to hunt for animals to be able to have more health and carry another pistol. Sea fights when the player decides to attack a ship during the mission. Jolly roger. Treasure chests.	It is possible to choose your own route to sail to Abaco.	Shipwreck survivors and lost loot tell something about life at sea and the dangers that one can face at sea.
Now Hiring	The tavern in which Edward drinks with his friends. The joyful shanties in the tavern. Pirates need a captain to lead them. Striving for a fortune.	The players can choose what places they go to within Nassau to recruit pirates and the players can hereby create their own routes. The way how the player saves the pirate/captain can also be created through different ways of using space, although	The tavern with its joyful songs, drinks, and pirates around tells that this is an important place for pirates to visit.

	Honorable because they provide the poor with money from the king. James used the word Aye. Hanging pirates. Swordfights (either chosen or determined) The supernatural. Treasure chests.	they may not leave the area of the hanging.	
Prizes and Plunder	Seafights with either entering or sinking ships Intimidating the crew on the entered ship Honorable pirates by saying that they will not do the surrendered crew any harm, but they sink after all. Swordfights on the entered ship, or use of guns/swivels. Plundering rum. Focus on treasure and gold. Tropical background with blue sky, sea, and palm trees. Sea shanties. Slow motion shots during sea fights. Jolly roger. Treasure chests.	During the entering of the ship the player can decide how he/she participates in the battle.	Not present.
Raise the Black Flag	Jumping dolphins. Sea shanties. Slow motion shots during sea fights. Attacking merchants and the navy. Swordfights (also slow motion cutscenes) when entering enemy ships. Tropical setting. Entering ships. Bottles of rum, plundering rum.	The player can create its own spatial story in how he or she obtains the 70 pieces of metal cargo. It is possible to create a spatial story to head back to Salt Key to escape the hunter or to attack him.	The captain's cabin gives an impression of fortune and wealth.

	Jolly roger. Treasure chests.		
Sugarcane and Its Yields	Pirates drinking rum together. Bandana's/pirate hats. Shanties. Slow motion scenes while fighting enemies. The urge for gold. Swordfights (optional). Seafights (optional). Tropical setting. The supernatural. Jolly roger. Treasure chests.	The player is free in deciding how a certain goal can be reached, however sometimes there are limited ways (due to timers/areas) to create an enacting story.	Andreas Island obtained a lot of pirates because a lot of people wore hats/bandanas. Slaves on Cat Island seem scared when they see a fight in front of them. Slaves are working on the plantation. It seems very peaceful.
Proper Defenses	Pirates as honorable men. Saying "aye". Tropical setting. Tropical background with ship clearly positioned here for the evocative reason. Rum. Seafights. The supernatural. Jolly roger. Treasure chests.	The player can decide how to follow the galleon, but should not be discovered. The player can decide how to attack the eight Spanish gunships.	Sinking the eight Spanish gunships results in them leaving an abundance of loot to obtain and survivors to save.
A Single Madman	Stealing a galleon. Treasure chests. Swordfights (optional). Tropical setting specifically with the jungle. Slow motion kill scenes. Pirate democracy.	At some points the player can create an enacting story, but most often he/she has to follow the specific path. It also occurs in the way how the player treats the guards and how he/she eventually finds and kills Julien.	A burnt down campfire that still smokes tells that there are people nearby although the place seems empty. Spanish guards are drunk near the camp. The camp is recognizable because of the tents.

Narrative

Mission name	Ludonarrative
This Tyro Captain	During sailing to Abaco is it possible to attack enemy ships. The enemy ships only attacked me when I entered a forbidden area. I sank two Spanish schooners on my way to Abaco. Furthermore, it was possible to drop anchor before abandoned islands that did not or did lie on the route and collect treasure chests. manuscripts and Animus fragments. I also rescued a shipwreck survivor and found some lost loot floating on sea during my trip.

During the hunting and skinning of animals the player can also collect all the collectables that are present on Abaco.

After creating the new holster and obtaining the health upgrade it was possible to walk around Abaco and collect things. I could also swim around the island and walk around on the Jackdaw.

I also tried to swim a long distance during this mission. Swimming on open sea did not cause me to die. It was possible to just keep swimming till the area that was not available in the mission warns me. |
| Now Hiring | It is also possible to collect collectables, items, and visit viewpoints during the mission. Mostly in the sense of "why not also take this while I am already here", but the player could also start to collect everything on Nassau during this mission.

The hanging is not needed to go to immediately, because collecting other things or doing other things is allowed.

Going back to the tavern also allows Edward to do other things within Nassau.
I tried to swim away from Nassau to see what would happen, because it would not let me leave by ship. I could however not swim very far from the shore, because it said that the area was not accessible in my current memory. |
| Prizes and Plunder | I saved shipwreck survivors and took some lost loot that was on sea during the mission.

It is possible to sail for a long time in order to choose what schooner to attack.

It is possible to hunt on sea animals such as sharks and whales during the mission.

It is allowed to visit abandoned islands or shipwrecks to collect collectables and items.

The player can sail around for a long time but not enter areas that do not exist within the current memory.

During the mission it is allowed to sink more schooners before entering a specific one. In addition, the player can also attack cannoneer ships and frigates.

The mission also allows the player to visit abandoned islands, shipwrecks, or to hunt sea animals.

Salt Key can be explored and there can be searched for collectables, items, and viewpoint before buying the intermediate hull upgrade.

I started a bar fight in the tavern in Salt Key, which came to existence as a side activity within the mission "Prizes and Plunder". |
| Raise the Black Flag | It is possible to stop and swim for a bit, or discover an abandoned island/shipwreck. Or to hunt (sea) animals. Although this may not happen during combat.

The player can either fight the hunter ship or run away from it. It can be tried to visit some abandoned islands before or after the hunter has reached the player. When the hunter is following the player limited time is present for this.

On Salt Key it is possible to discover and collect things during the mission.

Swimming is possible. |

Sugarcane and Its Yields	During the search for the agent I could collect collectables, items, and viewpoints on Andreas Island. It is however possible to find the agent accidentally while doing this.
	Shadowing the agent can occur in different ways although the player may not be discovered. It is also possible to collect items during the shadowing although the player cannot move to far away from the agent.
	The player can collect some items when he/she is going back to the Jackdaw but this has to happen in under fifty seconds.
	The player can choose how to follow the agent's ship, but has to stay out of sight of the agent's ship, and cannot collect items/swim because the player will lose its target (agent ship).
	Enemy fights can be fought unless the agent's ship notices it, because then the player is immediately desynchronized. Avoiding these ships can be done through closely watching the GPS.
	It is possible to swim around and walk on some sandbanks before dropping anchor at the harbor.
	During the fifty seconds the player has to reach the agent it is possible to quickly grab some items, collectables, or fight guards.
	During the mission it is possible to obtain items on Cat Island, as long as the player stays close to the target during the conversation. After the conversation furthermore the player has more freedom.
	Mayan Stelae can be found using supernatural powers.
	In order to find the key the player may kill guards and even the agent.
Proper Defenses	When searching for El Arca del Maestro it is possible to stay some time longer on Salt Lagoon to collect items/viewpoints and collectables. It is also possible to visit another small town, the major towns are not possible.
	The player can for instance kill enemy ships or avoid them.
	Fighting enemy ships near El Arca del Maestro results in becoming discovered.
A Single Madman	When climbing the ancient building the player can explore and collect collectables and items. During the specific route the player can choose to move back or try to find other routes, or go for items.
	There are also some collectables hidden in the forest that the player can try to find. At the Spanish camp it is also possible to search in different side paths (that end) for items.
	When not having reached the green area where Julien is in the player can search for items/collectables in the village of Great Inagua. Although he/she may not go too far away or desynchronization will occur.
	I could swim a tiny bit away from the island, but swimming further provided the message "area not accessible".
	Walking back from the goal when the first goal is reached is possible, but nothing will happen.
	At the point I had to find Julien I could walk the whole path backwards without desynchronizing.

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	Evocative spaces	Enacting stories
This Tyro Captain	Treasure chests	The player can stop at sea near the abandoned island to collect items/collectables. On Abaco it is possible to hunt some more animals or go find collectables and items that are present there. It is possible to attack ships on the open sea during the mission.
Now Hiring	Treasure chests	It is possible to collect all collectables and items in Nassau during this mission and thus to create different spatial stories around how the mission was completed and what routes have been taken to collect collectables during the mission.
Prizes and Plunder	Treasure chests	The player can create its own story by choosing which, when, and whether to attack schooners. It is possible to sail around for a long time and keep attacking ships. It is also possible to visit abandoned islands, shipwrecks, or attack sea animals during the mission and collect collectables/items there. On Salt Key is it possible to discover the area first and collect things before heading to buy the intermediate hull upgrade.
Raise the Black Flag	Treasure chests	During the mission, except during combat, the player can visit tiny villages, abandoned island, and hunt. Here he/she can collect things as well
Sugarcane and Its Yields	Treasure chests Supernatural	Following items
Proper Defenses	Treasure chests	Following items
A Single Madman	Treasure chests	An enacting story could occur when searching for an item/collectable.

Transgressive play

Narrative

Mission name	Ludonarrative
This Tyro Captain	During the sail to Abaco I tried to visit other locations that were as like Abaco unknown on the map, but when I sailed towards it said that the area did not exist in my current memory. I also tried to sail back to Havana or Cape Bonavista since I had been there before but they also appeared on the map as unknown. I followed the line of "area not accessible" but I could not pass it anywhere. I had no other choice than to sail to Abaco. Sinking allowed me to restart from a certain point again to sail to Abaco. I had to kill and skin the animals on Abaco, because sailing around had limited options and not doing anything did also not result into anything. Also only killing the animals did not result into anything.

	I tried to exit the place and to continue with playing when the mission wanted me to create a new holster and obtain a health upgrade, but when I exited it, it kept going back automatically to the place I had to upgrade.
Now Hiring	I waited to see what would happen when I watched captured pirates fighting to the British guard that have captured them. What I saw was that the local inhabitants started running around, very explicitly. The pirates were furthermore killed when I did not help them attack the British guards. For this reason, this place as a place to recruit pirates disappeared and a new place appeared on the map. When the pirates died the guard immediately came to me and attacked, while I did not attack him at first. I did not attack him and therefore he killed me. Pirates thus need a leader. Not doing anything to start recruiting pirates did not lead to anything. I headed back to the Jackdaw and wanted to sail away, but this would result in canceling the current mission. I could therefore during this mission only walk around on Nassau as an island, and on the anchored ship. I tried fast travel during the mission but the game would not allow me to do that. I let the pirate die when he was hanged, which led to desynchronization, because my ally had died. This message also occurred when I walked away from the hanging even before the timer had ended.
Prizes and Plunder	Ben wanted me to use the spyglass to find a schooner. I did not do this and still the mission proceeded. However I had to attack the schooner first because else the schooner would not do anything. I tried to escape from the schooner but the schooner followed me and was much faster. Eventually the schooner lost me and stopped following and attacking me. I wanted to go back to Nassau but it would end the mission. Nothing else happened when I followed some Spanish schooners. I could swim for a long time, but not enter villages, only abandoned islands. I tried to abandon the ship when the schooner attacked me but the game would not let me leave the steer or even the ship. Every time I sink a schooner I attack the mission sets back to attacking another schooner because I have to enter it. During the time the schooner was entered I decided to do nothing and stay near the steering wheel to see what happens. My crew won and killed the needed five enemy crew members. I noticed that Adéwalé does nothing as well. Not buying an intermediate hull upgrade did not cause the mission to proceed. I could not even exit the payment screen.
Raise the Black Flag	I decided to not attack the military brig Adéwalé pointed out to, although Edward said he wanted to attack that ship. This was not a problem and I could attack other ships. During this mission I also tried to do nothing while my crew attacked the enemy crew, although now ten crew members had to be killed instead of five. My crew still won, but I lost a lot of crewmembers. Ben said not to kill British ships so I searched for one. I attacked a British schooner, which was allowed. Not attacking ships did not result in anything because they did not attack me. Running away from the hunter ship into open sea results in the hunter ship creeping up to you and starting to shoot you. Visiting major villages causes desynchronization. Desynchronization occurs while entering an area that is unknown in current memory.
Sugarcane and Its Yields	I had to follow James but I ran away from him. I could do some interactions around him, but moving too far away from him gave me a warning to decrease the distance

	between myself and my target (James). Not following James causes him to stand still and wait for the player to become closer. When I wanted to sail away with the Jackdaw I desynchronized. I received the message that the area was not accessible in current memory. I could swim a bit further but I still desynchronized. When shadowing the agent I ran away, which caused a timer to appear and demanded me to become close to my target (the agent) again or desynchronization would happen. I tried to kill the agent, but it showed the message "discovered" and I desynchronized. I decided to wait the fifty seconds to see what happens. I received a few warnings to decrease the distance between me and my target, and eventually desynchronized with the message that I was not early enough at my destination. I shot the agent's ship and I was desynchronized. I shot enemy ships, but this often lead to desynchronization when the agent's ship noticed it. When I sailed away and shot randomly while I had to go on shore the agent's ship noticed me and I still desynchronized. When I did not shoot but just sailed away I still desynchronized because I lost my target. This did not happen with swimming. I could swim very far away, so I wanted to drown myself to get back to the Jackdaw easily, but this did not work. You can only suicide at land. When I tried to kill the agent in the conversation I desynchronized with the message that I drew too much attention. When I tried to kill the guard in the conversation I received the message that my target has died. Leaving the circle of the conversation leads to desynchronization. I tried to sail away from Cat Island but this led to desynchronization. I could swim a bit further but eventually this also ends in desynchronization. The message is that the area is not accessible in current memory. Killing too many slaves, civilians, or tame animals leads to desynchronization.
Proper Defenses	I tried to sail and swim away from the place El Arca del Maestro could be, but going too far away causes desynchronization because the area did not exist in the current memory, although I had already unlocked it. I tried to start a fight with the much stronger El Arca del Maestro, but when I shot at it I was immediately desynchronized because I had been discovered. I tried to sail away from El Arca del Maestro but I was desynchronized because I lost my target. During following El Arca del Maestro I could not release the steering wheel and go swimming. The mission said to avoid mortar fire, but it was not a problem to be hit. I hit my allies and Adéwalé told me that I should fire at my foes. The allies did not shoot back at me. They showed some damaged, but they did not sink. The message "Don't shoot on your allies" kept appearing. I tried to sail away from the eight gunships but they are much faster and therefore escaping is impossible, and sailing away without shooting back results in sinking. In addition, sailing too far away causes desynchronization because the area was not accessible during open combat.
A Single Madman	I tried to take the steering wheel and sail away but Adéwalé stood in front of it and I could not interact with it. I could jump of the ancient building and kill myself. Going too far into the rest of the village of Great Inagua causes desynchronization.

	Julien is saying that they have to hurry to leave, but they never leave and nothing happens when I do not kill him.

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	Evocative spaces	Enacting stories
This Tyro Captain	Swimming a long distance without problems could make people think that pirates swam for fun.	Creating a spatial story against the rules of the game cannot be completed because it often results in desynchronization. A narrative is therefore created that does not quite end.
Now Hiring	The player could think of the British as more evil by watching them slaughter pirates.	It is possible to create a spatial story in which the player moves through space and keeps letting pirates die. Although new places with captured pirates keep emerging. Creating a spatial story against the rules of the game often led to desynchronization. The player can start a story by leaving the location of the mission, visiting the ship or swimming, but cannot end their own story and have to go back to the mission.
Prizes and Plunder	Swimming as a thing that pirates do often. Pirates do not necessarily need their leader. Pirates also need to repair their ships.	Creating a spatial story through swimming. Playing hit and run with schooners. Desynchronization when wanting to visit other areas or ending the mission by visiting villages. Enacted story is therefore ended.
Raise the Black Flag	Swimming as a thing that pirates do often.	Creating a spatial story through swimming. Only running away from the hunter ships create a spatial story in which the player eventually dies. I could attack British ships during the mission while Ben had said that this was not allowed. A spatial story is created by actively searching for them. Searching for other ships to attack instead of the one Adéwalé and Edward had pointed out to.
Sugarcane and Its Yields	Swimming as a thing that pirates do often. Pirates did not commit suicide through drowning.	There are lot of restrictions within the missions to create an enacting story, since they often end in desynchronization. However, through swimming an enacting story can sometimes be created.
Proper Defenses	Swimming as a thing that pirates do often. Pirates do not kill other pirates. Pirates do not escape from battles.	Creating a spatial story against what the mission wants the player to do results in an enacting story that cannot be finished because of desynchronization. There are thus a lot of restrictions in the creation of transgressive enacting stories.
A Single Madman	Pirates can kill themselves. Pirates have to kill.	Enacting stories can hardly be created because of the desynchronization that will happen. It is however possible to run back and forth on the specific route.

Appendix III: Sequence 7

<u>Implied play</u>

Narrative

Mission name	*Framing narrative*	*Ludonarrative*
We Demand a Parlay	The mission opens with a flashback cutscene in which Caroline is afraid Edward will be hurt when going for privateering. Edward says that he will be careful. Edward furthermore asks Caroline to come to him when he is rich. Caroline is not sure about this and her mother calls her away from Edward. Caroline says she cannot promise to come, because Edward is being foolish. Edward says that Caroline should not give up on him, because he needs her faith the most. It is July 1718 and Edward is sitting in the tavern in Nassau writing a letter to Caroline. Anne brings him a drink and sits with him. Edward throws away the letter thinking that Caroline has already forgotten about him. Jack Rackam comes sit with them and teases Anne. Then a cannon shot is to be heard. This is before the actual mission starts. For the actual mission to start Edward needs to go to the other villagers near the beach. There is a ship near the beach and a lot of British guards entering Nassau. Woodes Rogers (who Edward has met before) steps forward. Edward tells Jack that Woodes may not see him. Woodes tells that they want to speak with the governors of the island: Charles Vane, Ben Hornigold, and Ed Thatch. Jack thinks it is about the royal pardon. Ben steps to Woodes. Jack calls Ben weak. Next Edward has to shadow Woodes. Woodes thanks Ben for the pleasant reception he got on the island, he expected it to be more hostile. Ben warns Woodes that the pirates will show themselves soon. Woodes says that Ben is nice for a pirate. After shadowing Woodes, Ben has to call his men in order to negotiate with them. When they walk further Woodes tells commodore Chamberlaine that they need to repair the fortress. They furthermore talk about "slow persuasion" in order to get the pirates on their side. The commodore says they should shoot every ship that is not British, but Woodes says that they should listen to him because he is the governor.	The player can shadow Woodes and his group in different ways as long as the player is not seen by Woodes and his group. An optional goal when getting into the fortress is to kill guards while hanging from a ledge. In the fortress an optional goal is to sabotage the alarm bell. The fortress can be entered in only one way, but this can be reached from both sides of the fortress. Chamberlaine's plans can be reached in different ways as long as the alarm bell is not rang.

	After shadowing Woodes and his group the next objective is to hide. During this someone knocks on the door of the fortress. After this the whole group walks into the fortress. The next objective is to get into the fortress. In the fortress the royal pardon for piracy is read out loud, but no one is to be seen. Next the player needs to steal Chamberlaine's plans. After doing this a cutscene appears in which Woodes, Ben, and the others walk out of the door next to Edward. Woodes tells them to accept the pardon when their hearts allow it. Until then they have to stay in Nassau, because that is better than open persecution. The pardon is the best bet for the pirates. Chamberlaine is more aggressive and says that they will harm Nassau when they do not accept the pardon. Woodes tells him to calm down. Ben says that they should accept the pardon, while Charles does not want that and is rather hang. Ben says that they screwed up their republic, and therefore should take the pardon. Two other pirates follow Ben, while Charles and Jack remain. Charles says he needs a drink.	
The Gunpowder Plot	The mission starts in the tavern in Nassau where Charles calls Ben a traitor. Woodes and Ben pass by Charles and Edward and they hear that Woodes praises Ben. Edward says to Charles that they will survive it. Edward has made a plan in which they regroup in his camp, because Nassau is a lost case. Edward shows Charles Chamberlaine's plans and says that they should steal some gunpowder and pitch in order to blast the blockade in Nassau. Charles is shown drinking afterwards. Edward has to get the gunpowder, while Charles takes care of the pitch. The next objective then is to steal four crates of gunpowder.	Optional goals are to kill four guards in one streak and to use a blowpipe on guards 10 times. The player can choose the order of stealing the gunpowder and the player can choose how to steal it. Either by heavy swordfights or by sneaky stealing it.
Commodore Eighty-Sixed	The mission starts on a place where Charles and a regular pirate are hidden. In a cutscene is shown that they are trying to cut the ropes. At some point the lieutenant is calling guards and tells them that the commodore is suspecting a revolt and that all pirate ships in the harbor will be sunken despite of what the governor has said. Charles says that someone should kill the commodore or everything has ended. Edward says he will do it. The regular pirate however says that he will not kill the commodore because he is one of the King's man. Charles then attacks the regular pirate and says that they cannot take any risk. Charles will wait for Edward.	An optional goal is to kill three guards using stalking zones and to kill Chamberlaine from the sky. The player can choose how to follow the guards, and how to kill Chamberlaine.

| | The next objective is to follow the guards. The lieutenant and the guards discuss the bad blood between Woodes and Chamberlaine. The lieutenant furthermore recruits guards for the job.

When having reached the beach the next objective is to kill commodore Chamberlaine. When entering his ship it is said that they will depart. If they question Chamberlaine the guards may stay on shore. Chamberlaine simply does not want the rats (pirates) to take over the island/start a revolt.

Chamberlaine checks everyone before departure and gives them tasks, but never leaves.

Edward kills Chamberlaine and confronts him with the pardon that was given. He tells Edward that he would have killed all pirates if it was not for Woodes. Furthermore, he says that Edward does not become better by killing him. Chamberlaine thinks all pirates are peasants, feeding on honest man. Edward responds that King George is too, after which Chamberlaine is offended. | |
| The Fireship | The mission starts on the beach where Charles and Jack are waiting. Jack is smoking. A cutscene starts in which Edward tells them that the commodore is dead. Charles tells Edward that there is a problem with the galleon. Then he becomes angry at Jack and attacks him because he is smoking near the gunpowder that could blow up whole New Providence. After this, Charles tells Edward that the galleon has been taken by the British.

The next objective is to escort the fireship. When this is done long enough the fireship sails into the blockage and blows it. The next objective is then to escape through the blockage.

When this is done a cutscene appears in which the crew is cheering. Jack and Charles drink and say to screw the pardon. The ships are then shown while the crew is singing a shanty. | Optional goals are to sink three ships with the mortar and to use barrels to sink a ship.

The player can choose how/with what and what ships to shoot at. The player can also sail around but may not move too far from the fireship or too far away on the map. |

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	*Evocative spaces*	*Enacting stories*	*Embedded naratives*
We Demand a Parlay	Tropical setting. Jolly roger. Honorable men receiving a pardon. Treasure chests.	The player can choose how to get to the point where the fortress can be entered. The player can choose how to shadow Woodes and his group.	The Jolly Roger is raised on a place where Woodes group passes to emphasize the pirate republic Nassau.

	Drinking.	The player can choose how to steal Chamberlaine's plans.	
	Swordfights (optional) (slow motion scenes).		
The Gunpowder Plot	Swordfights (optional but often not avoidable).	The player can decide how and in what order he/she steals the gunpowder.	A training camp for British guards, which shows their strength in the besieging of Nassau.
	Tropical setting.		
	Drinking.		The British blockade with ships surrounding Nassau.
	Treasure chests.		
	Jolly roger.		The British flag is present everywhere.
Commodore Eighty-Sixed	Tropical setting.	The player can choose how to follow the guards and how to kill Chamberlaine.	A training camp for British guards, which shows their strength in the besieging of Nassau.
	Jolly roger,		
	Treasure chests.		The British blockade with ships surrounding Nassau.
	Swordfights (optional, but killing has to happen).		The British flag is present everywhere.
The Fireship	Tropical setting.	The player can only make choices in what ships and how he/she attacks those, and how the player moves to sink these ships. Escaping namely needs to be done as soon as possible as huge ships will come and attack the player.	Not present.
	Jolly roger.		
	Sea fights.		
	Drinking.		

Exploratory play

Narrative

Mission name	*Ludonarrative*
We Demand a Parlay	Fights with British soldiers can happen out of sight of Woodes.
	Items/collectables/viewpoints can be taken if they are close to Woodes group and the player is not running out of time.
	I started to fight with guards in the fortress which was possible until the alarm bell was used, then desynchronization occurred.
The Gunpowder Plot	It is possible to get a drink in the tavern and some information.
	Items/collectables/viewpoints on Nassau can be obtained.
	Side activities such as saving pirates, robbing a storehouse, or stealing from a courier may appear.
Commodore Eighty-Sixed	It is possible to fight guards when the guards that are followed do not see this.
	Items/collectables/viewpoints on Nassau can be obtained when near the guards that are followed, or more easily and broader when the objective is to kill Chamberlaine.
	Side activities such as saving pirates, robbing a storehouse, or stealing from a courier can take place when the objective is to kill Chamberlaine.
The Fireship	Exploring is not possible.

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	Evocative spaces	Enacting stories
We Demand a Parlay	Pirates often fight.	Going for items/collectables within the range of the goal is not a problem.
The Gunpowder Plot	Honorable pirate saving other pirates. Pirates are out for gold.	Enacting stories are created through these side activities, collecting items, or doing other things such as drinking in the tavern.
Commodore Eighty-Sixed	Side activities.	Enacting stories are created through these side activities, collecting items, or by choosing to fight guards.
The Fireship	Not possible.	Not possible.

Transgressive play

Narrative

Mission name	Ludonarrative
We Demand a Parlay	The Jackdaw cannot be reached in the whole mission. Walking away from shadowing Woodes causes desynchronization after a timer of twenty seconds has been shown. I killed Woodes and immediately desynchronization occurs. Woodes may not see Edward. During hiding the player may not kill Woodes and his group. Walking away when hiding causes a timer to count down from 20 and when the player walks even further away desynchronization appears. I wanted to leave the area of the fortress but the whole area surrounding the fortress has been made unavailable.
The Gunpowder Plot	I tried to sail away from Nassau but I got the warning message that this is not possible during the British blockade. Adéwalé also stays in front of the steering wheel. Swimming too far away from Nassau causes desynchronization with the message that the area is not accessible in current memory. Doing nothing results into nothing.
Commodore Eighty-Sixed	Walking away from the guards results in a timer that counts down from twenty and eventually to desynchronization. Killing the guards that are followed results in desynchronization. I tried to sail away from Nassau but I got the warning message that this is not possible during the British blockade. Adéwalé also stays in front of the steering wheel. Swimming too far away from Nassau causes desynchronization with the message that the area is not accessible in current memory. Doing nothing results into nothing.
The Fireship	Sailing too far away from the fireship causes desynchronization. Also sailing too far away causes desynchronization because the area is not accessible in current memory. Shooting on allies is possible, but gives the warning that this should not be done. Adéwalé also makes a sarcastic remark about this. It is however possible to help sink the fireship. When the fireship sinks the player is desynchronized. Doing nothing also results in the fireship sinking. Staying to close to the fireship causes sinking or a lot of damage. Sailing away from the escaping goal causes either that the area is not accessible anymore or that the more advanced ship sink the Jackdaw.

Environmental storytelling

Mission name	Evocative spaces	Enacting stories
We Demand a Parlay	The royal pardon is such an important subject because only the fortress and its near surrounding can be visited (resisting authorities).	Lead to desynchronization when starting a transgressive enacting story.
The Gunpowder Plot	Pirates cannot leave a blockade, and thus have to fight for it.	Enacting stories are ended through desynchronization.
Commodore Eighty-Sixed	Pirates cannot leave a blockade. Chamberlaine has to be killed in order for the pirates to be given another chance.	Enacting stories are ended through desynchronization.
The Fireship	Killing allies as a pirate comes with consequences.	Enacting stories are ended through desynchronization.

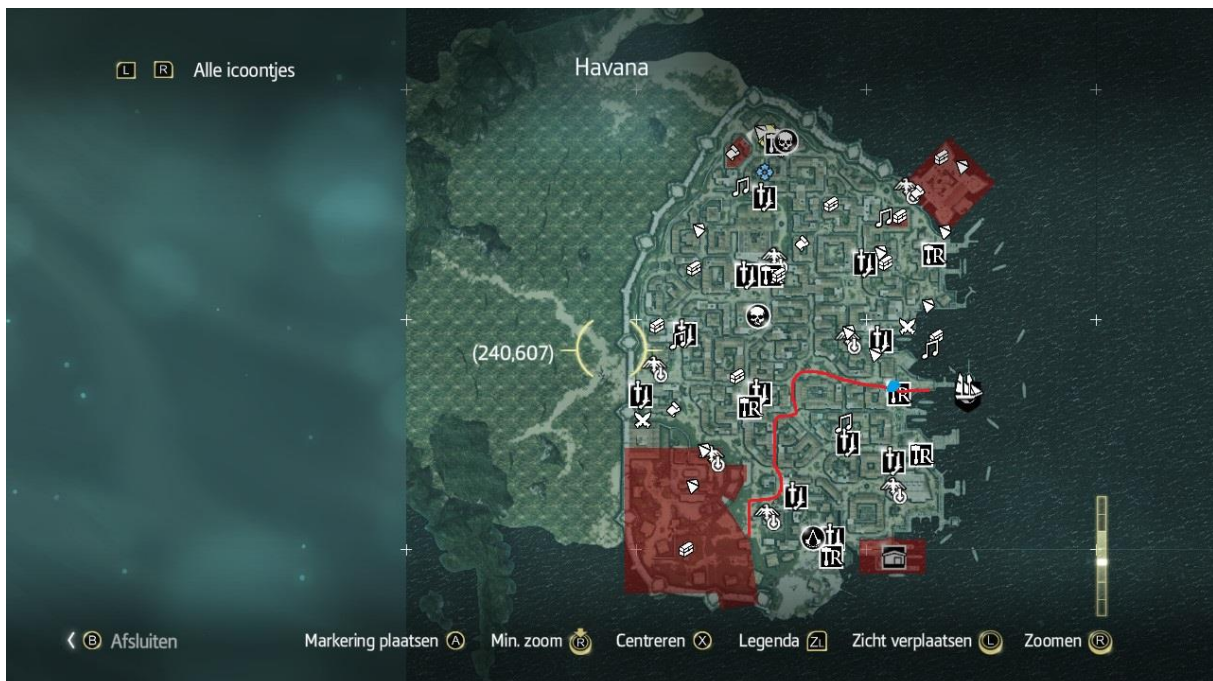# Appendix IV: Gameworld tourism

<u>Note</u>

Red line: the route walked.

Blue dot: the place stood still at.

For Nassau the same route is walked twice (before and after its besieging).

All of this has been done after the main storyline has been finished, and every piece of land was conquered. (except for Nassau as pirate republic).

Havana

<u>Standing still (15 minutes)</u>

- <u>Location:</u> A town square near the harbor master close to the docks.
- Side activity about catching a courier appears.

- I stood in the middle of the road and after one minute Spanish guards pushed me away.
- White men are standing in front of their markets.
- Spanish guards are speaking Spanish, every patrolling round they say something different but after some time they start over again.
- White citizens are walking around.
- Two Spanish guards walk around me constantly, after the first push they did not push again.
- Inhabitants that walk across me allow me to blend in with them, sometimes large groups pass me.
- The sound of a sword appears sometimes.
- People that pass me: Spanish guards, men with hats, white men with wigs, men with beards, women in dresses. Both black and white people are present

Route

- A sign with "Pyrates beware" near cages on the dock.
- Plenty of man both black and white stand on the dock, some are fishing.
- Some lady dancers can be rented in order to distract guards or to be used as group to blend in with.
- A side activity about catching a courier appeared but eventually disappeared.
- Spanish guards walk around and talk to one another in Spanish.
- People are talking to one another in small groups.
- Women both black and white in dresses.
- Also white men with wigs.
- Another group of lady dancers.
- A man is making weird hand gestures.
- I hear music coming from the tavern.
- Another group of Spanish guards.
- A drunk man.
- A group of pirates that could be rented (both black and white).
- A black man passes by.
- White inhabitants speak Spanish.
- When people pass by a blue wave goes over my character.
- Pets (cat) are present.
- A monk passes by.
- Another group of rentable pirates.
- People are sitting and talking near a bonfire, a black man is drunk.
- Walking past inhabitants makes me blend in with them.
- The inhabitants cannot be pushed away while walking.
- People are praying with a monk in front of church in Spanish (a black men is there).
- Through the gate slaves can be seen working peacefully on the plantation.
- A black man passes a plantation without any trouble and without being part it.
- Another group of pirates that could be rented appears.
- Walking past the plantation with guards guarding it too closely causes guards to push me away, and eventually they pushed me into the area of the plantation. Seven guards then attacked me, while four were guarding the gate.

- 3x Citizen ship.

- 6x Spanish cannoneer ship.

- Floating loot is present at sea.

- The wind is moving the ship away from the harbor.

- Jumping dolphins.

- Sea shanties.

- The wind blew me towards cargo, the pirates notice the floating loot and it becomes possible to loot the cargo. When I do not pick it up they keep referring to it.

- Weather changings.

- A shipwreck survivor becomes present.

- A Spanish brig that has almost been sunken appears. It shows that its health is empty and has a blue waving line above it.

- When I got close to land I immediately got pushed away from it.

Kingston
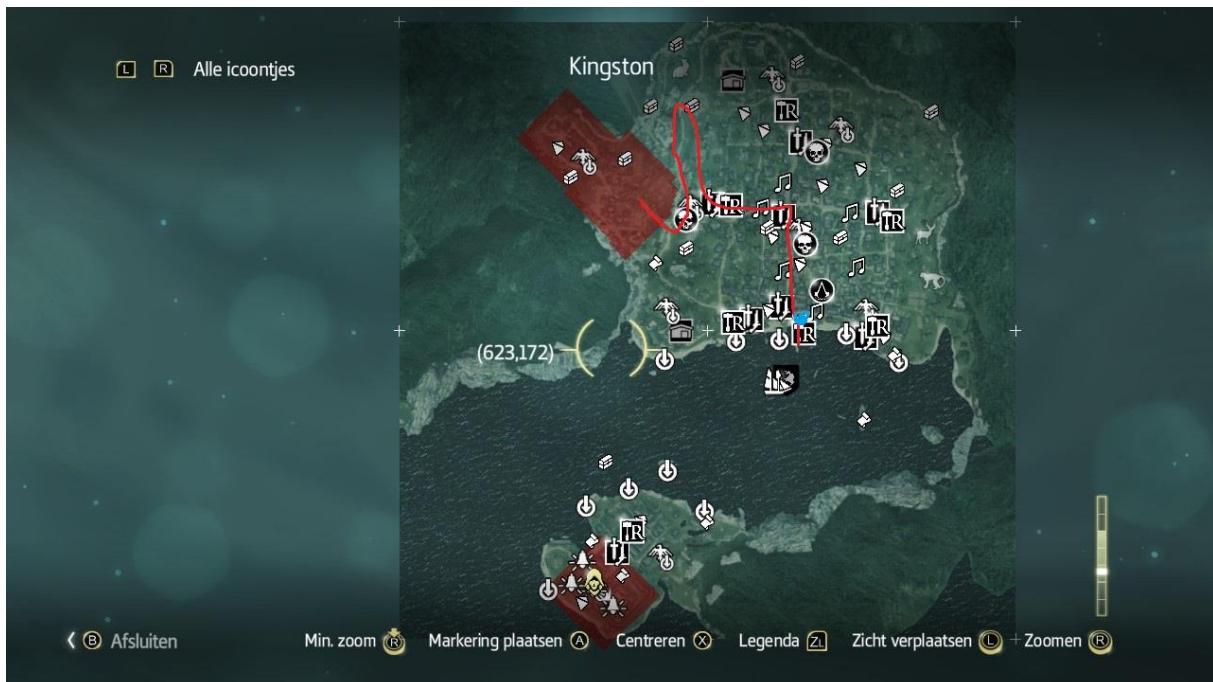
Standing still (15 minutes)

- Location: a town square near the docks at the beginning of the main street.

- English guards walk around but do not reach the place I am standing at.

- The British guards say something about praising the King, about the Navy, they have a clear British accent.

- When the British guards come close to me they shine in white and the option "assassinate" or "shoot" appears, after this the guard is still outlined in white when close to me.

- Villagers that appear give me and themselves a blue wave across them.

- I can steal from villagers when they pass by.

- I can view a white man selling slaves but they never get sold or other slaves are brought in.

- Big groups that are racially mixed pass by.

- Villagers, both black and white, simply walk closely past me, touch me, then turn around to look at me angrily.

- A white villager pushed away a British guard but the guard did not respond to him.

- White men are carrying boxes towards the dock.

Route
- Side activity to catch a courier.

- A group of rentable pirates is present after leaving the docks, the pirates are drunk.

- There is a market with white people selling things.

- A white man is selling slaves (two man, one woman), the slaves look sad. There is no audience. The white man is not speaking as well.

- A lot of white men are carrying boxes.

- White and black men alike walk around.

- White women in red or green dresses walk around.

- British guards are walking around.

- When I am in their way they push me away

- The rentable lady dancers (all white) are talking in English when I pass by.

- White and black people alike are talking and/or sitting around (sometimes mixed, sometimes only one race).

- Groups of British guards are standing in groups in the street.

- A man is using a broom to clear the front of his house.

- The British flag hangs prominently in the streets.

- A drunk man is sitting in front of his house.

- Another group of talking rentable lady dancers.

- Another group of rentable drunk pirates (black and white).

- The blacksmith greets me when I pass by.

- It is less crowded when being more behind in the city.

- Another group of rentable drunk pirates (all white)

- Coming too close to British guards guarding a restricted area causes them to wave, and eventually push you away.

- More black man walk around near the plantation but are not at work.

- There were no guards at an entry of the plantation so I walked in.

- Slaves are working peacefully on the plantation.

- When guards noticed me they started to attack me.

- The scarecrows look like a pirate and even wear an eyepatch.

Near the harbor (at sea) (15 minutes)
- 4x British fregat.

- 2x British brig.

- Civilian ship.

- British cannoneer ship.

- 2x Spanish fregat.

- British Man-o'-war.

- Spanish Man-o'-war.

- British Schooner.

- Pirate brig.

- Floated loot able to pick up, the sea put me in that direction .
- The British fregats and cannoneer ship open fire on the Spanish fregat and Spanish Man-o'-war.
- They get closer to me and damage me because I am in the middle of their fight. They do not shoot at me. After some time they go away from me but continue their fight, I lose one health bar.
- Shanties.
- A Spanish fregat sinks, and a new one appears.

Nassau (besieged)
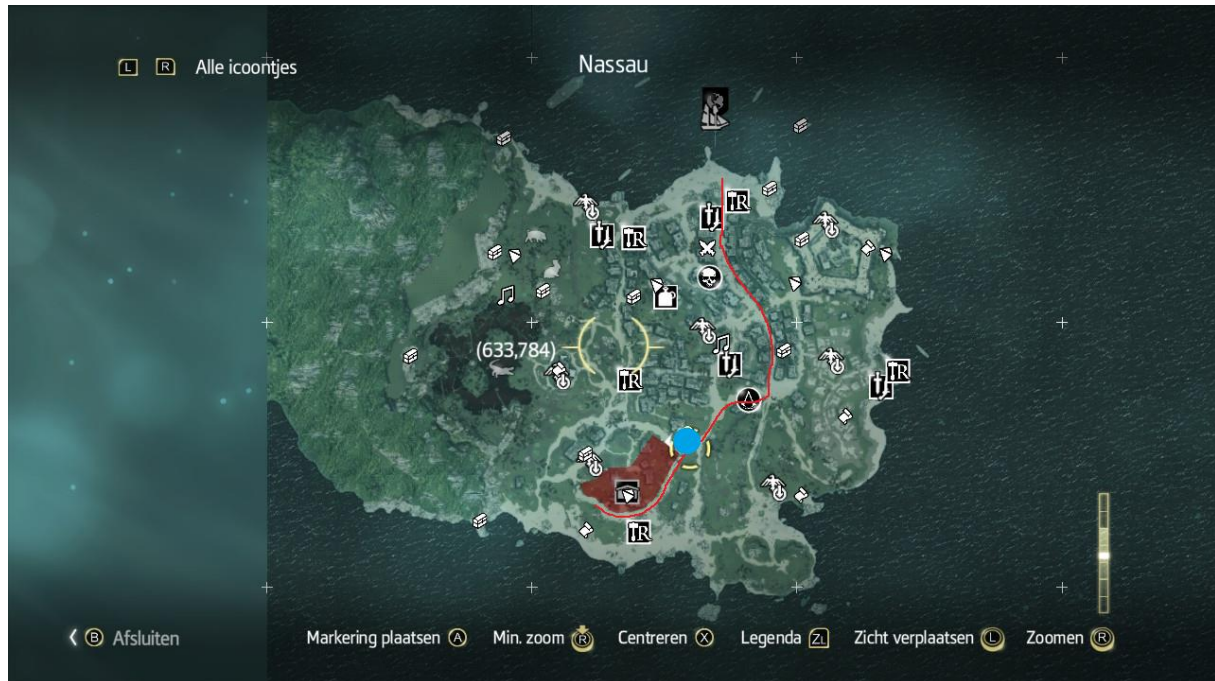
Standing still (15 minutes)
- <u>Location:</u> In between the plantation and the city
- Black man and woman are very present on this location.
- Men and women are working on the plantation peacefully.
- On two places a white man is talking angrily towards slaves. One is where the slave is being frightened, the other is where two slaves (man and woman) are talking angrily towards a white man, because he is said to be drunk. The black woman is talking. When I turned around the angry black man and woman have changed for white people. I refreshed the game then only one person is black.
- Right in front of me a white man and a black woman start to talk to one another. When they walk off the white man follows the black woman.
- British guards also walk past me, but do not do anything to me, there is however an option to assassinate or shoot them.
- The talk between white man and black woman starts again. It seems like the white man likes her. He also waves towards here and calls her name when she walks away. When he follows her she become angry at him and waves with her hands.
- The white man keeps following her and another white man also tries to get her attention. She also pushes him away.

- The same white male has now started following a white woman.
- A white man and black man meet each other and shake hands.
- At night the talks continue but the slaves stop working at the plantation.

Route
- Empty pirate cages on the beach.
- Side quest courier pops up.
- British flag is waving.
- People are standing in groups in the street (black and white).
- British guards are also standing in groups but also walk around.
- A white pirate (not rentable) is standing near a house.
- Black women walk around freely.
- The gallows are empty, but there are guards and an audience in front of it.
- British guards are talking with one another aggressively.
- Other people are at work in the city.
- More pirate non-playable characters (not rentable) are present here, but not plenty.
- Another side courier quests pops up, the courier walks past me and the option to assassinate or shoot him becomes present with a white line surrounding the courier
- I walk past an Assassin who I can interact with, white lights shine on him
- On the plantation I walk across a white man who is aggressively talking towards a slave who seems frightened. The man also tells the slave that he is payed to work
- The rest of the people on the plantation (slaves) are at work peacefully
- Walking past a gate of the restricted area too closely causes guards to push me away, they tell me that I have no business here. The guards are protecting a warehouse.
- When I walked into the restricted area the guards immediately start to attack me.

Near harbor (at sea) (15 minutes)
- 6x Spanish schooner.
- British schooner.
- Spanish cannoneer ship.
- British cannoneer ship.
- Two Spanish schooners, one British schooner, one British cannoneer ship, and one Spanish cannoneer ship are chasing one another and are having a sea fight. They appear out of sight quickly.
- Floating cargo.
- Shanties..
- Weather/day/night change.
- Jumping sea animals.

Nassau (pirate republic)

Standing still:
- Location: In between the plantation that is out of order and the city.
- The aggressive slaves towards the white man are here, but they also shift in skin color here. At this moment they are all white.

- The same white man is following the same black woman as during the besieging of Nassau. However, this man looks like a pirate and not like a white noble man.
- Another white man starts following a white woman.
- A black man starts following a white woman.
- The side quest of catching a courier emerges.
- A white and a black pirate are talking friendly to one another, a black woman joins them, after this another black woman joins them.
- A group of pirates walk by, villagers both black and white continuously walk by, pirate guards do not walk by.

Route:
- Empty pirate cages on the beach.
- The Jolly Roger has been raised.
- People are at work in the streets.
- Pirates are very clearly present, also black pirates.
- The gallows are empty without an audience.
- Lady dancers can be rented.
- A white man and a black man are sitting together.
- Pirates are hitting on ladies they run across in the streets. The woman is white.
- There are no British guards in Nassau at this moment.
- There are other black men as well who are aggressive towards a pirate.
- The British guards have been replaced by white men that protect the same area as the British did after the besieging of Nassau. The men look like pirates. There are also black man among these pirate guards.
- It is unclear what the pirates are protecting.
- Nobody is working on the plantations.
- The pirate guards treat me in the same way as the British guards did.

Near harbor (at sea) (15 minutes)
- 5x Spanish schooner.
- 4x Spanish cannoneer ship.
- Pirate cannoneer ship.
- Shanties.
- Weather/day/night changes.
- Pirate cannoneer ship drops explosive barrels and starts a fight with two Spanish schooners.
- An option arises to shoot the explosive barrels the pirate ship drops.
- The Spanish schooners are scared of the pirate cannoneer ship, and keep their distance but are still shooting on him.
- The pirate cannoneer ship sunk.

Sailing route Havana-Kingston-Nassau-Havana

In general

- Floating loot.
- Shipwreck survivors.
- Fortresses are forbidden areas that attack you when not conquered yet (Spanish or British).
- Weather/day/night changes.
- Jumping sea animals.

Havana-Kingston

- 8x Spanish cannoneer ship.
- 3x Civilian ships.
- 8x Spanish schooner.
- 3x Spanish brig.
- 7x Spanish fregat.
- Spanish Man-o'-war.
- 4x British schooner.
- 2x British cannoneer ship.
- 2x British Man-o'-war.
- 5x British fregat.
- 5x British brig.

- 2x Pirate brig.
- I had to sail through a restricted area, when a Spanish schooner noticed me a red bubble appeared, but the ship did not start to attack me. My crew was providing information about the ship.
- It is possible to avoid fights using the radar that provides where the ships are looking at.
- A fight between two Spanish fregats and one British fregat.
- A pirate brig is attacking a British fregat. The pirate brig is showed as a blue dot on the map.

Kingston-Nassau

- British brig.
- 2x Pirate brig.
- 4x Spanish fregat.
- 3x British fregat.
- 2x British schooner.
- British cannoneer ship.
- British brig.
- 9x Spanish schooner.
- 6x Spanish cannoneer ship.
- Spanish Man-o'-war.
- A Spanish cannoneer ship, Spanish schooner, and Spanish cannoneer ship are fighting against a British fregat.
- A pirate brig is fighting against a British fregat, two British brig, British schooner, and a British cannoneer ship.
- A Spanish cannoneer ship noticed me in the restricted area and started to follow me, when I left the restricted area the ship stopped following me.

Nassau-Havana

- Spanish brig.
- 5x Spanish schooner.
- 6x Spanish cannoneer ship.
- 2x Civilian ship.
- Spanish schooner and Spanish brig are anchored near Andreas Island.
- I accidentally bumped against a Spanish cannoneer ship and it sunk, after that it was possible to collect the ships loot that was floating in the water.
- Some explosive barrels lie in the water and are able to be shot with swivels. These barrels also have spikes and could damage ships that pass by.