NARRATIVE

Sarah Rust
NARRATIVE VS PLOT
Narrative is the larger narrated story. This can exist without a plot or as a larger system in which plot exists.

Narrative does not necessarily require a causal chain. Could be a history of events or sequence.

Technically the level progression in Tetris could be a narrative.

http://www.slideserve.com/julius/games-and-narrative
ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE IN GAMES

➤ Order
  ➤ Linear
  ➤ Branching

➤ Necessity
  ➤ Is the player required to know about this?

➤ Manifestation
  ➤ Cut scene, onscreen text, Quick Time Events, audio and textual cues, logs to name a few

➤ Perspective
  ➤ What is the viewpoint of the narration? Does it change?

➤ Interactivity
  ➤ Can we change what and how things happen? To what degree?
LEVELS AND ORDER

➤ Levels are a way to break up a game

➤ For developers
  ➤ Development simplification
  ➤ How different should they be?
  ➤ How important is progressive difficulty?
  ➤ Useful for advancing narrative and story

➤ Transitions
  ➤ Cut scenes
  ➤ Travel
PORTAL

➤ Visual and audio cues

➤ Hidden rooms that the player can find betray the real story that will eventually unfold

➤ Setting changes as player finds out more about their situation
PORTAL
➤ Can interact with objects in different order
➤ Order does not affect outcome, only perceived experience
Quick time events
Different perspectives
Some key plot points are not shown to player

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMK6sTnMxBI
BEYOND: TWO SOULS

➤ Anachrony: each level is a moment in one girl’s life, told out of order

➤ Player feels rewarded for remembering what happened before and putting it all together
It really annoys me how with life you choose between friends or a boyfriend. I understand neither but why can’t she have both?
MASS EFFECT

- Earlier actions affect later dialogue and actions
- World (universe?) Building
- Codex
- Digressions with characters

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGnbmPvStws
➤ Meta-narrative game about how meaningful and meaningless choice is in narrative

➤ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMh2AUli1M0
NARRATIVE IN VR

➤ Not a lot of games with strong narrative right now using VR
➤ Will focus on interactive story experiments in VR
  ➤ Google Spotlight Stories
Vignettes scattered around the square, start playing when looking in their direction

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiDRZfeL_hc
➤ Only unchanging aspect is the car setting
➤ Viewer can choose where to watch and what to watch in the car
➤ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqCH4DNQBUA

directed by Patrick Osborne
“Where gameplay is all about interactivity, narrative is about predestination. There is a pervasive feeling in the game design community that narrative and interactivity are antithetical.”

-Mateas and Stern, “Interaction and Narrative”
Narrative is a ... double temporal sequence ... : There is the time of the thing told and the time of the narrative (the time of the signified and the time of the signifier). This duality not only renders possible all the temporal distortions that are commonplace in narratives (three years of the hero's life summed up in two sentences of a novel or in a few shots of a "frequentative" montage in film, etc.). More basically, it invites us to consider that one of the functions of narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme. (Christian Metz, quoted from Genette 1980, p.33)