Jumping into Myst, the introduction is well done such that it sets up a narrative and sets up questions for the player immediately. Orienting around the world is impressively done as well. The point-and-click aspects of exploring made it easy to have a mental construction of the space. For some puzzles, however, there was some gray area in terms of what you were able to interact with, making the games mechanics getting in the way of the puzzle solving component.

The first ‘time period’ I tackled was the Mechanical Age, entering through a giant gear. I quickly understood I needed to rotate the center structure around to the four different cardinal directions, yet finding out how to do that took an embarrassingly long time. The two throne rooms were intriguing, and had me exploring them for a while, from trying different combinations on the animal mechanisms to attempting to open the mini chess box. The simulator, however, was very clearly an indicator of how to rotate the building- yet didn’t do anything. The puzzle remained engaging, until I encountered the elevator.

The simulator gave different sounds depending on the direction you orient the building, yet their purpose was not apparent. Revealing the elevator was a simple task and then took a few minutes before I discovered the levers on the top floor that looked suspiciously like the rotation simulator. Getting the elevator to be at the middle floor whilst I was on the top floor, however, was one of the most aggravating things I have ever felt in a puzzle game. It never occurred to me- until I stepped out of the elevator by accident- that I was able to hit the middle button and step out before the elevator went down. I explored the throne rooms a multitude of times, I even reset a new save to explore for clues on the main island.

When exploring the floors, it never occurred to me that when hitting the middle button while on the top floor would let me step out. First of all, it did not do that when I was on the first floor. Implementing such a feature may take more work, since the elevator has to have a way to come back down, but it would give the player a hint as to how the elevator works without giving away the solution to this component of the puzzle. I was locked into a mindset for a game released in 1993, such that once I hit a button, I was locked into the space. When I attempted the middle button while on the top floor, I attempted to turn around in the elevator to see if something opened up behind me while it beeped- but then I stepped out. I turned around and saw the levers within reach and put my head in my hands. From there, the rest was straight forward.

The elevator puzzle required me to think a little bit outside the box- I never imagined I would be able to step out for some reason- and this seriously changed how I continued playing the game. When moving on to the puzzle to enter the rocket, I used the same idea to get the dates for the gear puzzle and was able to move on. In the case of the elevator, the game’s mechanics felt as though they got in the way of the actual puzzle solving, which was frustrating, but did feel somewhat rewarding when I realized there was a new avenue to solving the puzzles in the land of Myst.