RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How can we design puzzles around key story events and give players enough freedom without making it a handheld experience?

- Does a unique gameplay experience in each chapter of the story add to the novelty of the experience?

- How can you alter player experience based on their prior interactions without changing the overarching narrative?

- How to create a fail state for stories central to the gameplay?

* How can we design puzzles around key story events and give players enough freedom without making it a handheld experience?

Games such as “What remains of Edith Finch”, “Disco Elysium”, “Firewatch” and “Return of the Obra Dinn” are the sources of inspiration for the game I’m trying to make. So going through the talks by these developers, game designers and narrative designers working on the game will give me some ideas of what their thought process was when they were working on the game, the issues they’ve faced and ways they’ve solved it either technical or design based. Also going through various reviews by people who’ve played the game and critiques would help get another perspective on these games by seeing what the audience thinks was bad/ good.

* Does a unique gameplay experience in each chapter of the story add to the novelty of the experience?

In “What Remains of Edith Finch”, playing a part in the life of each character feels like a new experience and makes the story more engaging. It adds different ways to move or to take the form of another subject to make us go though the story from another perspective. Similarly, in “It Takes Two” which is a co-op game, every location has different ways to solve puzzles by using the level design and alternating between the players helping each other to solve puzzles. This makes for exciting gameplay and the player doesn’t know what to expect next peaking their curiosity.

* How can you alter player experience based on their prior interactions without changing the overarching narrative?

This is one of the more complicated questions since I’m bound by the story and cannot have branching dialogues like other games do. Nor can I have a stats system which would change the players interaction completely because the story is linear and I’m trying to deliver an experience. Some ways I will explore are dynamic difficulty adjustments which won’t make a drastic impact on the story but make things easier for some players. Few dialogues for actions performed by players by just changing the main dialogue. This could add replayability value to the game. Personalization of the player character will also be explored.

* How to create a fail state for stories central to the gameplay?

We’re trying to tell a story and the player doesn’t fail according to the story. And it wouldn’t be a game, or a fun one if it wasn’t challenging enough to kill the player. Some games add abilities to heal oneself whereas other games play around with the difficulty level. Having multiple ending is another way of going about it because even though we have a linear story, we still give the player some control over their character and it should feel like it. Another method would be by having a soft fail state where the player is allowed to continue but with the bare minimum resources needed.