ty") are better served by alertness to those theoretical and philosophical understandings of the literary that are disposed to consider whether the literary absolute can, in fact, go electronic. Central to this argument will be the discovery in discussions around the literary absolute of a prefiguring of concerns emerging from and in electronic literature, together with an examination of the two that finds viable mediations within the concept of the aesthetic illusion, especially as explored in recent work by Werner Wolf that has clearly discernible implications for the study both of electronic literature and digital games. Literary analogues offered for illustrative and comparative purposes may include, among others, Saussure's speculations on a different form of literary absolute in his *cahiers d'anagrammes* and Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*; examples from electronic literature and its game interfaces may include, among others, *Façade* and *The Stanley Parable*. Reference will also be made to some Stephanie Strickland's most recent electronic poetry, from which the epigraph is taken.

Games, Literature and Imagination

Gordon Calleja (University of Malta)

The game world has recently been experiencing a renaissance of games that lean strongly on the use of text to communicate their worlds, characters and events. Games like *Kentucky Route Zero* (Cardboard Computer, 2013), *Device 6* (Simogo, 2013), *80 Days* (Inkle Studios, 2014), *Blood and Laurels* (Short, 2014) and *A Dark Room* (Doublespeak Games, 2013) are examples of text-heavy indie games that have not only been incredibly successful commercially, but also raised the bar in terms of the quality of writing found in games. It is also evident that the writing employed by these games has aspirations of literariness. These games are a continuation of a trajectory in indie game design that moves markedly away from the drive towards mimetic representation found in mainstream game titles by requiring more active engagement of the player's imaginative faculties through the employment of more low-fidelity visual representation, more abstracted simulation and the use of text, among other things.

The emphasis on imagination (Bateman, 2011) of contemporary indie games highlights a continuity between print, electronic texts and cybertexts that we too often take for granted: the printed, spoken or flickering word's main function is to connect our imaginative faculties. The tightest relationship between literature, electronic literature and games therefore lies in way they each shape our imagination. The other papers in this panel will tackle this issue in relation to literature and electronic literature. This paper will explore the games' constituent elements: their mechanical systems, representational layers and hardware affordances shape the imagination, comparing and contrasting these elements with those found in print literature and electronic texts. These constituent elements form the percepts that stimulate our imaginative faculty into internal images that allow us to experience the fictional/simulated world. Theorists have used various terms to account for this blending of perception and imagination in consciousness, but the co-dependence of these faculties seems to be

an area of agreement. Sartre calls the percept "the physical analogue" (Sartre, 1972) which we experience in consciousness by "dressing" this analogue with our imagination in a process he calls "synthetic projection". Walton calls it a "prop" (Walton, 1996) which is invested with imagination in the process of "fictionality" (Walton 1996, 2013), a term shared by Walsh (2007) in his work on fiction in literature. Iser (1979) has similarly built his theory on the psychology of reading on the coming together of text and mind within the imagination. Within cognitive psychology Kosslyn et. al. (1999) have conducted a series of experiments that prove that mental imagery is activated with every form of sensory input, concluding that the imagination plays an important part in perception. This view is shared by a number of researchers of visual perception that have studied the imagination including Kearney (2002), Richardson (1969), Finke (1989) and Block (1981).

This paper will thus explore the relationship between the representational elements of text-heavy indie games and the mental images these create as they combine with the mechanical rule systems that animate them. In so doing I will argue that the combination of minimalist and abstract visual representation together with a tightly designed mechanical rule system that has been created from the ground up specifically for the individual game (unlike the majority of mainstream games) creates a vivid imaginative experience that gives the indie games considered here their alluring power. They provide hints, metaphors and indications of the worlds they represent, leaving it up to the player to fully flesh out those worlds, characters and events with their own imagination giving players an engaging and memorable gaming experience that they have had a stronger role in co-creating.

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A Stitch in Twine: Platform Studies and Porting *Patchwork Girl*

Jim Brown (Rutgers University—Camden)

Panel: Platforms, Writers, and Readers—Wednesday, August 5 • 13:30 - 15:00 (Sydneshaugen skole: Auditorium Q)

This presentation asks what we can learn about a foundational work of electronic literature—Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*—by porting it to a new platform. More than this, it asks what we can learn about the source and target platforms of such a porting exercise.

Thanks to a great deal of path breaking work, much scholarship on electronic literature now makes use of what Katherine Hayles calls media-specific analysis (MSA). The field has followed the lead of scholars such as Hayles, Nick Montfort, Matthew Kirschenbaum, Terry Harpold, and many others in assuming that the materialities at play in a digital artifact actively shape expression and interpretation. We no longer treat the screen as another page. Work adjacent to electronic literature has asked these same questions, attending to the role of software and hardware in digital expression. Platform studies offers one version of this line of inquiry, and it asks how a given computational platform shapes and constrains creative processes and products. Much like the tenets of MSA, platform studies insists that the various computational machines at work in a given piece of digital media act as more than a conduit or background to expression. Scholarship on electronic literature has already begun to engage with platform studies, most recently by way of Anastasia Salter and John Murray's study of Flash. In their book-length study of this platform, Salter and Murray take up a number of works of electronic literature by authors such as Jason Nelson and Stuart Moulthrop.

This presentation will continue that work by porting Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* to the Twine platform. When Chris Klimas released Twine, it immediately drew comparisons to Storyspace, the platform used to create *Patchwork Girl* and many other works of electronic literature. Where Storyspace has guard fields that set up conditions by which text can be hidden from or revealed to the interactor, Twine implements an "if" Macro. Where Storyspace allows authors to group together lexia with "paths," Twine offers a similar function called "tags." Further, both platforms offer the writer a kind of "node-and-edge" view of the writing space. However, the very fact that these pieces of software were created two decades apart, by different developers, and in different media ecologies suggests that there are important differences