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Figurski at Findhorn on Acid by Richard HOLETON

Article in the Journal of Interactive Narrative, Volume 1, Issue 1, April 2024

<https://doi.org/10.62937/JIN.2024.THGH3456>

Authors:

Richard HOLETON, Stanford University, Stanford, USA

Cite as: HOLETON, Richard. "Figurski at Findhorn on Acid." Journal of Interactive Narrative 1, no. 1 (May 1, 2024). <https://doi.org/10.62937/JIN.2024.THGH3456>.

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Vol 1 / Issue 1 / IDN 1

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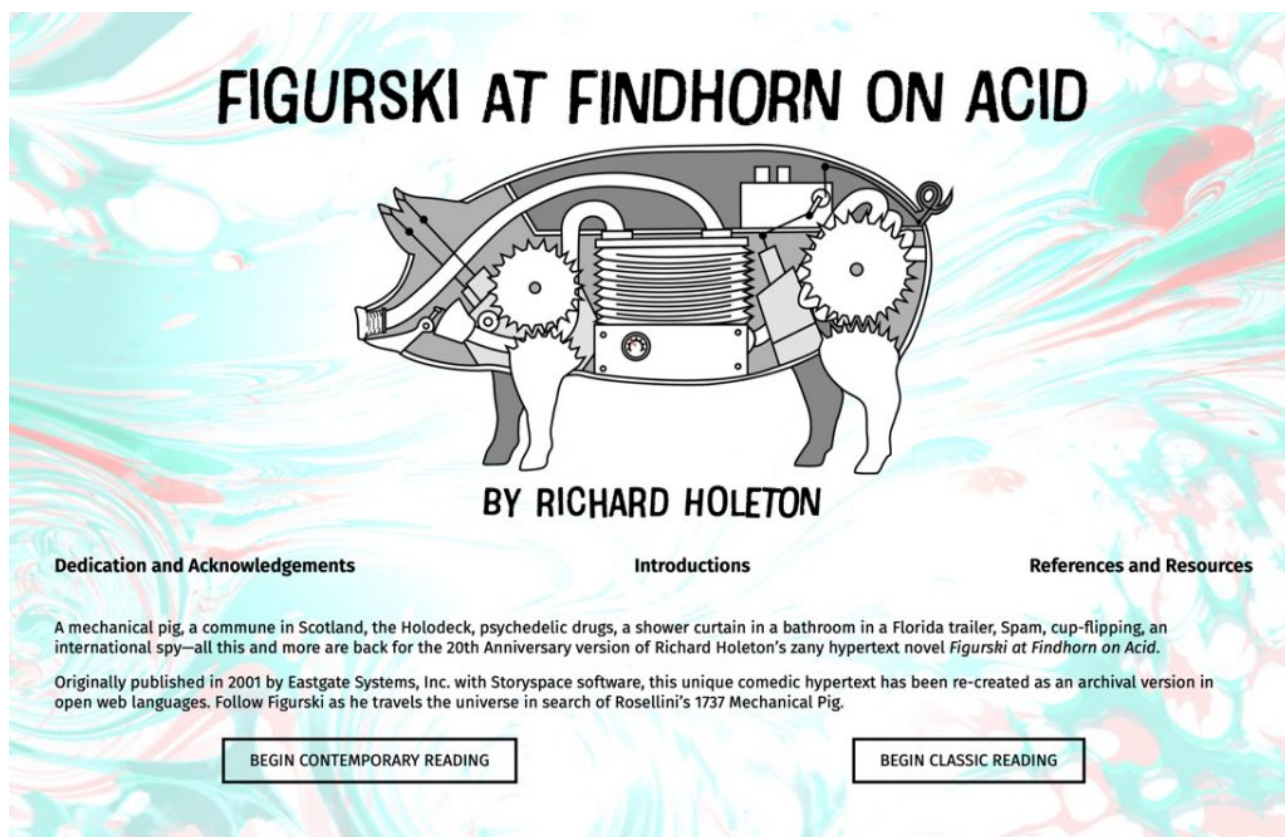
Richard Holeton, Stanford University, Stanford, USA

As a combinatorial fiction structured around all the possible arrangements of three characters, three places, and three artifacts, *Figurski at Findhorn on Acid* is built for fun and exploration. It's been described as game-like, as "funny, crazy, ultra-postmodern satire" (Mariusz Pisarski) and as riding "a thin edge between the most complex recent critical ideas and the most absurd TV game shows" (Michael Tratner). Originally published by Eastgate Systems on the Storyspace platform in 2001, the novel was technically and functionally reimaged for the web in 2021 in partnership with [Washington State University's Electronic Literature Lab \(ELL\)](#), under the direction of Dr. Dene Grigar. As a collaborative effort and complete recoding, the result is a new work featuring a unique, dual aesthetic design with two modes that the reader can toggle between—"Contemporary Mode" for modern readers, and "Classic Mode," which pays homage to the look and feel of the original.

The zany plot follows a convicted murderer on parole, a gender-bending French-Moroccan journalist, and a handless Vietnamese-American juggler as they traverse global and virtual locations competing for possession of a rare and valuable 18th-century mechanical pig. While readers may stick to a roughly chronological default path through the narrative, they may not be able to resist the temptation to digress with a particular character, location, timeline, or footnote. They shouldn't need to drop breadcrumbs, however, insofar as I've sought to make the structure both logical and transparent, with multiple navigational aids on every screen. One of these is the map function, an innovation of Storyspace's hypertext writing environment that has been ingeniously recreated by the Electronic Literature Lab for the archival web edition. This interactive map lets readers navigate the

text by clicking through a graphical, hierarchical depiction of the structure (everything in *Figurski* is divided into threes and multiples of three) in which text passages are represented by nested rectangles and links are shown with arrows.

Critics such as Tratner have commented on *Figurski's* layers of self-reflexivity. For example, both the 18th-century mechanical pig and a clever forgery from the 19th century, with which it's frequently confused, have exactly 147 parts—as do each of the novel's two sections. Those two sections are the main narrative and a parallel, shadow narrative (the Notes section); the latter consists of metacommentary on the former—analogue to the counterfeit mechanical pig and the “real” original. So we can say that the characters' disassembling and reassembling of the two automatons, over the course of the novel, corresponds to the experience of readers as they follow links, connect, and reconnect the pieces of the hypertext narrative. In this regard as in others, *Figurski* stands on the shoulders of the great metafiction and anti-novels of our shared literary heritage, just as it owes a large debt to the pioneers of early hypertext fiction. At the same time, in trying to create a reader-friendly comic hypertext novel, I hoped to make something different. Something that might bridge from the experimental novels of the past—some of which have been called proto-hypertextual, for their pushing against the constraints of linear print-text—to the emerging multilinear, electronic literature. Something, finally, that modern readers can jump into, embracing its moment by moment unfolding—the novel's relentless but ever-changing, sometimes surprising, recombinations—while co-constructing with me the novel's “ultra-postmodern” fictional world.



FIGURSKI AT FINDHORN ON ACID

BY RICHARD HOLETON

Dedication and Acknowledgements **Introductions** **References and Resources**

A mechanical pig, a commune in Scotland, the Holodeck, psychedelic drugs, a shower curtain in a bathroom in a Florida trailer, Spam, cup-flipping, an international spy—all this and more are back for the 20th Anniversary version of Richard Holeyton's zany hypertext novel *Figurski at Findhorn on Acid*.

Originally published in 2001 by Eastgate Systems, Inc. with Storyspace software, this unique comedic hypertext has been re-created as an archival version in open web languages. Follow Figurski as he travels the universe in search of Rosellini's 1737 Mechanical Pig.

BEGIN CONTEMPORARY READING **BEGIN CLASSIC READING**

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