Shelley Jackson: A self-described "student in the art of digression"
http://www.eastgate.com/people/Jackson.html

"I like digression and interruptions and the clash of styles and voices."

Shelley Jackson

Kafka
Shelley Jackson Biography

- Born in 1963 in the Philippines
- Raised in Berkeley, CA
- Her family ran a bookstore, which had a great influence on her. She fell in love with books and she knew she wanted to become a writer.
- B.A. in Art from Stanford University
- M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Brown University
- At Brown, she was educated about electronic literature
- During a lecture she began to draw a “naked woman, with dotted line scars”, she later expanded this idea into the hypertext novel, *Patchwork Girl*.
- *Patchwork Girl* had become a best selling CD-Rom.
- The CD-ROM is considered groundbreaking work of hyperfiction
- Hyperfiction- is a genre of electronic literature, characterized by the use of hypertext links, which provides a new context for non-linearity in literature and reader interaction.
- In 1987, Jackson married the writer Jonathan Lethem; they divorced in 1998.
- Currently teaches in the graduate writing program at The New School University and is also a writer-in-residence at the European Graduate School in Switzerland.
Other works by Jackson

- **Hypertext:**
  - Patchwork Girl (1995)
  - My Body (1997)
    - [http://www.altx.com/thebody/body.html](http://www.altx.com/thebody/body.html)
  - The Doll Games (2001)
    - [http://www.altx.com/thebody/body.html](http://www.altx.com/thebody/body.html)

- **Books**
  - Sophia, the Alchemist’s Dog (Children’s book, 2001)
  - The Melancholy of Anatomy (short story collection, 2002)
  - Half Life (novel, 2006)- won the James Tiptree Jr. Award for science fiction and fantasy

- **Other:** INERADICABLE STAIN
  - [http://ineradicablestain.com/stain.html](http://ineradicablestain.com/stain.html)

- Poetry
Patchwork Girl

- *Patchwork Girl (PWG)* is a hypertext novel
  - What is Hypertext?
    - *text that “links” in multiple ways to other text.* (Chin)
    - *Non-linear- no beginning or end*
    - *an interactive literature* (Chin)
    - hypertext requires different reading strategies than the print *novel* (Davis)
  - Maybe frustrating – disorienting
    - Never know where in the text you are.
    - No sense of progression or completion
History of Hypertext Literature

- Introduced and popularized around the late 1980s, through mid-1990s
  - *pre-dates the World Wide Web*
- Published using special software
  - *Storyspace (Eastgate Systems)*
  - *Hypercard*

(Chin)
Patchwork Girl (PWG)

- Consists of 323 lexias, joined by 462 links (Chin)

Lexias:
- "paragraph-sized blocks of text." (Hayes)
- "screens of text" (Clayton)
- vary in length from a single sentence to more some 300 words

Links:
- Multiple connections to other material (Clayton)
Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* takes as its premise that Mary Shelley's second monster, the female companion that Victor Frankenstein began creating but then destroyed, was secretly finished by Mary Shelley herself. The monster becomes MS's lover, then travels to America, where it goes through interesting adventures until its final dispersal into its component parts in the early 1990s. (Chin)
SHELLEY JACKSON'S INERADICABLE STAIN

- Skin
  - http://www.ineradicablestain.com/skin.html

from: http://www.uiowa.edu/~iareview/mainpages/new/july06/jackson.html

“Participants are not carriers of the text, but are the words themselves.”

- Words -YouTube
  - http://youtube.com/watch?v=A7EOTN4IJBM
PWG

- Inspirations
  - Novels
    - *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* (L. Frank Baum, 1913)
    - *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley, 1818)
The Patchwork Girl of Oz

Synopsis The magical practices and potions of the Land of Oz is the thread running through *The Patchwork Girl*. The story begins with a visit by a young Munchkin lad, Ojo the Unlucky, who with his Unc Nunkie visit a reclusive magician, Dr. Pipt. The old sorcerer has just completed the six year task of brewing a spoonful of the Powder of Life, and is preparing to administer it to a life-sized rag doll made by his wife Margolotte. The intent is to create a servant to help his wife in her chores, but unbeknownst to the magician, Ojo doctors the doll's brains. In the confusion that erupts as the Powder of Life performs its miracle, Margolotte and Unc Nunkie are turned into marble statues and the Patchwork Girl is brought to life quite unfit to ever be a servant. To restore life to the two hapless victims, Ojo undertakes a quest to find the ingredients for an antidote to the enchantment, accompanied by the Patchwork Girl and the Glass Cat, another creation of Dr. Pipt. A series of adventures ensue, as they brave new challenges and meet new and amazing peoples and lands in their hunt for the magical ingredients. Through the trials of this grand quest Ojo learns that he is no longer presumed to be ill-fated by circumstance of birth, and is known henceforth as Ojo the Lucky.

http://www.halcyon.com/piglet/bk12des.htm
YouTube- Patchwork Girl

- [http://youtube.com/watch?v=mZ4MmGycEHI](http://youtube.com/watch?v=mZ4MmGycEHI)
  - Band
- [http://youtube.com/watch?v=yclLuKVHowI](http://youtube.com/watch?v=yclLuKVHowI)
  - Audition
• Plot

• What was it about?
  • Basic premise
  • The female monster
  • Becomes her lover
  • Travels to America
  • Adventures in America
  • Dispersed into parts

SHELLEY JACKSON’S PATCHWORK GIRL
Themes/Issues:

- **Writing and Identity**
  Identity is written by being created or “stitched” rather than being something that you are born with. Identity becomes and effect of technology (writing as a technology).

- **Scars**
  Literal and Metaphoric. Every writing, print or electric, has gaps and makes leaps. Normally they are covered with transitional phrases, in hypertext they are left uncovered. Each link is a leap in the text that both indicates a gap and offers a suture: the link brings together what it holds apart.

- **Community**
  Like identity, community is based on connections rather than bloodlines, stitched from friendship rather than family.

- **Immortality**
  The desire to use technology to create life, better life, life that will not die. (the living dead).

(Davis)
Themes/Issues continued

- Identity
- Self
- Gender
- Birth
- Death
- Resurrection
- Authorship
- Writing
- Originality
- Time
- Sexuality
- Bodies
PWG Quotes
Post Modern literary theory
Jackson Quotes

- “I'm interested in the slippery territory between the self and the outside world.” (Nunes)
- “I like digression and interruptions and the clash of styles and voices. I like weirdo devices.”
More

- http://hubpages.com/hub/Tattoo_Ideas_Words_Shelley_Jackson_SKIN
- http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/jackson.html#top
- http://www.egs.edu/faculty/shelleyjackson.html
- http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~davis/crs/331/PWG.htm
- http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.100/10.2hayles.txt
- http://community.livejournal.com/mortalworkofart/
- http://www.guernicamag.com/fiction/253/the_cats_meow/
- http://www.guernicamag.com/fiction/253/the_cats_meow/
- http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0402/jackson/interview.html

Etc.
FIELD GUIDE TO SHELLEY JACKSON

- “(An Aid to Identification.) If you are scouring the net for news about Shelley Jackson, you may have begun to suspect that there are more than one of us out there. Here’s interesting news about the other Shelley Jacksons out there and some hints as to how you can tell them apart from the ineradicably stained one.”

Works Cited:


