PATCHWORK GIRL
by Shelley Jackson
Presentation by Kenneth Roman & Peter Hammersley
KEY WORDS/ PHRASES:

- Hypertext Fiction
- Pastiche
- Lexia
- Electronic Space
- Post-Modern After-ing
- Non-Linear Exploration
- Is it a piece of literature?
- Births (several)
• Born 1963 in the Philippines

• Parents ran a small bookstore for several years in Berkeley

• BA in Art from Stanford, MFA in Creative Writing from Brown

• Village Voice “Writer on the Verge” and Pushcart Prize Winner

• Her works have spanned different Literature forms: hypertext, short story collections, a novel and even a tattooed
BOOK (?)

• Published by Eastgate Systems in 1995
• Written using the Storyspace program
• Started as a drawing of a naked woman with dotted line scars during a hypertext lecture

• Inspired by the novels:
  • *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley, 1818)
  • *Patchwork Girl of Oz* (L. Frank Baum, 1913)
  • Greek Mythology
PRAISE:

- "Brilliantly conceived and beautifully written." -- George P. Landow, author of Hypertext 3.0
- "A cult hit." -- Village Voice
- "Wonderfully rich and complex." -- N. Katherine Hayles, UCLA

PROBLEMS:

- Some people prefer linear text and narration over hypertext
Victor Frankenstein's companion creature is secretly finished by Mary Shelley herself.

Mary and the “Patchwork Girl” lay together and become apart of each other.

Patchwork girl escapes to the New World while dealing with her degenerating body.
FORM AND STRUCTURE

PATCHWORK GIRL
OR, A MODERN MONSTER

BY MARY/SHELLEY, & HERSELF

(a graveyard, a journal, a quilt, a story, & broken accents)

(sources)
Form and Structure cont'd.

- 1st Person Narrators
  - A graveyard
  - A journey
  - A quilt
  - A story
  - & Broken Accents

- Hypertext:
  - Storyspace Map
  - Links/Hidden Links
  - Lexias
  - Pictures
  - Tables
CHARACTERS

My skull is like an ancient vase scratched from the dust with toothpicks and paintbrushes and reassembled on a deck. There are fragments enough to make a vase, but how many vases shattered for this one? An archaeologist made a pot; that’s all we know.

Sometimes when it’s quiet I hear in my ears the roasting of a crowd.

My trunk belonged to a dancer. Angela, a woman of low birth but high sights, and a cosmic ear for the accents of the upper class. During, she had her own advancement always in view, except when she danced and her body tossed with an abandon that was her greatest attraction. She knew this but did not understand it; offstage her efforts to control her posture, her movements were fervent (“I shake my headquarters like a little dog, and arch my back like a cock crowing over his chickens,” she complained to a fellow dancer), for she saw rightly that the language of the body also has its accents, low and high.

My body is both intimidating and naive: moments of knowingness—of art manipulative and interested—punctuate my abandon, and knowingness opens into chaos.

This Urn guards a Heart, a Liver, Lungs, Stomach, Guts, and Veins.

My right leg belonged to Jennifer, who buried herself in layers of petticoats, finery, and forlorn. It took hours to lace her up in the morning. Gossip called her vain. In fact, she was hiding. Something grewled in her dreams, shook her sleeping frame: she woke up in wet and stained sheets with bits of feathers stuck to her cheek. It was only bound in legs and tight bodices that she dared go down to breakfast; unbundled, she might tear all to shreds. She conversed over weak tea and stuck the tines of a fork through twenty layers of petticoats into her restless thigh; I bear the mark. She lived a mild, exemplary, and useless life, and woke up every morning diligent and sweating, having won her loved ones another day safe from the beast.

As for me, the basic desires pleased decent. Jennifer needs her rest.
CHARACTERS CON’T.

• Patchwork Girl
• Mary Shelley
• Shelley Jackson
• Percy Shelley
• Elsie
• Ojo/ Margolette’s/magician/shaggy man/dorothy
• Body Part “donors”
• Chancy
• Madam Q
ISSUES / THEMES

- Feminism
  - Queer Identity
  - Concept of Beauty
- Chimera
  - Monster/Cyborg/Creature/deamon/supreme freak
- Self – Identity
- Thoughts as limbs of composition
- Degeneration, Dismemberment, Fragmentation
S O U R C E S

• http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/jackson.html

• http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA01/Huffman/Productions/pgpaper.html

• http://www.egs.edu/faculty/shelley-jackson/biography/

• http://ineradicablestain.com/

• http://darevirginia.com/thesis.pdf

• http://www.eastgate.com/catalog/PatchworkGirl.html