A Genealogy of Frankenstein's Creation: Appropriation, Hypermediacy, and Distributed

Cognition in Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, Victor Erice's *Spirit of the Beehive*, and Mary

Shelley's *Frankenstein*

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Abstract

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Studies of Frankenstein-related cultural, literary, and filmic productions tend to either focus atomistically on a particular cultural artifact or construct rather strict chains of filiation between multiple artifacts. Media scholars have developed rich conceptual resources for describing cross-media appropriations in the realm of fandom (including fan fiction and slash fiction); however, many scholars of digital literary culture tend to describe the relationships between new media artifacts and their print counterparts in terms that promote what is "new" about these media forms without attending to how older media forms anticipate and enter into conversation with electronic multimedia formats.   This paper suggests an alternative to this model that emphasizes the extent to which media forms remix, appropriate, and speak through other media and cultural artifacts.   Studying Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, James Whale's classic *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein* films, Victor Erice's *Spirit of the Beehive*, Bill Condon's *Gods and Monsters*, Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl,* and some of the scholarly literature around the Frankenstein narrative, the construction of gender, and the discourse of post-humanity, this paper explores the mechanisms through which these artifacts draw attention to their participation in a greater "body" of Frankenstein culture. Additionally, this paper explores how these artifacts use what Bolter and Grusin have described as the logic of hypermediacy to emphasize the specificity of their deployment through a particular medium into a specific historical situation.

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Appropriation, Hypermediacy, and Distributed Cognition in Frankenstein narratives

"The long reign of print has induced a kind of somnolence in literary and critical studies, a certain inattentiveness to the diverse forms in which 'texts' appear" says N. Katherine Hayles, opening her analysis of Shelley Jackson's hypertextual fiction *Patchwork Girl* ("Flickering Connectivities" 2). Extending this metaphor, we might argue that the collection of Frankenstein narratives from which Jackson's appropriates may profitably be considered an artistic dream-state in which the repressed attention to media specificity that Hayles uses as a point of departure has maintained significance and prominence. If, indeed, Hayles is correct in her assertion that specific expectations derived from print have undercut awareness of important critical moments in the study of this group of media artifacts, we may still safely say that the repressed has returned in manifold forms as a particularly fruitful vector for creative output. As I will show, this appears true whether we consider Mary Shelley's foundational text or the subsequent filmic derivations which have maintained the importance of the media-specific codes that Hayles posits we have neglected both at the level of content and media form. While Hayles tends to focus her inquiry on how Jackson's piece remediates Shelley's classic, arguing from Jay David Bolter and David Grusin's theoretical frame that "media constantly engage in a recursive dynamic imitating of each other, incorporating aspects of competing media into themselves while simultaneously flaunting the advantages their own forms of mediation offer" ("Flickering Connectivities" 3), she elides the significant cultural gravity of the filmic tradition that historically intervenes between these textual events. Perhaps more importantly, although she gestures broadly at the milieu in which Shelley's novel was produced, her extensive analysis of judical-economic history frames

1

the material context of the novel's production in terms of the construction of the unitary author without examining how the novel itself resists this context.

The characteristics of a medium come to bear on the methods through which it is produced, disseminated, and received; evaluating these characteristics and methods requires attention to the recursive and interpenetrating flow of remediating forces. Hayles's turn in later essays to the concept of "intermediation" relieves her media ecological[1] model of any obvious technological determinism or teleology. Even so, her occasional implication that different media are fundamentally in conflict or competition suggests a perspective on media ecology that might properly be seen as a more neutral (and occasionally celebratory) inverse to the technophobic critiques put forward by Neil Postman in his *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* and *Technopoly*. I say this advisedly, because Hayles offers repeated disclaimers that she does not lionize electronic hypertexts at the expense of printed works and at times emphasizes these playful interpenetrations I would like to foreground; even so, her chosen tutor text seems striking for its ability to undercut several of the premises she lays out in her theoretical meditation on the electronic hypertext "medium alone" (4). So while I will extensively follow Hayles's lead for the purposes of this analysis, I will take as my point of departure not Hayles's competitive model of media ecology, but instead the general orientation established by cultural theorists studying fandom and fan fiction. In particular, this project follows at a cautious distance Henry Jenkins's *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* by acknowledging that analysis of media artifacts increasingly requires attention to how multiple media forms engage in synergistic dialog, mutual support, and cross-media permutation and proliferation, creating media phenomena that are virtually inexhaustable and deploy multiple

strategies of appropriation, adaptation, and lending across several media forms. As I do this, however, I will follow Hayles by attending to the specific qualities of individual instantiations (books, films, electronic hypertextual fan-fiction) within the *Frankenstein* media phenomenon, from the perspective of their formal and technological qualities alike. Equally, I will attend to the rhetorical and stylistic codes that draw attention to these qualities and the larger material-historical fields through which these instantiations are produced, disseminated, and received. The *Frankenstein*-derived narratives provide occasion for nuanced demonstration of the conceptual richness of this orientation, given that they originate in an extensive constellation of Prometheus-themed texts written in the years surrounding the Summer of 1816 and culminate in an interminable flow of films, television shows, multi-user dungeons, video games, critical literature, and fan fiction, of both amateur and professional varieties. This constellation of works provides countless entry points and varied paths for analysis, none of which would be exhaustible even to the most dedicated researcher or fan.

This approach, of course, draws significantly on Roland Barthes's distinction between work and text: where the work "is a fragment of substance," or something that occupies a particular space (perhaps in a book), relies on a sense of interpretive closure, comes with attendant methodological assumptions about being self-contained, demands an approach that assumes relationships of filiation, and determines its use as consumption, the concept of "text" indicates instead a process of traversal, performance, or demonstration that may cross through several works, generating a sense of playful openness, a promiscuous dissemination of meanings occluded by a strictly hermeneutic approach (155-164)[2]. And, while much has been made of the etymological origins of the word "text" by the likes of Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes

himself, in a certain sense Barthes's suggestion finds its strongest metaphor not the regular weave of manufactured fabrics, but in the entanglement of fibers and strands characteristic of felt (Deleuze and Guattari 475); indeed, framed in the terminology of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, which George Landow has shown is particularly felicitous for the study of hypertextual artifacts (Landow 58-62), the methodological field mapped by the conception of the work (in Barthes's sense) is that of a striated space (Deleuze and Guattari 474). In contrast, approaching a text as it cuts across several works or cultural artifacts involves uncovering the "rhizomatic" linkages that traverse the smooth conceptual space, troubling the hierarchies, limitations, and structures that limit dissemination in a more classical "arborescent" interpretive strategy (474; 21; 25). In this case, an "arborescent" strategy might take Mary Shelley's work as the root of a tradition that maintains a significant degree of unity as it grows towards the present day; it might emphasize the sequential generation of Frankenstein media artifacts in a way that suggests determined, causative, and cumulative growth; it would certainly involve the assertion of a single interpretive "trunk" and attribution of a transcendent formal unity to the filiated sequence of texts (note the plural) under consideration. Emphasis on *competing* material media and a "parasitic" relationship between Jackson and Shelley's text overwhelms the connections we can identify between the various works in the multiply sutured textual "body" with models of filiation and hierarchy while it trumps recognition that the Frankenstein phenomenon always already "disrupt[ed] traditional boundaries in a border war" between media and individual works (Hayles 26)[3]. It is my contention that it is possible to identify and appreciate difference without relying on this informing master narrative of competing material media and parasitic relationships

4

between Shelley's text, the filmic tradition, and Jackson's deterritorialization of many of the characters, concepts, and strategies which have emerged in *Frankenstein's* textual body[4].

Given this orientation, maintaining a reflexive awareness of the material field provides an organizational problem for this project. The sort of media-specific analysis suggested by Hayles appears to unambiguously privilege the embodied pole of the material-transcendent binary. At the same time the theoretical perspective that enables consideration of these various Frankenstein narratives as an object of study and an occasion for scholarly performance may properly be criticized as the culmination of the disembodiment of literature and the subject. To the extent that drawing these narratives together follows Roland Barthes's moves in "From Work to Text" and the "Death of the Author" and Foucault's extension of this logic in "What is an Author?," this analysis appears to move away from the attention to the materially-focused field of media analysis and closer to the idealized discourse that has tended to characterize much traditional literary analysis. On one hand, Barthes's makes a claim that interdisciplinarity (say between Romantic literary studies, film studies, new media studies, and the theory of cybernetics),

> begins effectively (as opposed to the mere expression of a pious wish) when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down -- perhaps even violently, via the jolts of fashion -- in the interests of a new object and a new language neither of which has a place in the field of the sciences that were to be brought peacefully together. ("From Work to Text" 155)

This resonates with Hayles's claim that "the juxtaposition of print and electronic texts has the potential to reveal the assumptions specific to each, a clarity obscured when either is considered in isolation. . .[and] the specificities of digital technologies provide writers with resources to

complicate" our sense of "who we are" (58). But, Hayles describes the loss of the "body" of literature as a series of slippages within Western literary production and studies: 1.) from book to work 2.) from work to style and 3.) from style to face ("Flickering Connectivities" paragraph 16-18). We might say that even as Barthes denies this final slippage, which organizes the work around the idealized (and disembodied: the face-as-sign versus the head-as-body part) author, by using work in a limited sense, he extends the first slippage that Hayles describes from "book to work" by arguing that "the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the Text is a methodological field" ("From Work to Text" 156-157).   The difficulty will then be to elaborate a methodological field that includes the Frankenstein narratives indexed by the names of Shelley, Whale, Erice, Condon, and Jackson without undermining the material underpinnings of media-specific analysis. The solution to this difficulty will lie in appreciating the Text as "play, activity, production, and practice" in a methodological field that resists resolving the contradictions of the material-transcendent binary ("From Work to Text" 162).

Though Hayles's reading of Jackson's text is illuminating and her general assertions about the specificities of the then-emergent genre of electronic hypertextual fiction provide interesting points from which to depart on these inquiries, it is worth considering for a moment how these admittedly permeable distinctions between work and text, between striated and smooth, and between arborescent and rhizomatic trouble some of her basic premises.   First, Hayles claims that the "durably flat mark" on the page may be seen as relatively static in comparison to the dynamic status of the image on the screen; and while on a literal level she is correct, one of the central arguments I will put forward is that the printed work may be (and often demands to be)

6

performed in a playful relation with other works, both at the level of production and at the level of reception ("Flickering Connectivities" 5); moreover, given her chosen tutor text, the failure to consider the dynamic status of the filmic image proves conspicuous, and to a certain extent limiting to the promises offered by her initial insights. Second, Hayles claims that "Electronic Hypertexts are Generated Through Fragmentation and Recombination"; the great irony here is that when Hayles also claims that "Electronic Hypertexts are Written and Read in Distributed Cognitive Environments," she seemingly fails to acknowledge how both the content and the material history of Shelley's *Frankenstein* provides witness to the distributed cognitive environment of the print publication process, which proceeds (as we will see) through the process of fragmentation and recombination (Hayles "Flickering Connectivities" 7, 12).

After examining Shelley's *Frankenstein*, I will show how examples from the *Frankenstein* filmic history self-reflexively pay homage to the inherently distributed creative process that emerges through the networks of citation and appropriation that characterize these narratives. Hayles sees in *Patchwork Girl* a particularly fruitful work to explore how hypertextual fictions interpolate subjectivity differently than their print counterparts. In particular, she is interested in how this emergent genre inscribes reader and writer into a distributed cognitive process (or, in Haraway's terminology, "an integrated circuit") with each other, with computers, and with other collaborators whose roles as intertextual contributors may have been more easily elided in print forms. This paper will show how similar performances of subjectivity and identity can be (and have been) identified in the earlier works which *Patchwork Girl* draws upon. As I will show, Hayles account of the importance of materiality proves relatively satisfying, but demands a more sophisticated examination and re-evaluation of media

7

ecology and the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization across media forms and historical contexts.

Hayles's project is something of a representative case of a larger set of moves within critical discourse that are the ultimate target of this critique. While frequently seeking to transgress or undermine modernist tendencies to organize discourse around weighted binaries, writers about the posthuman tend to give special status to the binary between transcendence and materiality as a site crucial to the possibility of re-evaluating technological progress and its attendant marginalization of non-normative identities. For example, in *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture*, Elaine L. Graham respectfully takes Donna Haraway to task for re-inscribing this binary (with all of its religious overtones) into her conceptualization of cyborg writing by privileging the cyborg over the Goddess. But, Daniel T. O'Hara argues in his "Neither Gods nor Monsters: An Untimely Critique of the 'Post/Human' Imagination" that Graham herself re-inscribes this binary by failing to recognize that Haraway's project describes an imaginary, hence immaterial future state, which he interprets through Heidegger's post-Nietszchean notion of a will-to-will as an expression of the ideology of global capitalism. That is, O'Hara argues that Graham's framing of cyborg subjectivity performs an ideology that demands ever-new values, deferring a desire for the transcendent in a chain-like fashion and leaving us in the all-too-material world. Lodging a somewhat different critique, Marxist critic Amrohini Sahay argues that what she terms "cybersubjectivity" is a form of idealism insofar as it suggest that the crucial site of struggle is in the symbolic field of the imaginary (the individual struggle for autonomy against hegemonic domination), rather than identifying struggle in a doctrinaire Marxist fashion as "collectively overthrowing the structures

8

of exploitation" (552). Sahay argues that this form dematerialization emerges from the fetishization of fragmentation and micropolitics in post-structuralist theory; from Sahay's perspective, this theoretical trend intentionally avoids facing the "totality" of the means of production (and the system of distribution it underwrites), which must be overthrown to achieve meaningful social change.

However, N. Katherine Hayles's cautious take on the post-human in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* may qualify or complicate these arguments. By pointing at Haraway's conception of the "integrated circuit" (which distributes cognition between material humans and material machines) as a way to move beyond conceptions of autonomous will, Hayles suggests that one possible configuration of the posthuman rejects the notion that "the human-computer interface can only be parsed as a division between the solidity of real life on one side and the illusion of virtual reality on the other" (290). While Hayles frames struggle not in terms of the exploited and the ownership class, but rather as a moment in the development of our notions of information, the cyborg, and the post-human, her ultimately cautionary tone draws upon the very material reality that the modernist project of technological progress may lead to a situation that is not "conducive to the long-range survival of humans and of the other life-forms, biological and artificial, with who we share the planet and ourselves" (291). Simultaneously, Hayles suggests that cyborg subjectivity is not a future state, as argued by O'Hara, but a very real state of affairs born of our articulation with information technologies. According to Hayles, the conceptual sites of cyborg subjectivity and post-humanity need to be contested; but for her, the question is primarily whether we will define information in a way that draws it into a rich relationship with embodiment, or whether we will

9

instead enact destructive narratives based on the assumptions of mathematical models of information and cybernetics that tend to neglect the material world.

Following a similar trajectory to the rather dour discourse around posthumanity, embodiment, and cybernetics, but in a more celebratory mode, media theorist Friedrich Kittler takes issue with Johnathan Crary's account of the central role that the body takes in optical media technologies (Kittler 147-148). While he concedes Crary's point that contemporary media technologies move away from a model of disembodied geometric space towards a materialistic model of optics, he takes issue with Crary's emphasis on the human body rather than "material effects in general" (Kittler 148). Ultimately, this is crucial to Kittler's own strategy for privileging a disembodied epistemics. Kittler argues that knowledge of the human does not proceed from the body, but rather emerges as a consequence of media technics (34). Moreover, Kittler sees in all information (optical or otherwise) the potential for digitization, subsuming not just the embodied senses, but also the material effects of optics into a "dimensionless and thus imageless" world of algorithms, equations, and computer code (228-229). Deploying Kittler's recognition that "media come into existence when technologies of inscription intervene between" the body "and the production of the texts" and his observation that media can offer insight into the "human" to underscore the differing linguistic and epistemic models built into typographical media versus digital media, Hayles implicitly criticizes his view by emphasizing kinesthetic knowledge that Kittler's model of optical media inherently occludes (26). Similarly, in his *New Philosophy for New Media*, Mark Hansen suggests that the role of haptic interactions with new media texts provides the ground for a re-assessment of the importance of the human body in information systems and critical theory, although his view is considerably less nuanced than

Hayles, as he implicitly rejects the notion of cyborg subjectivity by viewing the information technologies through which this art is deployed as fundamentally a tool, rather than as a partner. George Lakoff also takes up the question of the implications of an information model that divorces information from the humans who use it. He suggests that the notion of artificial intelligence (hence, of information technologies as partners, rather than tools) depends on the "conduit" metaphor of knowledge and language, which proves problematic for many simple counter-examples; like Hayles, however, Lakoff is acutely concerned with the extent to which we are constructing a world around a model of knowledge and production that is algorithmic or computational and profoundly divorced from the reality of material human bodies.

As we move towards an analysis of Jackson's work, it will be useful to consider how this relationship between media technologies and the corporeal body have been complicated by media and gender theorists. Famously, Luce Irigaray suggests in *This Sex Which is Not One* that the emphasis on the penis as a visually recognizable presence in Western culture has tended to construct femininity as an absence closely affiliated with feeling and touch; this dichotomy between presence and absence as constitutive of gender provides in Irigaray's account a foundation for normative masculine reason that finds its center in the field of vision rather than in the lived body (25-26). Utilizing a more historical approach, Susan Bordo elaborates this notion, suggesting that the distrust of the body extended in Enlightenment reason to the eye itself, finding culmination in the Cartesian emphasis that the senses must be distrusted, while a disembodied mind's eye offers the opportunity for true knowledge (34-44). In an idealized form, the cinema demands a disembodied geometric vision by making the audience a passive and immobile participant in the media event.

In the article "Flickering Connectivities in Shelley Jackson' *Patchwork Girl*: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis" that I used as an entry point to this dicussion, Hayles shows how Jackson's text takes up this struggle by contesting the disembodiment of literature. Hayles situates this disembodiment within the historically concurrent Romantic emphasis on originality and the judical-economic system's privilege of style and expression over material instantiation as the essential material subject to copyright (paragraph 22). Moreover, Hayles repeatedly shows that Jackson's text takes up the much larger questions about the disembodiment of the self that animate contentious debates about the posthuman, as well as the historical-religious debates about materiality and transcendence to which Graham links Haraway's conception of the cyborg. As we have observed, however, Hayles ultimately suggests that the disembodiment of literature has encouraged blindness to the differences between media forms; consequently, she reads *Patchwork Girl* as a demonstration that many of our interpretive and theoretical approaches to literature are contingent on print-bound assumptions about the signifier, the central roles of the author and reader, and the nature of textuality should be challenged and revised. Arguing for the same sort of reflexive consciousness towards embodiment that animates her cautionary take on the posthuman, Hayles writes: "the effect of *Patchwork Girl's* creative juxtapositions is to shake us awake from the dream that electronic fiction is simply a 'text' that we read on a screen instead of on paper" (paragraph 57). From the subject positions constructed by 21st Century media forms, we will demonstrate how the unconsciousness of media forms she proposes had a correlative "dream" of awareness of the interplay of formal difference within the media artifacts I will examine. Again, the point here is not to deny that there are differences between media forms. Rather instead, I aim to encourage an understanding and appreciation

12

both of these differences *and* of the strategies through which differing media highlight aspects of each other through the processes of cross-media adaptation. In particular, I focus on how the deterritorializing formal and thematic moves enacted by these cultural artifacts can draw attention to thematic, stylistic, and philosophical elements that are occluded by narrowly focusing on individual works or on strict relationships of filiation by reterritorializing these elements in new historical contexts and material instantiations.

By conceptualizing this playful process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization as characteristic of active engagements with the image of Frankenstein's creation, this paper writes against an emergent critical consensus. Like Hayles, Jaishree Odin takes up the question of embodiment in Shelley Jackson's text. Arguing that feminist theorist Judith Butler provides a model for accounting for "the materiality of the body as a construction" without resorting to "linguistic determinism or cultural constructivism," she suggests that the performative models of sex and gender provided by Butler suggest the kind of "border subject" that Jackson provides in the figure of the Patchwork Girl (454-455); from this, she argues a new aesthetics emerges characterized by a "switch from linear, univocal, closed, authoritative" approach to a "nonlinear, multivocal, open, nonhierarchical" approach "involving active encounters that are marked by performance of the regulatory norms with and in difference" (455). This language re-produces the celebratory media teleology that I have already criticized in Hayles, while it suggests a questionable binary between new and old media that underwrites what I will suggest is an over-simplistic way of reading the "old": "Jackson's narrative," she says, "reveals through a fractured surface what Shelley's conceals in an elaborate system of framing and reframing" (457). Odin argues that Shelley conceals issues of authorship by framing the narrative with letters from

Walton to his sister, which bracket Frankenstein's own narrative, which in turn contains the narrative which becomes central to Jackson's text: that of the monster (457). As I will show in the following chapter, the critics are far from agreement on this point; moreover, as Shelley's classic novel performs a profound anxiety about authorial control, it arguably manifests many of the characteristics of the "new" aesthetics that Odin exalts, within the limitations of its own semiotic conventions.

So, this thesis will follow Hayles's project, contributing to our understanding of how remediation provides an opportunity to "reveal the assumptions specific" to individual media by

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1   "Media ecology" is a term which has attained importance in media studies following Neil Postman, popularized it by founding NYU program in Media Ecology. Within comparative media studies, the term designates the relationships between media, the ways that they compete and mutually support each other, and the interrelations between the physical and semiotic codes that distinguish them. To understand the conceptual richness of the term and the contested critical field to which it points, we may fairly contrast two media ecological models that inform this research. Postman contends in *Amusing Ourselves to Death* that television and other visually rich near-instant communications have out-competed typographically-based media forms, while Henry Jenkins's "convergence" model of media ecology emphasizes the extent to which contemporary media artifacts are deployed across several mutually-supporting media. In Jenkins's model, the contemporary media ecology demands attention to multiple media platforms due both to corporate-guided cross-marketing and to active public participation in media events through fan fiction, cosplay, mashups and other examples of what Lawrence Lessig calls "Read/Write Culture" and Yochai Benkler points towards with his model of "commons-based peer production" (Lessig 28; Benkler 60).

14

forcing considerations of material embodiment. But, to the extent it is successful, this reading

will reveal embodiment not as a pole of binary logic (material/transcendent) to be escaped

through a transhumanist technoscience, nor to be naively embraced as a preferred mode of

understanding, but to be critically analyzed as a strategic and contingent performative move in

our readings of culture and our understandings of subjectivity and identity. With this aim, I plan

to undertake a re-evaluation of the textual, editorial, and historical scholarship about the role of

Romantic views of originality, literacy, and humanity in Mary Shelley's presentation of Victor

Frankenstein and his creations in the classic novel.   I then intend to examine how these views

are remediated and transformed by James Whale's classic *Frankenstein* film franchise, especially

as that franchise is re-interpreted through Victor Erice's *The Spirit of the Beehive.* Finally, I

intend to return to Hayle's media-specific analysis of *Patchwork Girl* with the understanding that

Jackson's text remediates not just print culture, but film culture as well.

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2   In this thesis, I will also deploy a concept adapted from Roland Barthes by George

Landow: "the lexia." Landow appropriates this term to indicate the individual nodes within a

hypertext fiction; subsequently, the term has been widely accepted within the critical literature,

making this citation largely irrelevant. Even so, Terry Harpold takes issue with Landow's use of

the term, saying that it would be desirable to reorient "the concept of the lexia away from purely

node-based segmentation of the text to parsings that are more variable and opportunistic, and

including within the lexia's purview grammatextually activated expressions that may have no

direct relation to the text's on-screen chunking" (5.62). While Harpold is probably correct that

Barthes's original conception of the lexia has somewhat broader utility, Landow's usage appears

to have become the standard of critics working with electronic hypertext fictions, so despite my

15

conscious use of a Barthes-derived theoretical framework, I will follow the convention on this matter.

3   This quotation about "border war" is intentionally taken out of context. Hayles, as we will see, is fundamentally (and correctly) interested with the construction of subjectivity in Jackson's text and uses the "border war" metaphor to provide some narrative clarity to the means through which the unitary subject is fragmented into an assemblage of intensities located both within and without the borders of body. Her central argument is that *Patchwork Girl* performs this kind anti-Romantic subjectivity both on the surface level of the plot and at the media-formal level, interpolating readers with a radical multiplicity of fragmented subject positions that are, in turn, articulated with both the machine and the the hypertext's creators. It is with certain irony, then, that I point out how she carefully demarcates borders in her model of media ecology that in turn become barriers to seeing the intersections between the Frankenstein works in an analogical light.

4   See Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 476-477

Chapter 1: The Distributed Cognitive Network of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

From the perspective that attends to media convergence and Lessig's notion of Read/Write Culture, the critical body around Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* constitutes a form of fan fiction, insofar at it enables critics to make very personal performances which simultaneously draw on the textual evidence and write into the interstices and silences of the novel. These performances enable critics to write to the political, historical, and social concerns of their particular context – for instance, critics who have variously seen in Shelley's portrayal of Frankenstein's monster images of femininity, masculinity, racial difference, transgressive sexual orientation, and even disability. Equally, they enable critics to engage in dialog both with the text and with each other about such issues. Moreover, some of the critical voices (such as Gilbert and Gubar's reading, which we will consider momentarily) have become almost naturalized responses to the novel, both affecting what readings are made possible within the text and speaking to subsequent adaptations, appropriations, and deployments of the figures from the novel. In this chapter, then, my intention is not to provide a new reading of this novel, but rather illuminate *Frankenstein*'s place in the popular retellings of the Promethean myth in the early 1800s and survey some of the critical and editorial responses to this novel with an eye towards demonstrating the profound multivocality both of the novel itself and of the critical enterprise which surrounds it. These explorations, in turn, set the stage for the analyses of Victor Erice's *Spirit of the Beehive* and Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* to follow.

The title of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's[1] novel provides an entry point for considering the extent to which, despite being a work composed for print, it displays the supposed characteristic of electronic hypertextual fictions that N. Katherine Hayles describes as production

in a "distributed cognitive environment." To the extent that the novel provides the narrative of

The Modern Prometheus, it partakes in the Romantic construction of the ancient Greek figure as

what Stuart Curran calls "a fundamentally political icon" (431). In particular, given that the

story emerges from a ghost-story writing contest between Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley/Mary Godwin in the summer of 1816, it is appropriate to consider

how the distinct, but related constructions of Prometheus in Percy's closet drama *Prometheus*

Unbound (begun 1818; first published 1820) and Byron's "Prometheus" poem (1816) provide

context that tends to undermine the idea of lone creator, undivided within herself, who

spontaneously generates a creation free from the influences (both positive and negative, as we

will see) of others. This historical affiliation suggests instead the extent to which the creative act

finds realization not in the *spontaneous overflow of feelings* of a single agent, but rather through

a process that brings the material context of a specific social scene to fruition through the

collaborative and contested actions of several individuals, whose own relationships to the text

may be conflicted and complex.

The editorial history of the novel offers some insights into the problematic nature of

properly Romantic conceptions of authorship. After observing that the nine month period over

which the character Robert Walton composes the letters and notes which present the plot

provides a *figure* for the nine months during which Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley expanded the

now-lost *ur*-text[2] to *Frankenstein* into a two-volume novel-length story that would be further

developed under the assistance of Percy Bysshe Shelley and various editors into the several

versions of the novel now known, editor Charles E. Robinson observes:

It would be fair to say further that Walton's writing *in* the novel and Mary

Shelley's writing *of* the novel are also 'figured' by the creative work of Victor

Frankenstein himself. Victor's assembling of disparate body parts into his

monster is not that different from Walton's assembling his discrete notes about

Victor into a narrative; and both of these creative acts may be compared to Mary

Shelley's esemplastic fusing of words and images and symbols and punctuation

into the text of her novel. Mary Shelley herself encouraged this kind of

comparison when she bad her novel, her 'hideous progeny,' to 'go forth and

prosper,' suggesting that her monster was a metaphor for her novel and that both

creations would be altered by their experiences in the world. ("Texts in Search of

an Editor" 364)

Robinson goes on to compare Percy Bysshe Shelley's role to that of a midwife, even as his own

edition of *The Original Frankenstein* demonstrates conclusively that Shelley's role was much

closer to that of junior collaborator than that of midwife. Consistent with the midwife metaphor,

Robinson also maintains in his introduction to this edition that "the novel was conceived and

mainly written by Mary Shelley," presumably arguing against the critical voices like John

Lauritsen who have questioned whether Mary, as a woman, could have penned those works

indexed by her name ("Introduction to *The Original Frankenstein*" 25). Even so, he also

acknowledges that Percy contributed over 4000 words, many of which are substantial (to say

nothing of his redactions); more importantly, Robinson observes that his contributions were

offered as the novel was composed, suggesting that they may have had significant impact on how

the story itself unfolded ("Introduction to *The Original Frankenstein,*" 25). Finally, Robinson's

abbreviated stemma in "Texts in Search of an Author," indicates that Percy was significantly involved with the editorial process that led from the the two-volume *Original Frankenstein* (Robinson's appellation) to the three-volume 1818 first publication, including a small portion of the text written in Percy's hand (96).

Robinson correctly observes that the multiply framed narrative structure of Mary's novel points out the extent to which it is "a novel very much about the question of authorial and editorial control" (92). That is, to the extent that the novel draws attention to its own voice, the novel suggests the collaborative context of composition and narrative transmission. In this regard, Robinson draws attention to how Victor Frankenstein's narrative is framed by the sea-adventure story of Walton while the Creation's narrative is, in turn, framed by Victor's narration, and, finally, the story of the De Lacy family is framed by the creation's own narrative voice (92). And, indeed, the repeated reference to Victor as the "author" of the creation/monster suggests the kind of homology Robinson observes between Victor's creation and Mary's. By showing how this novel troubles the idealistic notion of the Romantic author by foregrounding the ideological and historical-material fields of production, dissemination, and reception that construct the illusion of transparent transmission between Author and Audience, I will demonstrate in this chapter how Robinson's homology maps a conflicted and troubled site within the novel. As Robinson observes, Walton's role as amanuensis and editor for Victor's narrative is profoundly complicated by Victor's editorial role over Walton's notes; equally, Frankenstein's creation makes direct contact with Walton in the climactic scene, suggesting the complex relationships between multiple creators and editors that ultimately characterizes the elaboration and dissemination of Mary's story. Most insightfully on Robinson's part, he points to the fictive

audience of Walton's messages as a possible final editorial voice: Margret Walton Saville, who

we may rightfully imagine, prepares Walton's fantastic story for publication -- and who, perhaps

not uncoincidentally, shares initials with the author of the novel (93).

This homology between the initials of the silent fictive audience for the novel and the

novel's historical author provide a moment of hypermediacy that allows us to consider the

historical-material context of production and dissemination alongside the fictive field, suggesting

the extent to which they interpenetrate.   Given this, the presence of many editions of

Frankenstein provides a problem that is properly critical and not simply textual or editorial.

While it is beyond the scope of this inquiry to consider the many competing editions of the text

in wide circulation -- multiple editions edited by Mary herself (1818, 1818 Thomas, 1831), an

edition edited by her father William Godwin that served as the copytext for the one-volume 1831

edition (1823)[3], various critical editions, even editions which yoke the 1831 introduction to the

more familiar 1818 text -- it is worth considering that the work itself apparently demands at least

a cursory examination of how the material constraints of publication shape and reshape the

emergent text, in this case generating a multiplicity of texts that have the force of editorial

credibility behind them (Robinson 96-97).   So, whether we consider Percy as a particularly

involved editor, a "midwife," or properly a collaborator, the framing of the tale itself suggests

that we should acknowledge that accepting any of these titles -- and, indeed, the roles of Mary's

later editors – also accepts the distributed nature of the cognitive environment through which the

work itself emerges. While Robinson provides in *The Original Frankenstein* diplomatic

transcriptions of a version of the text that precedes Percy's interventions[4], the text-as-known is

not such an ideal form, but rather bears witness both to the intentional editorial interventions of

21

Percy (as in the 1816 pre-publication text offered first in *The Original Frankenstein*), but also the deliberate and accidental editorial interventions on the parts of later editors of 1818 and subsequent editions, including those of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley herself.   Indeed, by embedding within the story a complex editorial history, Shelley appears to complicate the neo-Platonic ideal "text" that stands behind and often motivates the collation of textual artifacts in editorial practice. Moreover, it suggests that privileging a specific edition -- especially if one must choose among various editions guided by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley or her father -- must be undertaken as a pragmatic decision, much in the spirit which leads Joesph Grigely to argue that "The differences which texts [generally, not *Frankenstein* particularly] reveal amongst themselves, and which distinguish themselves from each other, are the product of an uncentered alterity: there is no 'correct' text, no 'final' text, no 'original' text but only texts that are different, drifting in their like differences" (223). Robinson does not go so far as Grigley in this respect. Robinson's work restoring the 1816-17 versions of the text recalls to a certain extent Hershel Parker's insistence on recovering earliest versions as privileged instances for the editorial practice (3-4). However, I would argue that the function of his project is not so much to privilege the hypothetical Mary Shelley (writing alone) text he provides at the end of *The Original Frankenstein,* but rather to answer the political and pragmatic questions that suggest the novel to be the product of Percy's distinct genius, independent from the evidence that Mary was the primary author. While the idea that the novel is properly Percy's may seem quite reactionary, it is worth noting that this is a position endorsed by feminist Camille Paglia. The force of Robinson's project is not to shift the praise from a woman to a man (or vice-versa), but rather to demonstrate that the assumption of a solitary author is profoundly complicated by the fact that

22

Mary collaborated extensively with Percy both as the earliest versions unfolded and in the later editorial process[5].

Rejecting the thesis that Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's name served as a penname for Percy while also accepting that the Romantic view of the unitary author misleads as much as it describes brings me to the questions of how the text represents femininity and masculinity that have animated much twentieth century scholarship on the novel. Gilbert and Gubar famously stage a re-reading of the *Frankenstein* narrative that sees in it a suppression of the feminine voice that, once excavated, reveals many of the apparently male voices to be repressed representations of women, describing the novel as "Eve and Eve all along" (246). While not following the details of Gibert and Gubar's argument, Joyce Zonana suggests that the role of Safie's letters as a mode of authentication both for the monster (to Victor) and for Victor (to Walton) points at the importance of this inner narrative to unlocking the portrayal of the construction of femininity in the novel (170). Charles Robinson also suggests that the story of Safie's education reflects the fact that "Mary Shelley was reading her mother's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* at the same time she was writing" these chapters (382); in addition to using evidence from Mary Shelley's journals, he points out the close homophony between "Safie" and "Saville," suggesting that two of the essential links in establishing the "truth" of the narrative within the fictive field are closely aligned (373-374). Zonana foreshadows this observation by extending feminist Anne Mellor's assertion that Mary Shelley provides the De Lacy family with her own reading list and arguing that Safie's letters provide an allegorical substitute for *Vindication* on the De Lacy family bookshelf (172). Further, the Orientalist position of Shelley in relation to Islam displayed in Safie's escape from a "harem" provides Zonana with evidence that Shelley further attempts to

align Safie's story with women's liberation efforts (173). Indeed, Zonana extends the Gilbert and Gubar argument significantly using these insights and the evidence of the monster's reaction to his reflection in a pool of water (an echo of Milton), suggesting that Shelley does not unconsciously project the monster as an Eve figure, but rather consciously fashions him such (175). So, in Zonana's reading, the silencing of Safie's letters provides not evidence of the unconsciously silenced female voice, but rather a conscious choice to protect a feminine "truth that escapes the conventions of the narrative construction of meaning" from masculine discourse (181).

However, Bette London is dissatisfied with the Gilbert and Gubar argument (and its critical offspring), suggesting that these approaches tend to uphold a gendered project that the novel implicitly criticizes for treating the male subject position as gender-neutral and masculinity as "invisible" (256). Observing that Victor Frankenstein's concerns about the creation of a female monster invoke fear of the unseen while simultaneously suggesting that the first creation will become fully masculine and capable of materially reproducing with the supplementation of a female counterpart, London suggests that masculinity is shown to be not a neutral position, but a construction dependent on the feminine other (256). This unfolding argument is worth quoting at some length:

> If the logic of the novel demands as its consummation the laying out of
> Frankenstein's body, as I have been arguing, the symmetrical inversion of its
> creation scene is achieved through a detour onto the woman's body [that is: the
> body of Elizabeth] and through the circulation of the position of monstrosity.
> This pattern has far-reaching, and as yet largely unexamined, implications for

understanding both of the novel and of the wider workings of gender --
implications that exceed the narrow determinants of a strictly biographical
rendering. For the shifting configurations that mark the novel's reinventions of its
central scene destabilize the sexual hierarchies that underwrite the novel's
meaning, making the *male* body the site of an ineradicable materiality. Yet the
discomposing presence of that body remains the thing most resistant to critical
insight; [...] it is preeminently visible but persistently unseen, consigned to
modern oblivion. (255)

So, in London's reading, Walton standing over Victor's body recapitulates Victor standing over
the body of his creation, just as it recalls Victor standing over the dead body of Elizabeth on the
marriage bed. Reading the monster as female, then, has the consequence of undermining the
association of Victor (as emblematic of the supposedly immaterial, yet also masculine spirit of
creation) with the immanently constructed and masculine body of the monster.   Fred V. Randel's
reading of Frankenstein's workshop shows that while on one hand it provides the absent female
counterpart to his monstrous birth, the possible feminist subtext for this observation is
complicated by the association of this site with "strongly negative language, such as 'filthy,'
'loathing,' [and] 'horrid'" (530); ultimately, Randel argues that feminine is fully excluded from
this space and that the negative language indicates not just the absence of literal females from
this movement in the plot, but actually Victor's failure to acknowledge the access he has himself
to femininity "both through external relationships and through inner balance" (531). So, much as
in London's reading, this interpretation suggests that the novel does not construct femininity

through Victor and his monster, but rather deconstructs masculinity as a conceptual category independent of materiality.

These two central tendencies in readings of gender (as a text about the construction of femininity versus as a text about the construction of masculinity) provide the suggestion that far from exhibiting a univocal relationship to gender, the text speaks in several voices, which are in contest and ultimately reveal that both femininity and masculinity can be constructed multiply within the same text. Commenting generally on the novel, Elaine Graham suggests that "The reader leaves the arctic wastes, the site of Frankenstein's final confrontation with his creation, undecided as to many endings and resolutions" (82); ultimately, she argues that the monster's simultaneous exclusion from society and participation in socially constructed reason and learning calls into question our culture's sense of "ontological hygiene" with respect to normative humanity (83). This might equally apply to constructions of femininity and constructions of masculinity within the novel. While it would be far too simplistic to suggest that this multiplication of meanings emerges from the collaborative nature of the text's production, it does provide evidence that the notion of a unified text emerging from a single inspiration is profoundly lacking. The force of this argument brings us back to observations about the construction of the text in a distributed cognitive environment, by way of a detour through the now common observation that by critiquing the Romantic creator, Mary Shelley's text implicitly provides sharp criticism of Percy. To better understand what there is to critique, I will consider the introduction to *Prometheus Unbound*; here, Percy apologizes for any derivative elements of his composition by suggesting that it is the "form" rather than the "spirit" of a text that can be imitated (39). But, as we have seen, the compositional history and thematics within

Frankenstein indicate that form and spirit are much more closely intertwined than this view would allow. Given this, it proves fruitful to consider the similarities and differences between the visions of Prometheus offered in the milieu that helped shape the generation of this text and provides an entry point to the genre of Frankenstein-themed works that comprise the "text" (in Barthes's sense) that form the subject of my inquiry.

The Promethean project bears certain affinities with the discourse around posthumanity. Commenting on the emergent notion of the post/human, of which she takes the *Frankenstein* narrative to be a inaugurating work, Elaine Graham says "what is at stake, supremely, in the debate about the implications of digital, genetic, cybernetic and biomedical technologies is precisely what (and who) will define authoritative notions of normative, exemplary, desirable humanity into the twenty-first century" (11). Comparing her teratological project to Michel Foucault's genealogy, she further says that she attempts through her study to "illustrate how categories of extremity and deviance function to delineate normative and exemplary humanity" (40). Given this privileged role that Graham provides to the monster (as liminal, extreme, deviant, counter-normative), it is worth considering Percy Shelley's account of his own Promethean hero, comparing him to Satan for confronting the omnipotent and norm-engendering God-figure, but suggesting that he (unlike Satan) is "exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement" (37). Rather unlike Percy Shelley's Prometheus, Victor's ambition ultimately proves his undoing; so to a certain extent Mary's use of *Paradise Lost* as a significant intertext provides a pivotal point for understanding the differences between her vision of a Promethean figure and those of her husband. Byron, too, seems to re-write the aspects of *Paradise Lost* that cast Satan as a hero; in Byron's hands, the narrative

27

carries a greater mythic resonance, suggesting that man can learn from Prometheus' example: against the unpleasantness of existence, humans can oppose their Spirit and find in Death a triumph over suffering:

> [...] and equal to all woes,
>
> And a firm will, and a deep sense,
>
> Which even in torture can descry
>
> Its own concenter'd recompense,
>
> Triumphant where it dares defy,
>
> And making Death a Victory.

Victor's triumph, ironically, is also an attempt to triumph over the limits of human existence, but instead of escaping from "His own funereal destiny;/ His wretchedness, and his resistance,/ And his sad unallied existence" through death, it is death and the limitations of masculinity that Victor attempts to overcome. For the purposes of this reading the crucial point of comparison is whether the Promethean figure can be taken as a hero worthy of emulation or whether, instead, his suffering should be taken as a warning. Certainly, it appears that this collection of intertexts speak with several voices on this topic.

Additionally, we should consider the notion of a Promethean Age that follows the overthrow of Jupiter/Zeus, who serves as a rather transparent stand-in for authoritarian political institutions, problematic normative social values, and possibly even monotheistic faith. In Percy's take on the Promethean myth, this idea is central. "The Hour," a character whose name suggests the present, tells Prometheus of the change that has unfolded with the banishment of Jupiter:

The painted veil, by those who were, called life,

Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,

All men believed or hoped, is torn aside;

The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains

Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed -- but man:

Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless;

Exempt from awe, worship, degree; the king

Over himself; just, gentle, wise-- but man:

Passionless? no -- yet free from guilt or pain,

Which were, for his will made, or suffered them (187.190-199)

This vision of utopian anarchy free from illusion, guilt, and pain provides a stark contrast to the threatening vision of a new era of physical science, chemistry, and electricity enacted by *Frankenstein*: indeed, though perhaps God has died a few deaths in the interim, the prophecy of *Frankenstein* may have proven closer to the truth than that of *Prometheus Unbound.*

These inquiries have given us reason to appreciate *Frankenstein* as a complex text on several levels: first, by drawing attention to the question of authorial control, the novel opens itself onto questions about the origin of subjectivity and identity (i.e. does it come from a transcendent source, is it an autobiographical construction that we "write" about ourselves as Mark Mossman suggests in his powerful reading of *Frankenstein* against his own disability, or does it instead inhere in the collection of physical parts?). Second, by questioning authorial control, the novel highlights the collaborative nature of textual production. Third, both the link between identity and body and between an idealized vision of the Author and the messy, material

reality of a collaborative writing process inform the novel's orientation towards the construction

of gender, about which it appears multivocal. And, fifth, the contested conceptual space of the

Promethean myth attests to the extent to which, even beyond literal collaboration, the

Frankenstein appears in a conceptual space laden with ideological and political values, alongside

and against which it formulates a distinct, but participatory role.

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1   During the Summer of 1816, Mary was unmarried and would by convention have gone

by the name Mary Godwin. In her letters during the years leading up to this, Mary signed her

letters as "Mary," "M.," or with various nicknames. However, in her correspondence with Percy

during Winter of 1816-1817, she sometimes signed "Mary W. G.' (5 December 1816, 17

December 1816; Bennett, *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Volume I,* 22-24). This

may suggest the extent to which Mary chose her name based on her audience, given that Percy

was particularly interested in Mary's illustrious parents. According to Betty T. Bennett, Mary

and Percy were married on 30 December 1816 (25, fn. 5). On 13 January 1817, Mary signed

letters "Mary W. Shelley" to Lord Byron and Marianne Hunt (26-27).   Subsequently, she fairly

consistently signed letters using Wollstonecraft as her middle name, suggesting that the

appellation Mary Godwin Shelley, though conventional, would be against her own self-

identification. In a 5 Marcy 1817 letter to Marianne Hunt, Bennett restores a deleted "G." initial

from Mary's signature, yielding "Mary W. G. S." (34). In some later letters (starting in 1822 in

the published letters), Mary signs "Mary Shelley," "M. Shelley," or "M.S." with no middle

initial. Despite this, the vast majority of the published letters with formal signatures written

during the publication process of *Frankenstein* are signed "Mary W. Shelley," "MWShelley,"

"MWS," "Mary W.S.," or "Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley." Moreover, Mary continued to use

Wollstonecraft (or "W.") as a middle name through at least 1840 (Bennett, *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Volume II,* 347). For this reason, I've followed the convention of referring to Mary as "Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley."

2   Charles E. Robinson notes that there is no evidence one way or the other of Percy's involvement with the composition of this now-lost version of the novel ("Texts in Search of an Author" 368)

3   Godwin's role as the editor of an edition of the novel that served as copy text for one of the most widely circulated editions proves especially interesting in light of Maureen Noelle McLane's thesis that the dedication to Godwin takes on special significance in the light of the extent to which Frankenstein's creation troubles the position that "'intellectual and literary refinement,' in Godwin's terms, might be the route to his humanization" (959). For McLane, this suggests a certain subtext about border subjectivities whose cultural identity markers set them outside the normative realm of (masculine, white) humanity.

4   This hypothetical edition is also available in facsimile form in Robinson's *The Frankenstein Notebooks*.

5   Nothing *prima facie* makes it impossible for Percy to have changed his perspective on the Prometheus myth between 1816 (when Mary Shelley and Byron penned their respective Promethean undertakings) and two or three years later when he undertook his own closet drama. Even so, certainly Victor Frankenstein as "The Modern Prometheus" finds a far less sympathetic portrayal than Shelley's re-writing of the classical figure. As we will see, Mary's text invokes and complicates Prometheus as the titan who created mankind and the relationship between Prometheus and Pandora, even as it suggests that the *Frankenstein* steals the "fire" of Life, but

31

tends to focus more on his punishment, while in Percy's text more emphasis is given to

Prometheus as the revolutionary bringer of a new age and his liberation from Jupiter's

punishment.

Chapter 2: "Spirits don't have bodies, that's why you can't kill them": Hypermediate Citation

and the System of the Suture in Victor Erice's *Spirit of the Beehive*

The image of Frankenstein's monster, or more properly, the image of James Whale's

monster is, as the childish character Mr. Kay in Bill Condon's *Gods and Monsters* puts it, "one of

the great images of the twentieth century." And although we may not agree with him that it is

"as important as the Mona Lisa," the profound iconic value of this image in relation to twentieth-

century appropriations of Mary Shelley's narrative is undeniable.   Moreover, the narrative

indexed by this image opens onto characteristic themes of modernity: the tension between a

scientific view of the body that sees it as the workings of so many chemicals and parts and a

romanticized view of spirit, self, or soul; the implication that other metaphysical conceptions like

a deistic God can be dispensed with, since science can create life from the material world; and,

the suggestion that something resembling identity can be constructed from a heterogeneous set of

elements. Just as Whale's Henry Frankenstein assembles the body of his monster from elements

of various origins, the deployment of the monster as icon organizes a heterogeneous body of

works – or, a single text, in the sense that Barthes opposes text to work – around these problems

of modernity. Equally, the iconic value of the monster draws attention to the history of cinema as

an evolving art form with characteristics specified and regulated by technical limitations and

historically contingent conventions and norms.

In Victor Erice's *Spirit of the Beehive (El espíritu de la colmena),* this historically

evocative image of Frankenstein's creation proves to be a particularly powerful trope for

generating a richly nuanced fiction that maintains reflexivity towards the film as a material

medium that is constructed, disseminated, and consumed within a particular historical reality. For the purposes of this exploration of how Shelley Jackson's hypertext adopts, troubles, and reflects on the modes through which the *Frankenstein* narrative has been used at times to underscore and at others to contest the importance of the ideological and material fields into which it is deployed, *Spirit of the Beehive* provides a particularly fruitful tutor text. Insofar as it engages the iconic power of Whale's image by embedding it in a particular political circumstance, it offers an opportunity to explore the effect of historical context and the ideological field on the construction of the subjectivity of the audience. Moreover, by situating the organizing and observing subjectivity in the narrative within the character of a little girl who has relatively little agency in the troubling matrix of power around her, *Spirit of the Beehive* offers an opportunity to explore the tensions between occular-centrism as a characteristic of the filmic medium and the relatively richer role given to agency and haptic interactions[1] within new media artifacts like Jackson's.

Indeed, in the classic James Whale *Frankenstein* and its sequel *The Bride of Frankenstein*, the modernist crisis of the material body significantly organizes the narrative, offering Erice's later narrative a familiar thematic foundation. In the original, Henry desires a normal brain for the monster, but his assistant Fritz bungles the theft and delivers instead an abnormal brain. This evokes the notion that the brain is the material seat of the mind, a physical object inside the human body that controls behavior, perception, and affect. But, contrary to expectations, the monster does not emerge into the film as a murderous sociopath as a result of his abnormal brain, but rather appears as a sympathetic and childlike quasi-hero whose misdeeds hinge on a fundamentally impoverished experience of the world. Providing very little evidence

34

that the monster's abnormal brain affects his behavior, the film suggests the monster's capability to learn offers him an avenue to self-improvement, regardless of his physical abnormality. But it is his material body that serves as a sign that he is abnormal to the townsfolk, who are understandably angry that the monster killed a young girl. In this way, although the material limitations of the monster's abnormal brain do not limit his growth and agency in the world, it is ultimately the material limitation of his appearance that prevents him from developing a life for himself. It is important to note that it is a socially normative image of acceptable humanity that is involved here, not just objective deformity: the blind man recognizes the creature as monstrous, but accepts him as a friend; the young girl Maria quickly accepts him as a playmate. In the first case, the blind man's disability has prevented him from internalizing the visual bias – and in the second, the young girl simply has not learned to distrust that which appears different.

But the film does not perform this tension strictly within the fictive space; instead, it opens with a pre-Hays code warning about the shocking nature of plot. This introduction represents within the film the physical space of the cinema, curtains and all.   The announcer who speaks for the producers explicitly lays out a moral for the tale, namely that "a man of science . . . sought to create a man after his own image without reckoning upon God." More importantly, the announcer directs his address out of the fictive space and into the material space of the cinema (that is: the cinematic space), associating the point of view of the camera unequivocally with the audience and affiliating our adult visual perception of Frankenstein's creation with those who persecute it during the course of the film. Simultaneously, this address draws attention to the imaginary aspect of the filmic spectacle, emphasizing simultaneously the physical audience inside a movie theater and the material and historical contingencies that might

35

lead a producer to append such a warning. (Or, the clichéd relationship between director and producer that might lead a director to attribute such a warning to the producer in order to create a heightened rhetorical effect).

The introduction to *Bride of Frankenstein* similarly raises questions about the materiality of the film as a production. In this case, however, it does so through an origin story. Beginning with stormy weather and a castle image very much evocative of the first film, *Bride of Frankenstein* surprisingly cuts to an interior shot portraying Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, and Lord Byron gathered inside during the Summer 1816. Mary Shelley is played in this scene by Elsa Lanchester, who also plays the title role. With a similarly reflexive effect, Lord Byron speaks in a highly affected accent also used by the character Dr. Septimus Pretorius, who assists Frankenstein in the creation of the "Bride." After some discussion of the origin of the story, the Mary Shelley character begins to recount the *Frankenstein* narrative during a montage sequence of iconic images from the first film. It is worth mentioning, however, that the story she tells is not her own (in the sense of the story written by the historical Shelley), but rather the filmic narrative from the first film. This device draws attention to the film as adaptation and, for those familiar with the novel, draws attention to the gaps between the Whale's account and Shelley's. Effectively, this provides a comment on the role of mediation in narrative art, suggesting that the requirements of film in the 20th Century differ dramatically from the requirements of orally delivered ghost stories or early 19th Century typography. Ultimately, the question of mediation bears directly on the themes of the abnormal brain and the normative image. At stake in the question of the abnormal brain is whether the "medium" of the body is enough to account for human inclinations, behaviors, and feelings or whether as individuals we are imbued with

essential characteristics which are independent from our material existence. So, the implicit

assertion that the film medium must dramatically revise oral or written media to be successful

simultaneously suggests that the medium determines many of the qualities of narrative art, but

that an essential core or inspiration traverses individual instances of the narrative. Equally, the

monster's problem with others' expectation of normative appearance suggests one of the essential

characteristics of film: unlike speech or writing, film requires specific and particular images to

move a narrative forward.

As I have previously elaborated, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin explore in their

book *Remediation: Understanding New Media* the opposed but interwoven logics of "transparent

immediacy" and "hypermediacy" in emergent media forms, proposing that as interpretive poles,

these concepts are not unique to the contemporary age, but rather have developed alongside the

history of human culture. In their account, "transparent immediacy" is the extent to which a

cultural artifact downplays the existence of medium, drawing the media user into the fictive

space traced out by the artifact; one might compare this to Bazin's "myth of total cinema," but I

think it is important to recognize that transparent immediacy is a matter of degree. That is,

typographical codes can generate the sense of transparent immediacy in a text when compared to

a more hypermediate text, just as much as the immersive codes of one virtual reality program

might privilege immediacy, while another might emphasize the media-specific qualities of the

VR system. In contrast, "hypermediacy" describes the tendency of media to foreground their

existence as media, which by extension draws attention to the material histories of invention,

production, dissemination, and consumption that come to bear on any artifact. So, we might say

that the introductions to Whale's *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein* are rhetorically

hypermediate moments that help trace out the themes of materiality and embodiment which run through the films.

But unlike the visual rhetoric of a webpage or many works of new media art like Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, hypermediacy in film emerges not as a default, but as a way of undercutting the rhetorical moves which establish transparent immediacy as a matter of course or convention. Within Lacanian film theory, Oudart's concept of suture significantly presages these thematics of hypermediacy versus transparent immediacy in contemporary comparative media studies. However, it is worth spending a moment unpacking the various conceptualizations of the suture in film theory, as some criticisms of the suture (for instance, William Rothman's "Against 'the System of the Suture'") depend on a very specific use of the concept. Rather than returning to the strictly Lacanian roots of this term in Jacques-Alain Miller's classic essay, I will focus on how it has been used in film theory, tracing out two tendencies within the conceptualization of the suture. In Oudart, the suture appears in classical cinema, but does not rise to the level of a device until it is consciously used by Bresson. Oudart claims that

> Bresson gives more than he took away; he puts the filmed subject within a structure and in a symbolic place which are those of cinema per se no longer as a fictive subject located in an illusory existential relationship with its surroundings, but as the actor in a representation whose symbolic dimension is revealed in the process of reading and viewing. (Oudart 35)

So, the merit that Oudart sees in Bresson is that he undermines the sense of transparent immediacy by emphasizing the symbolic nature of film, that is, he develops film as discourse,

rather than as naïve fiction.   In Oudart's account, the viewer uncovers a hypermediate relationship to representation precisely by attending to the formal codes in Bresson's film. As we will see, in some post-classic era cinema, Oudart's suture actually functions to establish a bi-directional relationship between transparent immediacy and hypermediacy in the generation of a coherent symbolic sequence.

Tracing out the conceptual ground for the suture, Oudart observes that "Every filmic field is echoed by an absent field, the place of a character who is put there by the viewer's imaginary, and which we shall call the Absent One" (Oudart 36). Since each shot is organized around the point of view of the camera, in the viewer's construction of a sensible reading there is always an implied character outside of the shot – behind the camera or on the viewer's side of the screen, as it were. What the suture concerns, then, is how the film contains the troubling Absent One and closes the gap in the fictive space that appears in the position of the Absent One.   As a pre-eminent example of this, Oudart offers the shot/reverse-shot sequence as a basic form of the "statement" in filmic discourse, saying "the appearance of a lack perceived as a Some One (the Absent One) is followed by its abolition by someone (or something) placed within the same field -- everything happening within the same shot or rather within the filmic space defined by the same take" (Oudart 37). So, in the classic shot/reverse-shot sequence, the shot of the first figure organizes itself through the point of view of the Absent One, opening a hypermediate hole or gap in the fictive space; but then, as the camera cuts to a reverse-shot, a second figure is placed into the position of the Absent One, restoring transparent immediacy to the fiction.   However, as Oudart's discussion of Bresson indicates, this back-and-forth does not result in the total erasure of the Absent One or the process which generates the need for that concept; far from it, the merit

of Bresson in Oudart's eyes is that he maintains reflexivity towards this process, reveals it in action, demonstrates through the unfolding film how it functions to create sense within the filmic discourse. Perhaps more importantly, Oudart does not conceptualize the suture as a phenomenon strictly linked to the shot/reverse-shot technique; this in part emerges from the empirical fact that shot/reverse-shot sequences often use oblique angles to achieve the suturing effect.   On this, Oudart is unusually clear:

> The ideal chain of a sutured discourse would be one which is articulated into figures which it is no longer appropriate to call shot/reverse shot, but which mark the need -- so that the chain can function -- for an articulation of space such that the same portion of space be represented at least twice, in the filmic field and in the imaginary field -- with all the variations of angle that the obliqueness of the camera with regard to the place of the subject allows. This ideal chain consists, as it progress, of a duplicating representation, which demands that each of the elements composing its space and presenting its actors be separated and duplicated, and twice read or evoked in a to-and-fro movement which would need describing more precisely. This is itself punctuated by the perception of the framing which plays an essential role, since any evocation of the imaginary field relies upon it: that is the filmic field and the fourth side; the field of Absence and the field of the Imaginary; the signifier of Absence and the signifying Sum; the Absent One and the character who replaces it. . . (Oudart 39)

So the key characteristic of the suture is not simply the technical use of shot/reverse-shot, but rather the duplication in the filmic field of any figure that appears outside the frame, but within the imaginary space in which the fiction takes place.

But in Daniel Dayan's "The Tutor-Code of the Classical Cinema" a somewhat different vision of the suture emerges. For Dayan, the suture appears to play two significant roles: one, as a "tutor-code" that helps viewers make sense of the semantic exchange between images by inscribing those images in a signifying process (and I take this to be a fair reading of Oudart). Or, two, as an ideological operation that helps to contain the opening onto the material, historical, and political context of a film's production and consumption implied by the presence of an Absent One who draws us out of the fiction. Stephen Heath argues that these conceptual differences define a "muddled" position for the suture:

> If the system of the suture is a particular ideological system (a 'writing'), it cannot be compared with verbal language. That Dayan does so compare it is symptomatic of the muddled status of the concept: in Miller and some Oudart, suture is descriptive of the very production of signification; in some Oudart and most Dayan, suture is an ideological operation, which the 'privileged example' of shot/reverse-shot demonstrates and resumes (so much so that Rothman is able to take 'system of the suture' as synonymous with point-of-view cutting').

The points here are subtle. Dayan makes a case that "the system of the suture is to classical cinema what verbal language is to literature" (Dayan 106), so he is clearly making the comparison that Heath warns against; even so, Dayan does not propose identity between the system of the suture and language: "Semiotic systems do not follow the same patterns. Each

makes a specific use of the imaginary; that is, each confers a distinctive function upon the subject" (110). So, the system of the suture and other mechanisms of enunciation in cinema do not follow the same pattern as language, even if Dayan wants to make a comparison. Insofar as language and cinema interpolate the subject differently, they make different use of the imaginary. But I have already begged the question here. Rothman correctly takes Dayan to task for failure to recognize that the suture is not the only mechanism for enunciation in cinema: verbal language is the pre-eminent system of enunciation for literature, so according to Dayan's analogy the suture is the central technique through which sequences of images create semantic sense.

But Dayan brings another aspect of the suture to bear on this understanding: in generating a system of enunciation, the suture has an ideological role. (It is worth noting that ideology here is not equated with simplistic false consciousness, but rather with the social, cultural, discursive, and institutional practices of power that give rise to characteristic beliefs or inclinations.) Dayan argues that, "As we will see, [the system of the suture] is built so as to mask the ideological origin and nature of cinematographic statements" (Dayan 111). So, not only is the suture a system of enunciation, but by Dayan's account, as a system of enunciation one of its functions is to conceal the ideological ground on which cinematic discourse is founded. Dayan makes it clear exactly what is being concealed:

> ... the filmic message must account *within itself* for those elements of the code
> which it seeks to hide – changes of shot and, above all, what lies behind these
> changes, the questions 'Who is viewing this?' and 'Who is ordering these
> images?' and 'For what purpose are they doing so?' In this way, the viewer's
> attention will be restricted to the message itself and the codes will not be noticed

42

(Dayan 113).

So, by Dayan's account, the suture is fundamentally aligned with the project of transparent

immediacy and, furthermore, the ideological function of transparent immediacy is to pull viewers

away from the material grounding of the film, which offers answers to questions such as those

posed above through reference to real individuals filming live actors to generate a representation

that manifests social, cultural, and political power differentials. Indeed, notwithstanding of his

Althusserian use of the term ideology, Dayan proposes that the suture substitutes a "false origin"

for the materially grounded "true origin" of a filmic statement, suggesting after all that ultimately

Dayan believes the suture is a mechanism by which films create false consciousness.

If the suture is the mode through which cinema hides its historical, material body from

the viewer, filmic characters watching a film-within-the-film introduce a peculiar problem.

Using the paradigmatic technique of the cut/reverse-cut: consider the case in which in the first

cut, we see a character viewing a film-within-the-film, then during a subsequent cut the Absent

One is replaced not with a character but with the film-within-the-film the character is viewing.

This creates a paradoxical relationship between hypermediacy and transparent immediacy. On

one hand, the suture functions according to Oudart's formula, enabling semantic exchange

between the two images. On the other hand, according to Dayan's reading, the ideological

function of the suture is to offer "a product without a producer, a discourse without an origin"

(Dayan 117), but here the content of the film reaches out to the formal level, undermining this

ideological function of the suture. The semantic exchange between the image of the fictional

viewer and the image of the film-within-the-film draws attention to the relationship between the

actual film viewer and the actual film; to the extent that the frame allows the actual viewer to

perceive the medium through which the film-within-the-film is delivered to the fictional viewers, the film reveals a hypermediate face that encourages the viewer to appreciate the film as situated in her own particular situation. At the same time, the deployment of an iconic historical film as the film-within-the-film draws the viewer further into a familiar symbolic space. But not the symbolic fictive space of a particular work, but rather a symbolic space in which the characters engage a discursive field of which they are part; that is: the text as conceptualized by Barthes. At the same time, Barthes's conceptualization is notable for the extent to which elides the material instantiation of particular works as artifacts, privileging instead the rather immaterial path through multiple works a (w)reader might follow in weaving a text.

But, watching a fictive audience view a film involves a good deal more than allusion, which is all it takes to yoke the conceptual space of a contemporary film to the symbolic world of classical cinema. Indeed, at the same time that these scenes enact and perform Barthes' theoretical move, they draw attention to the material moment of projection or viewing, to the reality of a particular and potentially heterogeneous audience, and to the physical instantiation of the film as film. Consider Erice: on one hand, the strictures of Francoist cinema force his signifying process to remain somewhat obscure, lest the political criticism that underlies much of the film be openly revealed. To use the tired metaphor: if film is a kind of writing, Erice addresses his audience in lacunae and aporias. But, at the same time, by inscribing the *Frankenstein* film into the fictional space of *Spirit of the Beehive*, Erice draws the audience's attention to the politically troubling viewing situation: a specific, particular, material, and historical reality; that is, within the viewing situation, we are presented with a heterogeneous assemblage of signs and material artifacts. If in the filmic space the characters in *Spirit of the*

44

Beehive view *Frankenstein* from the vantage of an isolated village in the immediate wake of the Spanish Civil War, then we should maintain awareness that in the cinematic space, Erice's Spanish audience views those characters from the vantage of the declining fascist state. Ironically, it is Ana's vision of the outcast monster figure who appears as a mobile spirit in the face of the isolation and immobility of the characters' bodies, held in place by the political reality of the Francoist regime.

In the early scenes of *Spirit of the Beehive*, the physical medium of film takes a leading role as the center of visual attention, even if dialog focuses more on the content of the film-within-the-film. After watching the traveling van wind through town, a crowd gathers around as the impresarios unload the film canisters and equipment. A woman announces the film and the going rates, inscribing the filmic discourse into the discourse of economy. Then, the camera cuts to an interior shot of the community space where the film will be projected. The townsfolk enter, take their places, and chatter amongst themselves, effectively framing our reading of the film-within-the-film in terms of a specific audience. The projector starts and the camera cuts to the projection screen, using tight framing such that the screen takes up the entire filmic field. The visuals of the familiar *Frankenstein* introduction begin before the audio, drawing attention to what Mary Anne Doane calls the "material heterogeneity" of film (321). The camera keeps focused on the projection screen until the introduction concludes,[2] at which time the scene cuts away to an exterior shot of Fernando (the father of the film's protagonists) working with his bees. In Oudart's scheme, *Spirit of the Beehive* establishes a fictive space that has a symbolic absence defined by the camera's point of view, but then sutures this absence by placing the images from the film-within-the-film in its place. In Dayan's reading of the suture, the film enacts ideological

closure through this process: the symbolic absence offers a moment when the unity of the

sequence of images is called into question, briefly offering an opportunity to interrogate the

ideological ground of intentions, material constraints, and historical context before closing this

symbolic absence with the film-within-the-film. But this reading is profoundly troubled, because

what appears on the screen in this scene is not simply any segment of film, but rather is the

famous introduction that addresses the audience directly, effectively ripping asunder the suture

which has just been established and creating an odd unity of symbolic spaces where the Absent

One in the first shot is superseded by the image of the projection, but then the film being

projected implies an Absent One whose subject position is that of the fictive audience.

Later, Fernando sits down in his office to read a newspaper, but the dialog from the

Frankenstein film still in-progress interrupts him.   To the audience, this occurs as a voice-off.

Fernando gets distracted and ultimately moves towards the window and out onto a small balcony,

where he contemplates the ongoing film-within-the-film. Once Fernando passes through the

door, we see his back on the other side of a translucent honeycomb-like window. We can assume

that he is looking towards the building where the screening is taking place, but in fact we are left

in question about what object in the fictive space can create a sense of closure for this voice-off

and Fernando's gaze. As Fernando stands there listening and looking, *Frankenstein* progresses

through the scenes in which Henry realizes that Fritz has provided him with a criminal brain.

Mary Anne Doane's work suggests that voice-off establishes a potentially paradoxical

relationship between audience and film. On one hand, voice-off threatens to "reveal the material

heterogeneity" of the film (Doane 321) – that is, it threatens to reveal the film as 1.) an illusion

born of the synchronic perception of an audio track and a rapid sequence of images (this is

especially significant in light of the brief audio malfunction at the beginning of the screening of *Frankenstein* in *Spirit of the Beehive*) 2.) a material instantiation on a physical substrate that includes both these sounds and these images 3.) hence, the product of human efforts which are also embedded in the material world, with all of its historical, political, and social determinants. On the other hand, the voice-off "constitutes a denial of the frame as a limit and an affirmation of the unity and homogeneity of the depicted space" (Doane 321). That is, the voice off in this case establishes the town as a unified space through which sound can travel, Fernando's home as a location in close proximity to the community center where the film is shown, and the fictional space as something that exceeds the narrow frame of the filmic field.   Despite these implications of the voice-off, Doane holds that a voice which is not "anchored by a represented body" is "uncanny" (324). Just as an establishing shot always implies an Absent One in the subject position implied by the point of view of the camera, a voice-off implies someone who is not represented in the filmic field.   Doane suggests that the power of the voice-off to establish unified and homogeneous space depends "on the knowledge that the character can easily be made visible by a slight reframing which would reunite the voice and its source" (324). In this case, the camera zooms in on Fernando's back as he stands just outside the door, but remains interior to the home while viewing Fernando on the home's exterior. Resultingly, there is no chance that the film will reframe to give us a glimpse of the building from which the dialog is emanating without a dramatic cut.   Indeed, the unresolved voice-off in this scene finds reinforcement in the denial of visual closure: rather than cutting to the object of Fernando's point of view, the camera instead cuts to an interior shot of the cinema/community building, where we see the audience slightly from the side and the back.   In a certain sense this settles the

47

symbolic tension established by the voice-off and the unresolved suture. In Dayan's reading of

the suture, it draws us back into the ideological construct of the film as a unified totality.

Inside the theater, the camera quickly focuses again to the projection screen. But in

contrast to earlier shots, the framing of the projection screen is more distant so that the physical

space of the cinema appears as part of the composition. In the film-within-the-film, the young

girl Maria appears on the screen, begging her father to stay home and play. Within the film-

within-the-film, the sequence of images progresses according to the conventional shot/reverse-

shot rhetoric; similarly, within the fictive space of *Spirit of the Beehive*, the camera cuts between

the face of Maria on the movie screen and the faces of Ana and Isabel, the film's protagonists

(who have been curiously absent up until this point, almost one-fifth through the film). Cutting

back to the film-within-the-film, Maria approaches the pond in which she will ultimately drown.

Then, back in the cinema, we view the faces of Ana and her peers, clearly troubled by the

hulking monster emerging from the brush. After another short segment from *Frankenstein,* we

again cut to the audience, this time to view the face of Isabel, who seems somewhat less

emotionally involved than Ana or her other peers, but nonetheless bites her lip in anticipation.

As Maria leads the monster to the edge of the lake and hands the monster a flower, the camera

cuts once more to the children in the audience, who now seem somewhat relieved. Ana in

particular appears fascinated that the monster is proving to be friendly with the little girl. In this

scene, the cut/reverse-cut/cut/reverse-cut rhythm creates an oscillation between the cinematic

symbolic space within *Spirit of the Beehive* and the filmic symbolic space enacted by

Frankenstein. One way of reading this would be to propose that this establishes an

unproblematic closure where the elements of Erice's film are tied (or, indeed, sutured) to the

film-within-the-film, creating a fictional totality. But the screening of *Frankenstein* troubles this totality: the constant awareness of the projection screen in this scene not only gives us access to Ana's perception of the film-within-the-film, but also forces reflection on the moment of viewing for the actual audience of *Spirit of the Beehive*. Moreover, since *Frankenstein* offers itself in pieces and segments for us to reconstruct, it is not at all unlike the educational Don Jose model in Erice's film or the monster himself in the film-within-the-film: a meditation on hypermediacy, an occasion for us to re-experience the enchantment of cinema both on the face and through the eyes of a child, but also an occasion to develop awareness that we are not children, that it is not 1940, and that our adult relation to cinema is not one of simple immersion in transparent immediacy, but rather emerges from the give-and-take play of our awareness of hypermediacy and our identification with the filmic field.

Film critic Chris Darke describes the complex emotional dynamic in this "cinephilic moment": "*we* don't see what *she* sees, but her *seeing* it. We watch Ana's face itself becoming a screen upon which the external signs of an internal epiphany are being played out, a revelation the child will carry into the world beyond the cinema" (152)[3]. Darke goes on to quote Erice, who claims that this scene was quasi-documentary in nature, this really was Ana's first screening of *Frankenstein*, and the reactions recorded are the authentic reactions of the actress Ana Torrent as the film-within-the-film unfolded (153). Extrapolating from this, Darke suggests that in this moment, "the revelation of cinema's potential to disclose something real is conveyed, transmuted via the screen of Ana's face" (153). But *Spirit of the Beehive* problematizes this notion of the real. One one hand, Erice makes the choice to use the young actresses' real names within the fictional space and he makes claims about the naturalistic approach he used to "direct" the young

49

actresses; on the other hand, the "real" here is very much constructed: the expressions we see in these cuts are almost certainly the best moments, with many feet of unused footage left on the editing-room floor. Moreover, we have little reason to believe that the expressions we see are well-correlated with the scenes to which they were originally reactions. In a certain way, the apparent "reality" of these cuts is really a rhetorical move that confirms the internal consistency and symbolic unity of the fiction while obscuring the historical, material reality that underlies the scene. Indeed, Darke's reading of this scene (with which I do not substantially disagree) depends on the film's success maintaining a sense of transparent immediacy even as it offers hypermediate codes. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this sequence is that Erice chooses not to show the famed conclusion to this drowning scene in *Frankenstein*. This helps maintain an innocent and non-violent image for the monster, even as Erice acknowledges later that the monster throws the girl in the water when Ana and Isabel discuss the film and still later when Erice stages Ana's nightmare-fantasy of her father threateningly approaching her by a lake in the woods while wearing full monster makeup. Surely this is not an accidental exclusion. To the extent that the James Whale film is familiar to most cinema-goers, we can expect that it will be noticed. In fact, I would argue that it is precisely this exclusion that reveals the constructed (that is: symbolic) nature of the scene over-and-against the claim that Erice's production technique somehow allows an authentic disclosure of reality. Just as this decision reveals the film as a symbol system and the scene as a representation featuring actresses manipulated to behave a certain way for the camera as a step toward generating a coherent narrative, it also serves a thematic function: we leave the fictive cinema within the *Spirit of the Beehive* at a moment when Ana is closely identified with Maria and when Ana's curiosity about the monster is not yet

tainted with confusion about why the monster kills the girl. In this way, although within the fictive space we can infer that Ana sees the whole film, within the filmic field, we are denied any real sense of closure; instead, Ana's world remains yoked to the symbolic world of James Whale's film.

We might contrast this with a scene in Bill Condon's *Gods and Monsters.*   Here Boone (played by Brendan Fraser) sits in a bar with a drinking buddy, a bartender with whom he has recently had a sexual relationship, and a third man named Harry, who also works at the bar. Boone has convinced the others to watch *Bride of Frankenstein* when it comes on the television later that evening; meanwhile, they are engaged in somewhat bawdy bar talk.   The rhetoric of the scene leading up to this viewing is interesting insofar as it depends on well-timed banter to simultaneously explore Boone's personal growth as a result of his still infantile relationship with James Whale, the confrontational dynamic between Boone and the bartender, and the bar flies' apparently correct speculation about the nature of Whale's interest in Boone. No one appears to consult any sort of timepiece. This banter culminates at an obvious climax and Boone, feeling frustrated, says, "We're watching the damn movie, Harry. Okay, we're gonna' watch the movie." They turn on the television and, coincidentally, they have tuned in exactly in time to catch the opening title screen. This coincidence serves to undermine our awareness of the specific qualities of television (i.e. it is not a DVD player that begins the movie on demand); but at the same time, we view the film-within-the-film on an ancient television receiver, creating the same sort of hypermediate framing used in *Spirit of the Beehive* to maintain awareness of the film-within-the-film as something other than the fictional cinematic space.

Unlike Erice's presentation of filmgoers watching film, Condon's scene relies on snappy and clearly scripted *repartee.* Much as in Erice's scene, Condon relies on quick cuts between the film and the viewers to establish semantic dialog between the actions taking place in the film-within-the-film and the reactions of the characters in the framing film, whose opinions are far from homogeneous. And while Erice's characters subtly demonstrate their individual reactions to the film -- and according to Darke, this is simultaneously a representation within the fictive space of the film and a documentary of the actual reactions of the actors to the film -- Condon's script emphasizes the profound differences in reception among the various characters. Once the film-within-the-film is underway, *Gods and Monsters* cuts to James Whale's home, where he also is watching the movie on television. The effect of this is to establish a unity of time between Whale's experience and Boone's. This is emphasized by the fact that Whale's live-in nurse is demonstrably underwhelmed by the film, while Boone attempts to defend it against the accusation that it is unintentionally corny. (Ironically, later Whale acknowledges that it is intentionally humorous.) In addition to the unity between Whale and Boone, there is an implied unity between the characters and the audience of Condon's film: reactions are heterogeneous; within the same cinematic space, audiences may have a plurality of reaction. And, moreover, the ideal of the single silent and immobile viewer is undermined by the reality that film viewing is social both within a single viewing space and across the many circumstances in which a film may be broadcast or projected.

Though Condon offers a sense of closure by showing a sequence of scenes that serve as synecdoche for the whole of *Bride of Frankenstein*, Whale drifts off into reverie after its conclusion, either remembering or imagining the set of *Bride*, suggesting a similar symbolic link

to the film-within-the-film that we have already demonstrated between *Frankenstein* and Erice's

Ana.   Moreover, this reverie requires that Condon stage actors *as* actors filming a scene the

audience has just viewed[4].   So, while *Gods and Monsters* offers a decidedly more conclusive-

feeling movie-viewing episode, it does so through clearly artificial devices like unrealistic

timing, highly scripted dialog, and a dramatically abridged version of the film-within-the-film.

Equally, the sense of hypermediacy evoked by these devices is elevated as we slip into Whale's

consciousness after the end of the film-within-the-film: although it is clearly a very romanticized

view of the Hollywood set of the classic era, Whale's fantasy sequence still draws attention to

actors as actors, set as set, and film as film, effectively encouraging awareness of the ideological

origins that Dayan claims are denied by the very conditions for filmic enunciation.

Indeed, even Erice's Isabel knows that "everything in the movies is fake, it's all a trick,"

but the question is: what is the nature of the trick? In Dayan's analysis, those codes which

enable sequences of shots to engage in semantic exchange also trick viewers into ignoring the

ideological grounding of a film, luring the viewer into acceptance of the fictive space without

interrogating its origins. Dayan argues that this ensures that the spectator can maintain pleasure,

which he proposes is "dependent upon his identification with the visual field" and "is interrupted

when he perceives the frame" (115). Dayan's view opposes this pleasure of identification with

freedom:

> the system of the suture systematically encroaches upon the spectator's freedom
>
> by interpreting, indeed remodeling his memory. The spectator is torn to pieces,
>
> pulled in opposite directions . . . a retroactive process organizes the signified . . .

an anticipatory process organizes the signifier . . .[and] the spectator loses access to the present. (116-117)

But, as has been suggested in Oudart's analysis of Bresson and demonstrated by this reading of *Spirit of the Beehive*, when we move beyond "classical cinema" narrowly defined, the representational system turns inward on itself and begins to develop reflexivity toward the material reality of media and their origins. So, Rothman is correct to criticize Dayan's view for suggesting that the suture is the only mode of enunciation available within cinema, especially when it is defined by simple cut/reverse-cut logic[5]. After the era of classical cinema, some films maintain a high degree of reflexivity, allowing hypermediacy and transparent immediacy to interweave. In such films, the conception of the suture that suggests that immediacy always occludes the ideological dangers of hypermediacy in the name of enunciation appears inadequate; in these films, representations which at first appear as coherent fictive totalities slip into a state of playful hypermediacy that simultaneously allows the film to generate semantic sense between sequenced cuts and to enact an awareness of the ideological conditions of production, dissemination, and consumption.

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1   Mark Hansen examines complex forms of "haptic interactions" with New Media art in his *New Philosophy for New Media*, but even simple hypertext fictions require a degree of tactile or haptic interaction through the mouse-governed interface. It is true that books have a tactile interface (and even that fetishization of this interface constitutes a major area of critique of the emerging eBook readers) and that some books (especially scholarly critical editions) require complex uses of this interface, but most books require a relatively limited set of physical interactions with the book; moreover, these physical interactions have been understood to be

non-essential to the experience of the book by copyright insofar as the abstracted words in a book are subject to intellectual property protection while physical instantiations of the book are not.   In contrast, the physical interactions with the interface are crucial to experiencing *Patchwork Girl*.

2   While it may very well be the case that Spanish-language versions of *Frankenstein* used an idiosyncratic translation for the dubbing of the introduction and that Erice is simply representing the film as it appeared to Spanish audiences, it is worth noting the dramatic difference between the English audio track to the original *Frankenstein* and the version shown in *Spirit of the Beehive*. In the English-language version, the announcer concludes his comments with the warning that sensitive audiences should consider leaving, while in the English subtitle translation of the Spanish-language version in *Spirit of the Beehive*, the announcer instead concludes by encouraging the audience not to take the film too seriously. Thus, the version of *Frankenstein* in *Spirit of the Beehive* encourages awareness of the film as fiction from the outset, while the English-language version of the classic film instead suggests that the film's realism may be threatening. But, in both cases, the announcer frames the fiction in terms of the audience's affective states, rather than in terms of its own formal unity.

3   We might contrast Darke's account of cinepilia with Laura Mulvey's criticism of voyeuristic-scopophilia. Mulvey speaks primarily to Hollywood genres which seek to elicit visual pleasure through the objectification of the female body under the totalizing eye of the male look; she argues that traditional narrative film subordinates the looks of the camera materially recording the images and the audience watching the film to the looks of characters at other characters within the fictive space, but that the pleasure of looking on the objectified

female form "endangers the unity of the diagesis and bursts through the world of illusion as an intrusive, static, one dimensional-fetish" (721). She argues that moves by radical filmmakers which "Free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics [and] passive detachment" tend to highlight the extent to which film has constructed the audience as a voyeuristic male subjectivity (722). So, the techniques we've been exploring in Erice's film -- the complication of the suture through hypermediate citation, the identification of the audience with a female protagonist who also has limited agency due to her youth, and the emphasis on the "material hetereogeneity" of both the medium itself and the cinematic space tend to work against the voyeuristic strain in narrative film, even as we accept Darke's contention that it represents the cinephilic moment.

4   While I use "Condon" and "Erice" as shorthand, this scene demonstrates the profoundly collaborative nature of filmmaking, which is, in fact, part of the ideological ground obscured or contained by the functioning of Dayan's suture.

5   I say this even as I acknowledge Heath's contention that Rothman appears to miss the point that the cut/reverse-cut sequence is simply one example of the suture operating to contain the potentially hypermediate formal aspects of film, restoring the film to a state of relative immediacy.

Chapter 3: Suture and Scar in Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*

The concept of the suture in film studies finds in the *Frankenstein* narratives particularly powerful resonance, not just as a result of the obvious pun, but because the seams in the monster's body (or monsters' bodies, as we will see in the present chapter) provide a figure for understanding how heterogeneous parts find meaningful assemblage not into a unified whole, but rather into a body that bears witness to disjunctions, lacunae, aporias, and gaps. This "body" functions both at the level of works, as we have seen in our readings of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's novel and in our analyses of *Spirit of the Beehive* and other Frankenstein-appropriating films, and at the level of text, as we are deploying the concept in this paper to indicate the "body" of works indexed by the various images and tropes associated with Frankenstein and his creation. The suture as a system of enunciation enacts a sense of closure on the ideological field, reducing awareness of the material and historical realities that appear beyond the fictive field; on the other hand, the suture leaves scars, which serve as testaments to the continuing presence of these gaps and open onto the possibility -- and, in the case of these texts, necessity -- of interrogating those gaps in order to map some of the available entry and exit points for the construction of pragmatically useful and aesthetically pleasing texts from these heterogeneous elements.

As we have seen, the suture's usefulness is diminished (although not eliminated) when it is considered strictly in terms of the cut/reverse-cut logic to which it has sometimes been applied by critics and theorists of film. However, the frequent use of oblique angles during cut/reverse-cut sutures enables us to use this simple case of filmic grammar to sketch our approach to

Jackson's hypertextual fiction. This oblique angle serves as the mark or scar left by the suture that, even at as it closes the filmic field upon itself, leaves an indication of the "outside" to the filmic work.   But when considered more broadly as the means by which a filmic work recuperates from the wounds left when the heterogeneous elements of film-as-medium are joined into a (temporary, strategic) artistic whole, the suture reveals itself to be a concept easily re-deployed into the readings of other media forms. In particular, we have suggested at least three deployments of the suture of use to this critique. First, the simple system by which a cut/reverse-cut sequence finds closure through the placement of a fictive character in the position of the empty subject position of "The Absent One" who threatens to draw attention to the film as an ongoing construction; more generalizably, this manifestation represents the means through which the work creates closure as it moves from one segment or sequence to another, helping to create the illusion of a continuous fictive space independent from the material fields through which the film is produced, disseminated, and received.   Second, the suture represents the analogous system through which a film contains the troubling or uncanny relationships between its disparate parts or codes, for instance when when an irrational-seeming voice-over serves to unify the fictive space when the film cuts to the source of this voice; more generally, this represents the way that a work contains the contesting semiotic codes that it deploys, folding them into a media artifact that hangs together, even if it fails to acheive formal unity.   Third, the suture represents the means through which a film that deploys citations and quotations from other films prevents these intertexts from collapsing the fictive field, or rather puncturing it and allowing the material, historical, or ideological outside of the text to come flowing in.

In this reading of Shelley Jackson's hypertext fiction *Patchwork Girl*, I will explore how the suture can be extended from the realm of film theory to help account for the interpretive gaps opened up between lexias or elements of the hypertext, between the contested semiotic codes deployed by the fiction (sequences of grammatically related words and sentences, representational illustrations, elements of the computer interface, and conceptual maps provided by Jackson within the Storyspace environment), between the citations, quotations, and intertexts that Jackson deploys using a variety of strategies, and finally as a mobile symbol within the thematic and fictive space itself. In these readings, I will tend to focus more closely on the scars left behind by the suture than on the sense of interpretive closure; even so, this approach will necessitate analysis of how the text flirts with a sense of closure or transparent immediacy, even as this flirtation is tied up inextricably with the hypermediate functions that draw attention to the medium-as-medium and the embeddedness of this medium in particular material and historical contexts. While *Patchwork Girl* shows many of the characteristics of first-generation electronic hypertextual fictions by relying on relatively simple linking structures dependent primarily on a windowed text interface, hence eschewing the video, animation, and audio components that have become more popular as the technological limitations of the home personal computer have been extended, the use of hand-drawn images and conceptual maps within this implementation of the Storyspace environment suggests some of the same concerns about the uncanny experience of multiple competing sign systems that Mary Anne Doane points to as a characteristic of the combination of moving images and sound in film. Given that this provides our departure point from *Spirit of the Beehive*, it is here that this analysis of *Patchwork Girl* will begin.
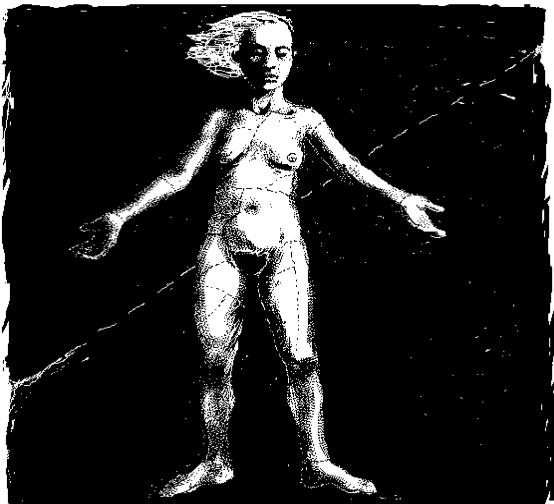
Illustration 1: Opening Screen

The opening screen of *Patchwork Girl* functions both as a decorative frontispiece and as an illustrative exhibit which recurs throughout the text in various forms. This hand-drawn ink-and-paper illustration offers an image of the figure we will later identify as the *Patchwork Girl*, the "bride" that Victor Frankenstein aborts after considering the dangers of bringing another (especially female) monster into the world (see *Illustration 1*). Her nude body is traversed with dotted lines that indicate sutures, while the image itself is traversed with a white dotted line that forms a permeable slash mark across the body. This implies (as N. Katherine Hayles has observed) the possibility of a three-dimensionality to the image through the suggestion of folding[1]; Hayles suggests that this generates awareness of the implied three-dimensionality of the stacks of windows that characterize the interface ("Flickering Connectivities" 26), although it is interesting to attend to the fact that it also draws attention to this illustration as something imported from another medium: folding a piece of paper is unsurprising, but given current technologies, folding a screen certainly is a surprising conception. In this way, the dotted line-as-fold provides not just a sense of awareness of the medium, but rather the kind of rich hypermediacy suggested by Bolter and Grusin to be characteristic of remediation that interweaves awareness of a particular medium with awareness of cross-media appropriation. Hayles also draws attention to the association of sewing and writing that underwrite many of the

60

lexias of the text. She point out that this association helps trouble normative gender roles which have tended to assign sewing as a "feminine" endeavor, while writing (especially the writing of fictions) has been dominated by "masculine" models (33); given this, we should also observe in advance of engaging the rest of the text that the dotted line provides an iconic way to represent sewing both in the sense of fabrics (that is: woven texts) and in the sense of suture[2]. The diagonal slash then serves as a metonym for the slash that Jackson will insert between "Mary" and "Shelley": the figures of Mary Shelley will be joined to the figure of the author (Shelley Jackson) through the process of sewing the text together, but during the process, the an incomplete (dotted) barrier of scars will bear witness to how the disjunctions between these subjectivities are created through time, space, and discursive traditions; the fact that this dotted line crosses the body of the Patchwork Girl suggests the uneasy shifts between first-person narrators that structure Jackson's interrogation of unified subjectivity: at times it is clearly Jackson's voice that writes, while at others (in particular, in the "journal" segment of the narrative), it is the fictional voice of Mary Shelley; in other regions of the narrative, it is the voice of the Patchwork Girl who writes, while at others it is a multiplicity of voices cut-up and pasted together somewhat in the style of Kathy Acker or William Burroughs

Terry Harpold offers some insight into an intertextual reference for this opening image in his *Ex-foliations: Reading Machines and the Upgrade Path*. He suggests that the open hands gesture suggests the *orans* posture of early Christian art and some contemporary religious practice (5.37). While most representations of the *orans* posture feature the hands in a somewhat more elevated positions than that represented on this frontispiece, the similarities are striking and certainly resonate with postures often struck during liturgical services and in both religious and

secular art.   In Harpold's reading of this posture, it "signals the supplicant's willingness to take on the wounds of faith," particularly recalling Christ displaying the wounds he sustained on the cross (5.37). Harpold observes that the Patchwork Girl is not only nearly ressurrected from the grave by Victor Frankenstein, but that within *Patchwork Girl* Mary Shelley herself intervenes and sews/writes the girl back into life (5.38). The Christ myth, of course, resonates particularly strongly with the Prometheus myth: Prometheus's liver regenerates every day while he suffers for providing an almost Gnostic Christlike service to humankind.   In this way, the resurrection suggested by this posture not only transgresses the normative boundaries of the human body, but also shows how resurrection indicates the "crossings of fiction and metafiction" that characterize the text's complex relationship to the larger *Frankenstein* body of works (i.e. "text" in Barthes' sense) and to itself (5.38). Moreover, Harpold observes, the Patchwork Girl's nudity and sexual openness suggests the extent to which the this opening screen encourages reading of issues related to gender and sexuality from the outset (5.39). Given this, it is worth noting that Eve has been represented in a somewhat similar posture in a variety of art works, including Albrecht Dürer's engraving Adam and Eve (1504); this association of the bride-to-be with Eve is precisely what motivated Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's plot to dismember the bride-in-progress. Feminist readings of Shelley's *Frankenstein* that attempt to see in both the (male) monster and in Victor Frankenstein suppressed images of femininity often occlude this crucial detail.

Indeed, although the image appears to indicate a sense of gravity through upright orientation and the suggestion of flexed leg muscles, this position also evokes the laying out of bodies that proved central to Bette London's reading of the construction of masculinity in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.   In London's argument, we will recall, the positions of monstrosity and

62

uncontrolled materiality circulate back-and-forth between male and female characters in the plot such that masculinity is revealed to be constructed as an opposition to femininity, rather than as a neutral and privileged position (256); in this reading, Frankenstein laid out before Walton on his death bed recapitulates Elizabeth on her death bed, just as the bride-in-process lying before Frankenstein just before he aborts this second monstrous birth recapitulates the monster lying on his own creation bed. So, the Patchwork Girl's position in the opening *her* lexia inscribes the character into the contested framework of gender and sexuality that the critical apparatus around Mary Shelley's novel has generated.

Illustration 2: Storyspace Map: ThisDoc

From the very beginning, however, *Patchwork Girl* offers a multiplicity of paths, a plurality of entry points: along with the frontispiece (her) that we have just analyzed, the software also opens up a map that is in some ways closer to- and more aware of- the machine which underlays the presentation of the narrative. Where the 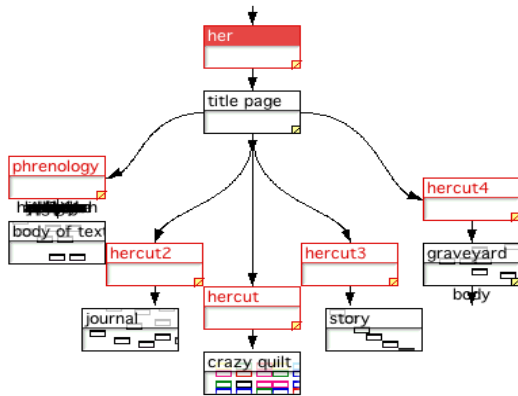*her* lexia (that is: the opening screen) offers a scanned image of a pen drawing that itself represents a body very much in the analogue world (if within the fictional field), this second (*Storyspace Map:ThisDoc*) map provides a simple flow chart indicating the general topology of the narrative through the digital "space" established by Jackson (see *Illustration 2*). In this map, the topology of of the narrative is demonstrably similar to that of the *her* lexia, which itself provides the "head" of this topological body. Given this near

homology between the *Storyspace Map* window and the *her* lexia, one disjunction seems particularly glaring: while the Patchwork Girl image in *her* features an ordinary complement of limbs, with the *phrenology* drawing (which leads to the *body of text* lexias) as the figure's right hand, the *hercut4* drawing (which leads to the *graveyard* lexias) as her left, the *hercut2* drawing (which leads to the *journal* lexias) in place of the right leg, and the *hercut3* drawing (which leads to the *story* lexias), there is a fifth appendage.   This map representation of the *hercut* drawing (which leads to the *crazy quilt* lexias) proceeds from between the two "legs" of the map, suggesting an affiliation between this segment of the text and gender and sexuality issues, an observation we will explore in greater depth in a moment.

P A T C H W O R K   G I R L ;

OR,

A MODERN MONSTER

————————————

BY MARY/SHELLEY, & HERSELF

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

————————————

(sources)

Illustration 3: Title Page

Clicking anywhere within the *her* lexia changes the window to a new lexia, *title page* (see *Illustration 3*), that remediates the print title page from the 1818 publication of *Frankenstein* (see *Illustration 4*). This action also moves the highlighted frame in the *Storyspace Map* window to the *title page*, acting as a sort of tutorial on the relationship between the text and the map. While obviously remediating the title page of a crucial printed edition of *Frankenstein* and illuminating the derivative aspect of
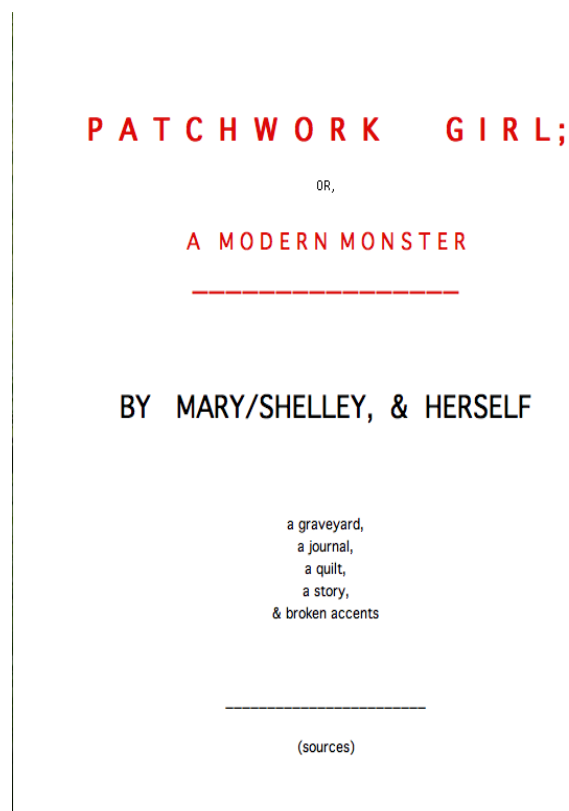
Jackson's hypertext in relation to Shelley's book, this antechamber to Jackson's narrative also draws attention to the specific formal qualities and capabilities of the computer screen which differentiate it from the paper on which Mary Shelly's work was printed.   Perhaps more importantly, using a title that shifts focus to the creation rather than the creator, Jackson draws attention to the extent to which 20th Century adaptations of the Frankenstein narrative tend to focus more on the monster than on the scientist, often going so far as to transfer the creator's name onto the creation. This suggests that Jackson's work will be more focused on the the contested identity of the constructed subject than on the processes through which subjectivity is generated. Similar significance can be attributed to the substitution of subtitles: "A Modern Monster" replaces "A Modern Prometheus"; again, this story will not focus itself on the experience of the monstrous creator, although Jackson will speak through a fictionalized Shelley's mouth. Instead, Jackson will use Shelley's figure as a way to explore the competing identities within the Patchwork Girl. Moreover, though it repeats the term "Modern," clearly the import of this word is quite different at the end of the 20th Century than at the beginning of the 19th: indeed, Frankenstein's creation has attained status as synedoche for modernity, with the attendant notions of an unfulfilled (and unfulfillable) desire for unifying master narratives, anxiety towards the fragmentation and transgression of the Cartesian subject, the mixture of fear and desire that characterizes the articulation of the material body with technology, and ethical and metaphysical gaps generated by the passing of a transcendent God as an organizing principle for society.
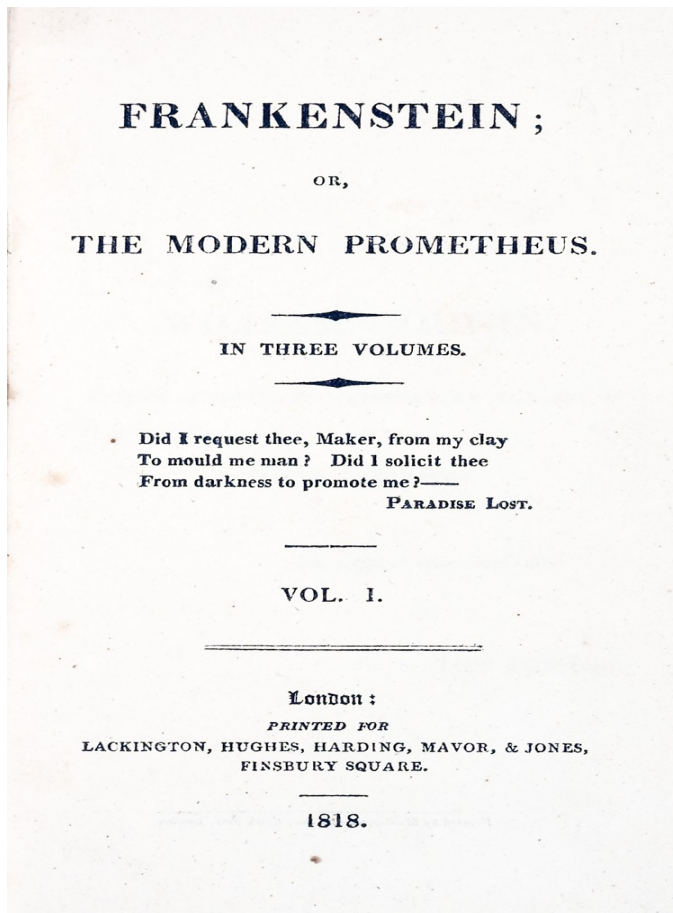
Illustration 4: Title Page to Mary Shelley's novel

Having already spoken to the attribution of the hypertext and the use of a slash to indicate the tendentious relationship between Shelley Jackson and Mary Shelley as originators of the hypertext, it is worth noting three things here. First, the title page acknowledges not just this slash as a relationship between the two Shelleys (Mary and Jackson, not Mary and Percy), but also connotes (especially in the context of the mid-1990s, when this hypertext was published) "slash fiction," which is to say fan fiction wherein amateur authors insert their own desires into existing texts by writing typically pornographic episodes into the interstices within the more mainstream work. These interstices are akin to the gaps between the parts of the Patchwork Girl's body, the gaps tied by the suture in film, the interpretive gaps between lexias within this fiction. Again, even on the title page, issues of gender and sexuality are implicitly evoked. Second, this alone evokes the "border war" between fiction and metafiction. This "border war" provides a figure for the border wars between the fragmented elements of subjectivity that become the crucial philosophical turning-points for the fiction. The addition of "& Herself" makes this point quite

explicit. And third, the 1818 title page is notable because it lacks Mary Shelley's name; indeed, according to Charles E. Robinson, the 1818 edition was published anonymously, a fact that contributes to the complex relationships of attribution and authorial control that I have explored in Chapter 1; looking at the 1818 title page, we note that instead of authorial attribution, there is a proto-Existential quotation from Adam in *Paradise Lost*, one of the significant intertexts in *that* novel. In this way *Patchwork Girl* manipulates Gilbert and Gubar's critical apparatus around *Frankenstein*,-- which suggests that the novel is a feminist re-writing of Milton's poem -- implying that in a certain sense, the original *Frankenstein* was slash fiction as well. Where the 1818 title page ends with publication information at asserts intellectual property rights over the book (even as the page fails to identify the author), Jackson's title page concludes with a link to some of her sources.

While it is unnecessary to mention every source on Jackson's *sources* lexia/page, she does make sure to provide academic-style citations for the elements of her cut-up passages in the *crazy quilt* section of her hypertext, including obvious intertexts like Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto," L. Frank Baum's *Patchwork Girl*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* and less obvious intertexts like the Storyspace manual. Besides these academic-style citations, she also mentions that "Mary's journal is entirely apocryphal," which is not to say the same thing as "fictional." Harpold and others have pointed out that Jackson provides an incomplete citation for an article in *Elle Magazine* and separately mentions an unnamed source for her biological meditations on chimerical genetics: "facts concerning modern biology's understanding of the multiple nature of the living organism are taken from a book leafed through in a bookstore, title and author unknown." This suggests the transgressive nature

of her hypertext, but moreover indicates that the kind of multiple and distributed subjectivities

engendered through slash fiction-writing, hypertextual fiction generally, and the cut-up method

tend to undermine the unitary Enlightenment subject that underwrites intellectual property; while

Hayles does not address this *sources* lexia specifically, her use of Mark Rose's scholarship on the

origin of copyright as a counterpoint to her analysis of *Patchwork Girl* is intended to draw

attention precisely to this aspect of Jackson's work (Hayles "Flickering Connectivities," 57). We

will be returning to this line of argumentation when we examine the *crazy quilt* section of

Patchwork Girl, but for now, I will return to analysis of how Jackson's hypertext sutures

contesting codes from several media -- print, born-digital, hand-drawn, photocopied, and

computer-mapped -- while drawing attention to the resulting scars and thus maintaining

reflexivity towards the material and non-fictive field.   The sources lexia is a dead-end in the text,
with no links moving to other lexias.

From the title page, the reader/user is offered access to the same sections of the hypertext seen on the *Storyspace Map*: "a graveyard," "a journal," "a quilt," "a story," and "broken accents." This last link leads to the phrenology image and ultimately to the group of lexias entitled "body of text." When the user clicks on "a graveyard," the *hercut4* image appears

Illustration 5: hercut 4

as a lexia (see *Illustration 5*). In this image, the frontispiece/*her* image has been cut into seven parts and chaotically re-arranged so as to appear dismembered. White dotted lines separate the various parts of the image. This rather transparently suggests the violence of Victor Frankenstein's decision to destroy the incomplete bride. In the lower left quadrant, the reader is assured that this is an acceptable entry point to the text itself by the roman numeral "I"; this, of course, suggests the starting point for the project of assembling such a monster as the Patchwork Girl: a place with dead bodies. Towards the top right of the image, a hand-drawn arrow points either at the crotch area of the drawing, or alternatively at the upper left most element of the image, which appears to be a partial quotation from the Storyspace manual. Since this manual is for creators of Storyspace hypertexts, not users, this fragment suggests the slippages between a classic view of authorial control, the perspective of fan fiction writers, and the significant control ceded to the reader/user in terms of sequencing and interpretation by the willing hypertext author. By clicking anywhere within this image, the first lexia (*graveyard)* suggests a relationship between this cut-up image of the Patchwork Girl and the fragment of the Storyspace manual: "I am buried here. You can resurrect me, but only piecemeal. If you want to see the whole, you will have to sew me together yourself."   From the beginning, then, this hypertext announces that the view of the body, the plot, and the subject it will provide will be fragmentary and that it is only through the work of the reader/user that something satisfying can be generated. As a framing device, this lexia points at the question of closure that Hayles picks up from J. Yellowlees Douglas: if the text does not progress linearly, is designed in such a way to include occasionally frustrating repetitions, and offers an exhaustible number of lexias, but a nearly inexhaustible number of sequences through which these lexias can be navigated, what is the

69

equivalent to "finishing" the hypertext?   As we will see, this is one of the crucial questions

within *Patchwork Girl*, as the decision to stop reading must be generated not from within the

hypertext, but by bringing the material field of reception to bear on the decisions which guide the

flow of lexias.   Indeed, the path through the *graveyard* is circuitous, describing various unsavory

aspects of digging and the assemblage of organs and tissues, but often offering repetitive and

circular links -- and, perhaps, more importantly, offering links that bring the reader/user back to

the opening screen *her.*

The next option on the title page, "a journal," offers another look at the origins of the Patchwork Girl, while subtly shifting the emphasis also to the origins of *Patchwork Girl*-as-fiction. The lexia that first appears, *hercut2*, offers a similarly cut-up vision of the opening illustration, but without the interjected portion of the Storyspace manual, the directional arrow, or the
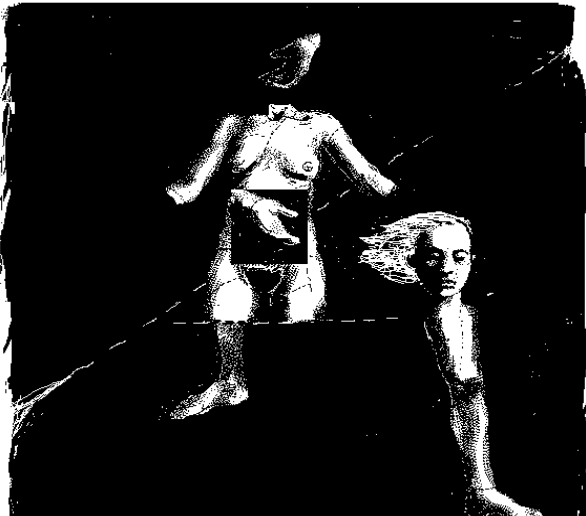

Illustration 6: hercut2

reassuring roman numeral. In this drawing, there are fewer dotted lines and the placement of the

various parts appears somewhat more intentional: the right hand appears in the place of the

head, while the left hand is superimposed over the intestines (or, perhaps, the womb); the middle

of the right leg is missing, while the left leg has been dismembered from the body and appears

below the decapitated head (see *Illustration 6*). The first lexia generated by clicking on this

image, *my walk*, offers a narrative from the perspective of Mary Shelley, rather convincingly written in her voice.   The narrative unfolds in a novelistic vein as the user/reader clicks through the available lexias; in short, we learn of Mary's re-creation of the female monster, the female monster's subsequent escape and return, the sexual relationship that emerges between monster and creator, and one of the most striking images within the text: Shelley cuts off a portion of her skin and grafts it to the Patchwork Girl. These passages (which can only reminds us of pages, given their length and written style) start to unfold the relationship between "writing" and "sewing" that Hayles and other critics have noted to be a central thematic in the narrative:

> I had made her, writing deep into the night by candlelight, until the tiny black letters blurred into stitches and I began to feel I was sewing a great quilt, as the old women in town do night after night, looking dolefully out their windows from time to time toward the light in my own window and imagining my sins while their thighs tremble under the heavy body of the quilt heaped across their laps, and their strokes grow quicker than machinery and tight enough to score deep creases in the cloth. I have looked with reciprocal coolness their way, not wondering what stories joined the fragments in their workbaskets. (*written*)

Writing the monster here becomes transposed with sewing a quilt (providing the basis for the link between L. Frank Baum's *Patchwork Girl of Oz*, who is a living quilt of different pieces of fabric, and Mary Shelley's female monster); the affiliation of sewing with femininity here in undeniable, but it is interesting to see how non-normative sexuality sets the fictional Mary Shelley apart from the old women of the town, who simultaneously "look dolefully" and "imagine [her] sins" (presumably with reference to the historical Mary Godwin, who lived with

71

the married Percy as an adulteress during the composition of *Frankenstein,* and who acquiesced to Percy's belief in open relationships); this imagination associates itself with the weight of the quilt, but also with their trembling thighs, suggesting the voyeuristic nature of their looks. Moreover, as "their strokes grow quicker than machinery," this voyeuristic imagination is linked with a the tension between the manual and low-technology means of stitching and the almost seamless articulation with the machinery of the sewing machine that provided much of the early context for the Industrial Revolution (a kind of Promethean Age) that Mary Shelley's novel critiques. Unlike the opening page of the *graveyard* segment, then, *hercut2* image remains at odds with the text that follows -- only feeble attempts are made to connect this image with Mary Shelley's journal. For instance, when the Patchwork Girl's "left leg jerked as if it would flee alone if need be" when Mary Shelley approaches, it might be seen to lend some sense to the placement of the head atop the left leg in the opening image of this portion of the hypertext (*she stood*). Even so, Mary Shelley's journal functions in as a remarkably self-contained component in *Patchwork Girl*, is relatively devoid of the disorienting circular and repetitive linking characteristic of the *graveyard*, and flows in a fashion that befits the sequential nature of a journal. As a journal, this section simultaneously recalls the journal of Victor Frankenstein, from which his monster learns about his own origins and the journalistic letters of Robert Walton, which make the narrative available to Saville and, ultimately, the outside world.

In much the same way that journals tell the story to the monster, of the monster, and through the monster in *Frankenstein*, the *journal* section may be characterized by a strange meta-authorial slide from the unified voice of Mary in *secrets* to the voice of the Patchwork Girl herself in the subsequent lexias *mary, surgery*, and beyond: the grafting of Mary's skin onto the

Patchwork Girl is told from the Patchwork Girl's perspective, even as it is framed by the words of Mary (in *secrets*) which indicate that her hope is that by undergoing this operation, the Patchwork Girl will speak in part from Mary's perspective as well. On this, the Patchwork Girl comments: "The graft took, the bit of skin is still a living pink, and so I remember when I was Mary, and how I loved a monster, and became one. I bring you my story, which is ours" (*us*). Within the *Storyspace Map*, this portion of the story (told by the Patchwork Girl) appears as part of the group *story*, demonstrating the permeable membrane that separates each of the sections of the hypertext.   Since there are many paths through the hypertext, I will now return to the "torso" of the story's topology, to approach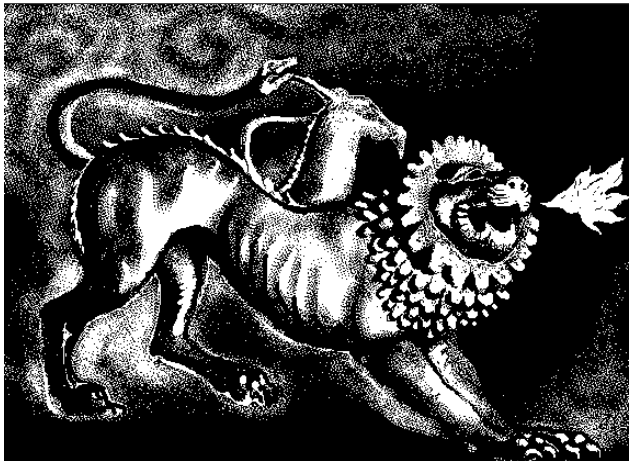 the *story* section anew, attending again to how *Patchwork Girl* deploys multiple media forms to represent and complicate the unfolding plot.

Illustration 7: Chimera Image

Departing from the *title page*, the link to "a story" opens up the *hercut3* lexia, which represents the same image as *hercut2*, except that it has been transformed using the negative image function on a photocopy machine. Additionally, a dotted pen line appears to indicate motion between the severed left wrist and the left hand, which is still located in the position of the head. From the right wrist, a thin pen-like line is used to emphasize what appears to be photocopier noise, creating a spiraling shape to the figure's right (image-left, since the figure faces the reader/user). In this negative view, the pubic hair of the illustration appears as an absence of markings.   If the

user/reader clicks on the *hercut3* icon in the Storyspace Map, it is revealed that most of the inner structure of the *story* section is hidden by so-called guard fields, which are conditions that must be met before certain parts of the narrative become available. However, two lexias appear to be accessible immediately: a lexia entitled *chimera* and another entitled *notes*. The *notes* field simply offers a citation for the *chimera* lexia, which features an image of the Chimera of Arezzo (1558), a fire-breathing amalgam of lion, dragon, griffin, and serpent; again, this lexia appears to be a dead end, until further guard fields are lifted (see *Illustration 7*). Given this, it is best to return to the story begun within *the journal* for the purposes of attempting to provide a coherent view of how *Patchwork Girl* sutures the text to these two disparate images. Told from the perspective of the Patchwork Girl, the story indicates that she soon departs from Mary's company, to head to America[3] in a segment of the narrative labeled *seagoing* in the Storyspace map. The narrative focuses on the disjuncts between the various parts of the Patchwork Girl's anatomy (for instance, her intestines, which are a rather unhappy lot), as well as the means through which she failingly attempts to construct a lady-like identity through the collection of cultural identity markers including books, signs of femininity, and food items. While at sea, the Patchwork Girl encounters a transvestite named Chancy, who pretends to be a man in order to sail; at first the Patchwork Girl takes Chancy for a man, fantasizes about him, and engages in a sort of gender-role play hinging on his "belief that [the Patchwork Girl] could not possibly be a woman (was therefore a man), and the conviction that [the Patchwork Girl] could not possible be a man (and therefore had to be a woman)" (*guises*). These assertions circle around the Patchwork Girl's poor performance as a lady, but also around the cultural identity marker which is beyond her control: her unusual size. Chancy, for his part, seems not to care very much one

way or the other about the Patchwork Girl's gender affiliation. These chiasmae suggest the import of the reverse-color imagery of the opening illustration: a visual performance already made familiar now appears in its reverse; the marker of biological sex, as an absence. Equally, America is described as a "booming celebration of mechanical invention," its air "galvanized" -- so the transformation of the image which evokes either the negative function on a copy machine or the later possibilities of digital manipulation may find a parallel in the Patchwork Girl's technological vision of her new home (*america*).

In America, the *Patchwork Girl* finds company among spiritualists, suggesting that the world of the soul, which she presumes is closed to her, offers a sort of double (or inverse) world to that in which she travels. Curiously, Madame Q uses a particularly pertinent metaphor to describe her role as a supposed vessel for other spirits:

> '[...] When I go into my trance state, I the woman now speaking, am absent; I am physically dead, as the best doctors in the Americas assure me.
>
> 'I am not much different from a frog's leg, which an electrical current has caused to kick. I am kicking, kicking with the spirit of your husbands, your brothers.
>
> (*ghosts*)

By evoking the experiments of Galvani (or, perhaps, Erasmus Darwin), Jackson effectively also draws us into the scientific millieu that historically provided the proximate inspiration for Mary Shelley's speculation about the possibility of re-animating flesh.   But here the "electricity" which drives the re-animation is the existence of a spiritual world that both *Frankenstein* and especially *Patchwork Girl* go a long ways to complicate and draw into question.   Ultimately, this odd materialist re-writing of the spiritualist tradition resonates with the Patchwork Girl:

So, within each one f you there is at least one other entirely different you [...]

More accurately, there are many other you's [sic], each a different combination of

memories. These people exist.   they are complete, if not exactly present, lying in

potential in the buried places in the brain [....] We haunt the concrete world as

registers of past events, we are revenants. And we are haunted, by these ghosts of

the living, these invisible strangers who are ourselves. (*she goes on*)

For the Patchwork Girl, these ghosts are associated with the identities of those from whom her

parts have been taken; her subjectivity quite transparently appears before her own self-

consciousness as an assemblage: "There was a crowd, a whole gaggle of persons, competing for

the space occupied by my one limited body" (*lives & livers*). Her actions are guided by several

voices, much as the text itself speaks in several voices.

In a rather amusing episode, the Patchwork Girl's leg is severed, becomes a famous

curiosity on the daily tabloids, and then is given its own funeral, while she is affixed with a

wooden prosthetic; feeling that she is no longer whole, the Girl commits to sew her leg back on

(*a funeral*). In a substitution recalling the movement from the laying-out of Elizabeth to Victor,

from the Creation to its Bride-in-Progress, the Patchwork Girl digs up the baby's coffin in which

her foot has been buried and replaces it with her dead pet armadillo (*laid out*). These events

begin a sequence wherein the Patchwork Girl's various parts begin to express their individual

identities, or alternatively to separate into disparate parts, depending on how you traverse the

topology of the segment. As N. Katherine Hayles has argued, to hold the multiple narrative

strands still in the mind of the user/reader, the reader must appreciate the distributed, contested,

and fragmentary nature of her own subjectivity (13, 30). On the other hand, the Patchwork Girl

finds herself haunted by the many stories that intersect in her body; although she tries to treat the past as "just a nasty habit of thought, subject to will" (*cut and paste*), she discovers that the will itself is not sufficiently unitary to allow such manipulations. The disjunction between the unified body she imagines and her "craggy, sprouting, leafy, crumbling [...] damp, even gooey or gummy [...]spotted and bumpy and creased. And scarred" actual body leads her to realize "that unity was not given, but achieved, through learning and craft" (*craft*). In this way, the Patchwork Girl begins to appreciate the constructed nature of her own existence, both as a body and as a subjectivity; this realization, however, emerges in tension with a crisis moment in a mercifully linear portion of the plot wherein the Patchwork Girl attempts to purchase a name ("Elsie") and past from another woman, attempting to re-construct herself in a more normative image; instead of achieving the desired result, this choice leads to a dissolution of her body. The various components of her body start to uncontrollably speak through her subjectivity, in a fashion she compares to Tourette's syndrome; subsequently, her foot falls off again, suggesting again some sense for this section's opening image of the head attached to the foot: of all of her body parts, the foot has the best claim to having it's own story, its own subjectivity. After this, all of the various parts of her body begin to disassemble. Through reflection on a "bizarrely comfortable vision of physical dissolution" that comes to her in a dream (*tourette's*, *body jungle*) and the loving intervention of the actual Elsie, who takes her name back (*name*), the Patchwork Girl finds that rather being a "settler" into a static and stationary identity, her condition demands that she be a "nomad": "instead of fulfilling a determined structure, [she] could merely extend, inventing a form as" she went along (*what shape*). For the Patchwork Girl, this realization offers also a contingent unity of physical frame; for *Patchwork Girl*, it offers some reassurance that

77

despite these images of violently rended flesh that open on to each domain of the narrative, the narrative is not, after all, a puzzle with a tidy solution and a single satisfying conclusion, but rather simply a journey with many entry points and exit points through which the reader/user must also take a nomadic path and "invent a form" appropriate to her own subject position. The Patchwork Girl, in the end, becomes a writer (of *Patchwork Girl*, perhaps), and the reader is offered a temporary position as collaborator in her composition, assembling and reassembling snatches of narrative; even so, this is not the classic trope of the marginalized individual writing herself into a quasi-normative position through Romantic force of will. Rather, she recognizes that "everything" she is "made of speaks up from the dead" (*voices*).

From this point in the narrative, the reader/user is returned to the frontispiece, and then to title page, offering a convenient place to ex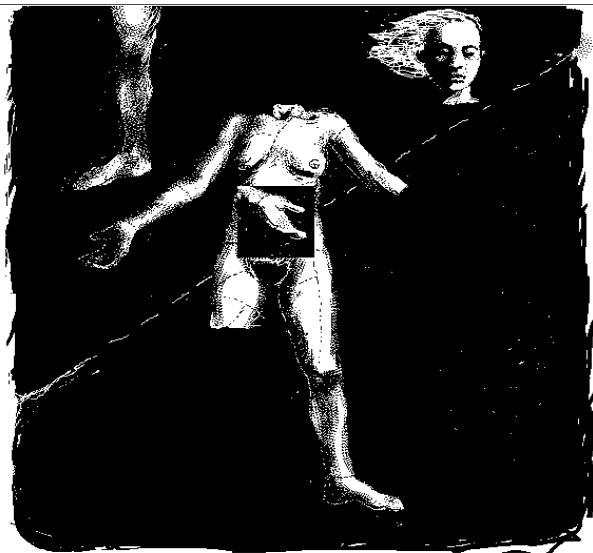it the narrative; however, two sections still remain: "a quilt" and "broken accents"/*body of text*. The "crazy quilt" offers an opportunity to appreciate how several of the central lexias have been crafted, spliced from the words of others using a cut-up or text collage method; in this section, new lexias are subjected to an interface that reveals them to be assembled, like the Girl, from disparate elements (see *Illustration 8*). Rather than featuring semantic linkages between lexias like much

Illustration 8: Entry image to Crazy Quilt

of *Patchwork Girl*, instead, this section is operated through a rather simple interface, wherein

these lexias offer first their untouched text, but upon clicking, they transform into font-coded descriptions of the sources from which the words have been lifted, including academic-style citations that offer up lines of flight out of *Patchwork Girl* entirely, not unlike links to external websites on the World Wide Web (see *Illustration 9*).
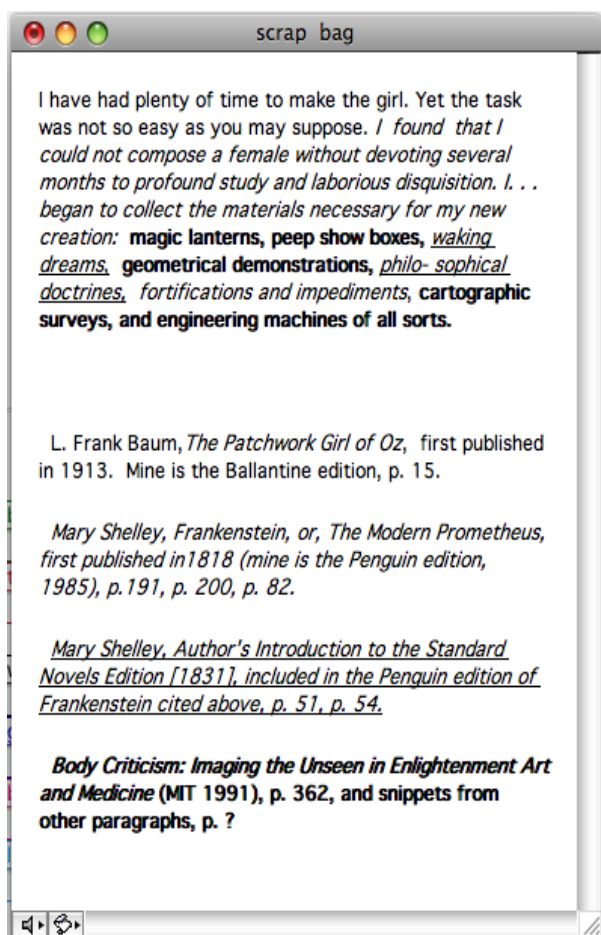

Illustration 9: Expanded view of example lexia in "Crazy Quilt"

For the reader who has passed through the hypertext unaware of the multi-layered appropriations happening at the textual level, this "crazy quilt" draws attention to the scars and reveals the sutures which have tied disparate textual elements from outside sources together into a woven of felt-like "text" in the sense that Barthes deploys the term. At times, these appropriations are whole sentences, even a few phrases in a row; at others, she borrows just a word or two from each source, re-arranging them to suit her purpose. Through these citations, then, each phrase recovers its memory, much as the parts of the Patchwork Girl maintain and re-assert the memories of the bodies to which they have previously belonged; in the metaphor of the quilt: each swatch of fabric has a history, even as the quilt itself serves a function relatively independent from these histories. While many of the citations offer particular insight onto the

themes and plot that unfold in the remainder of the hypertext, Hélène Cixous' "Coming to Writing" figures quite prominently: her focus on the tensions between the transgression of mixing and the fundamental fact that maternity involves containing within oneself and ultimately giving birth to a mosaic creature, partly of the mother's own flesh and partly of the fathers, offers an interesting lens through which to consider the central organizing tropes of Jackson's text -- patchwork, multiplicity, the suture, prosthetics, etc. Given the prominence of this intertext, it is little surprise that the *crazy quilt* features also the most elaborate affiliation of the *Patchwork Girl* with that other Patchwork Girl of L. Frank Baum's Oz series: swatches of text/fabric from Derrida, Cixous, Barbara Maria Stafford, Mary Shelley are sewn into a field of narrative segments from Baum's childrens' novel, affiliating the impetuous nature of Baum's creation with the transgressive aspects of Jackson's.   This recurrent theme may provide some explanation for Terry Harpold's observation that, within the *crazy quilt*, "the annotations of the expanded chimeras are incomplete or infelicitously constructed"; for instance, "portions of the citation apparatus are [occasionally] missing ("p. ?") or redundant ("Barbara Maria Stafford . . . by Barbara Maria Stafford")" (5.59).   While these citations are offered, perhaps as an afterthought, providing lines of flight from Jackson's hypertext into the wider texts in which it participates, her apparently willful failure to provide full citation for some segments suggests the troubled position that her critique of unified subjectivity leaves for formalized institutions of intellectual property[4].

Beginning from the title page, the *body of text* section of the text opens with an image entitled *phrenology* (See *Illustration 10)*. Critics have been particularly attracted to this image, in part, I think, because it differs from the others. The image represents a classic phrenological chart, or perhaps a model or map of the Patchwork Girl's shaved head marked as a phrenological
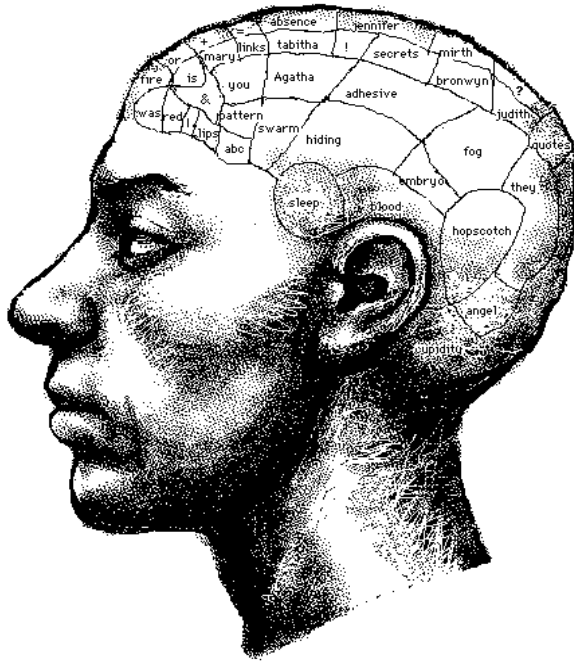

chart, where each portion of the head refers to one of the twenty-four "paths" that appear in the "path view," each of which effectively subverts the established linking hierarchies in the Storyspace Map view. Each path links to one or more lexias within the *body of text* section. Hayles observes that because this image is viewed from the side, it is not seen as a face, but as a body part,

Illustration 10: Phrenology lexia

drawing on her argument that the the face becomes a decorporealized site of signification that maps the Enlightenment notion of the unique identity of the author ("Flickering Connectivities" paragraph 27). Although Mark Hansen does not address this hypertext in his *New Philosophy for New Media,* this image resonates with his thesis that haptic and tactile interactions with New Media art re-insert the material body into the technological field that increasingly seems to function through relatively disembodied information, creating a site of resistance towards the

notion that information can be codified simply as ratios between the expected and unexpected without reference to semantics. Phrenology is, of course, a profoundly haptic science: the phrenological map is not simply for looking, but guides the process of feeling for bumps on the individual's head to discern facts about that individual's identity. In a certain sense, then, phrenology provides an analogue for the process through which the user interacts with the hypertext: rather than simply repetitively flipping the pages of a novel, the hand and eye are linked into an active circuit that "feels" its way across the text as much as it "sees." Hayles observes that since each of the names and phrases brings us to a lexia within the *body of text* section, that this suggests the over-arching theme that "the text lies within the represented body" which she argues "inverts the usual perception the reader has with print fiction, that the represented bodies lie within the book" (27). By annexing the *Frankenstein* narrative to this use of the body as a portal to the text, Jackson writes against Percy Shelley's Promethean tradition, which simultaneously apologizes for its own stylistic appropriations through the implication that what matters is the unique and original "spirit" of the piece *and* takes the prioritization of the mind over the body to an extraordinary extreme by staging a drama (an inherently embodied kind of writing, after all) as something that can only be realized within the mind of the reader.

This analogue between the haptic, embodied approach to (w)reading hypertext and the science of phrenology may be further enriched by a few observations. First, as representative of a debunked pseudoscience, the late 20th or early 21st Century reader comes to this image with skepticism; rather than providing an authentic map of the Patchwork Girl's identity, we rather expect to uncover through this "feeling" process a constructed "text" that exhibits the biases and situated perspectives of the author(s) who have established the map and the textual body that it

governs. Moreover, the association of phrenology with the sciences of the Holocaust speaks to the anxiety towards the march of industrialism, the rise of modernity, and the reduction of identity to strictly material body that animated Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; as a particularly frightening manifestation of modernism and the techno-scientific view of the body, Nazism is profoundly implicated in the thematics which Shelley addresses. Given this, the phrenological map which opens onto the *body of text* may serve as a sort of reminder of what it is at stake when we allow any discourse -- whether it be spiritual or scientific -- to legislate what is normative, acceptable, or worthwhile. Interestingly, as a map of interconnected regions, the phrenological chart suggests the actual structure of the skull, even as it fails to mimic precisely the various plates which make it up.   In the actual human skull, various separate flat pieces of bones (the "plates") grow together during young childhood, generating something akin to a single bone around the brain.   This single bone bears witness to its multiple origins with lines that the markings on the phrenological chart suggest. The area where two such bones meet and have grown together is, appropriately, called the "suture."

Finally, the map of interconnected regions across the scalp of the model approximates a Voronoi space-filling diagram, which itself is a sort of mathematical extrapolation from the image of a patchwork quilt.   Jaishree K. Odin draws attention to the similarity of Jackson's deployment of this patchwork image to the discussion of patchwork as smooth space in Deleuze and Guattari: "the smooth space of patchwork is adequate the demonstrate that 'smooth' space does not mean homogeneous, quite the contrary; it is an amorphous, nonformal space prefiguring op art" (qtd in Jaishree 463). And, indeed, in contrast to the relatively linear (or, at least arborescent) narratives available in *journal* and *story*, the hypertextual web of *body of text* is

83

complex, multiply linked, transversed with lines of flight from one conceptual map to another, profoundly rhizomatic[5].   The opening lexia, written in the voice of Shelley Jackson, begins to spell out this difference:

> Assembling these patched words in an electronic space, I feel half-blind, as if the entire text is within reach, but because of some myopic condition I am only familiar with from dreams, I can see only that part most immediately before me, and have no sense of how that part relates to the rest. When I open a book I know where I am, which is restful. My reading is spatial and even volumetric. I tell myself, I am a third of the way down through a rectangular solid, I am a quarter of the way down the page, I am here on the page, here on this line, here, here, here. But where am I now? I am here and a present moment that has no history and no expectations for the future. (*this writing*)

Hayles annexes this passage to a discussion of chronology, suggesting that since most conventional print fiction proceeds in a familiar linear fashion, there is always a sense of the past (what has been read, what is beneath the left-hand page when the book is laid open on a table) and a sense of the future (what will be read, what is beneath the right-hand page); in contrast, argues Hayles, "since the past and future" in a hypertext "can be played out in any number of ways, the present moment, the lexia we are reading right now, carries an unusually intense sense of presence" (47).   This claim is somewhat more troubling than it first appears. The correspondence between the book-as-volume and the unfolding fictive chronology provides a close analogue to the body-as-portal-to-text model that she advances as a unique stylistic move on Jackson's part. As a critique, this observation attains special salience because she suggests

that the body-as-portal is a more desirable model for textuality and, moreover, one that is necessary to engaging with gender issues as we collectively generate a critical theory capable of dealing with electronic hypertexts.   It is interesting to consider heavily footnoted postmodern texts such as David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* or Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* that Hayles addresses in her "Intermediation: The Pursuit of a Vision": these texts rely on semiological codes well-known from other genres of writing and from scholarly and student editions to trouble the relationship between chronology and the book as a volumetric object; at the same time, however, by depending on these well-established codes, the reader is easily re-oriented to the book-as-object and the radically disorienting move is recuperated.   Hayles excludes some print hypertexts including Robert Coover's "The Babysitter," so she probably also excludes the likes of Cortazar's *Hopscotch*, the low-brow realizations of these textual strategies in the *Choose Your Own Advenure* series, and non-fictional analogues like Deleuze and Guattari's *Thousand Plateaus* and Bolter and Grusin's *Remediation*; despite the relatively easy recuperation of texts like *House of Leaves*, *Infinite Jest*, Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, and Puig's *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, these less-linear works show that (1.) the correspondence between volume and chronology is more construction than necessity and (2.) that convention has instituted an interesting relationship between the body of the medium and the text itself that is remediated, rather than troubled, by the Phrenology diagram. Hayles acknowledges the book *Dictionary of the Khazars* as a hypertextual print work, but argues that *Patchwork* Girl is characterized by "fluidly mutating connections between writer, interface, and reader" that are unavailable in print ("Flickering Connectivities" paragraph 44). In this passage, Hayles also suggests that flash-forwards and flash-backs especially characteristic of 20th Century literature complicate the one-

to-one correspondence between the book-as-volume and the fictive chronology, but I think that

Jackson's suggestion is more subtle: regardless of the chronology within the fictive space,

narratives that are read as linear sequences of pages (which is not to say linear narratives) or at

least according to well-established conventions for reading extra-linear elements (i.e.

conventions for reading end notes when they appear in the text) provide through their physical

presence a map of the reader's progress and a definitive sense of the "volume" through which the

reader must pass to achieve a sense of satisfying conclusion. This the basis of digital humanist

Jerome McGann's claim that the print book is a user-friendly and highly developed interface for

hypertextual documentation: placing fingers between pages and flipping back-and-forth between

passages, endnotes, and critical apparatus is a normative relationship to the book as physical

object ("The Rationale of Hypertext"). So while critics like Hayles, Hansen, and Odin want to

identify in New Media art the possibility of rehabilitating an appreciation of the crucial

relationship between embodiment and information, it is worth noting that despite the de-

materialization of the print text revealed in formalist/New Critical approaches, editorial practice,

and the judical-economic institutions around copyright, the book retains a materiality and

relationship to the physical body electronic hypertextual fictions will need to recover and

remediate, if they are going to approach issues of embodiment with a meaningful level of self-

reflexivity. When Hayles asserts that "Electronic hypertexts are spaces to navigate," she is

commenting fundamentally on the "*construction* as a navigable space"; so when she further

claims that "electronic hypertext is intrinsically more involved with issues of mapping and

navigations than are most print texts" (11), she asserts a truism, but one that appears more

contingent on a historical situation that has been profoundly challenged by the emergence of some postmodern narrative practices[6].

Returning to the phrenology metaphor, while each "now" or lexia attains a special sense of presence or an elevated intensity, it is not the individual lexias which move the text forward; so, just as the individual bumps on the phrenological model offer plateaus of intensity, it is the lines of flight between these heterogeneous spaces that the text performs; that is: the borders between the patches traced out on the map are the privileged sites at which the narrative does its work. As Jackson observes, "the flow" "turns out to be the main point" (*flow*). When Jackson claims "every part of me is linked to other territories alien to it but equally mine," she describes not just the heterogeneous assemblage of the body enacted through the fictive existence of the Patchwork Girl, but also the relationship between linked lexias. These relationships constitute gaps: each new lexia in the conceptual space Jackson constructs evinces some degree of alterity in relation to the lexia from which (and to which) it links. The user/reader then functions as the actively suturing force, assembling the text, but leaving scars that bear witness to the violence of yoking disparate concepts together across the body of the text; these actions are impelled by the "seductions of sequence" (*rest of my life*) which are the desires to construct a path and to give form to the sometimes inchoate assemblage of textual units. In two lexias sharing bidirectional links through narrative space mapped in the *body of text* section, she says "my real skeleton is made of scars: as web that traverses me in three dimensions" (*dispersed*) and "the metaphorical principle is my true skeleton" (*metaphor me*); the power of the metaphor then is not in the appropriateness of of the image that substitutes for the referent, but rather in the artificial yoking of these two distinct entities together. Here the voice uneasily wavers between Shelley Jackson,

87

the Patchwork Girl, and the text speaking as self-aware entity of its own. This engenders a

paradoxical relationship between identity and absence that is familiar from both Lacanian

psychoanalysis and deconstruction: "I am most myself in the gaps between my parts, though if

they sailed away in all directions in a grisly regatta there would be no thing left here in my

place" (*dispersed*). Terry Harpold observes that "An experienced hypertext reader will click at

any juncture of two linguistically or semiotically incongruous sequences in search of the gloss

that relates them," suggesting that through experience the reader acclimates to the importance of

these gaps, comes to expect them not just between lexias, but between sentences as markers that

indicate the lines of flight out of a particular textual unit; this points towards Harpold's wish that

the term "lexia" had not been annexed to indicate a "node" within the network of textual units in

electronic hypertextual fiction, but that it had stayed closer to Barthes's original usage.

Returning then to where we began this discussion of *Patchwork Girl*, I want to observe

that Jackson's use of a complex web of citational, quotational, and appropriational strategies has

the effect of drawing the hypertext into dialog with a much greater text, even as this narrative

itself predates the popularization of networked technological infrastructure that would make the

"links" user-friendly. By writing a sophisticated "slash fiction" in the conceptual and narrative

interstices of the existing Frankenstein texts, she draws attention to the liberatory and creative

potential of gaps; meanwhile, at the textual level, the hypertext often demands the the user/reader

actively suture lexias together to create a pleasing or interesting path that does not *necessarily*

lead out of the hypertext into the greater text of material reality, but rather creates pleasing

assemblages from the available elements. Still, these sutures leave their marks on the individual

experience of the text; these scars provide hypermediate moments such that the illusion of

transparent immediacy finds itself contingent on the awareness of hypermediate codes. Through

a similar logic, the use of hand-drawn and analogue photocopied images and other codes from

the non-digital realm simultaneously speak to a desire to remediate and represent the unique

characteristics of other media, pushing the reader/user into the ideolgical/material fields of

dissemination and reception. By intertwining these concerns about the "body" of the hypertext

with the concerns about the "body" more generally, the text suggests that the (re-)construction of

border subjectivities (as Jashriee Odin calls them) has profound consequences in the very real

world.

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1   This is a possibility that Jackson herself writes about: "It is a potential line, an indication

of the way out of two dimensions (fold along dotted line): In three dimensions what is separate

can be brought together without ripping apart what is already joined, the two sides of a page flow

moebiusly into one another. Pages become tunnels or towers, hats or airplanes, cranes, frogs,

balloons, or nested boxes. Because it is a potential line, it folds/unfolds the imagination in one

move. it suggests action (fold here), a chance at change, yet it acknowledge the viewer' freedom

to do nothing but imagine" (*dotted line*). As we will see, this tension between the imagination of

a three-dimensional space and the reality of three dimensional objects is a thread woven

throughout the text, a thread that affiliates the text with the closet drama of Percy Shelley even as

it threatens to undermine the disembodied subject that underwrites his project.

2   In her characteristically self-reflexive writing, Jackson acknowledges this affiliation as

well: "It is paradoxical: more innocent than the solid line (above which rises, on a sewing

pattern, half a pair of scissors, oddly askew), it can be coereced into fiercer uses than the pacifist

fold: on the photograph of he cow, the classic cuts are sketched out in dotted lines. The cow

doesn't know it yet, but it is an assemblage of dinners" (*dotted line*). These images -- the folded

line, the scissors in a sewing pattern, the cow image mapped out as steaks -- each evoke the

haptic relationship between electronic hypertext user/reader and the words themselves; as we

will see, this is not unique to electronic hypertext, but the awareness of this perspective

generated from these images is precisely the sort of hypermediate awareness of medium to which

we posit the scars left after the suture attest.

3   Stuart Curran asserts that the political construction of the Prometheus myth in the era

during which Mary Shelley wrote her "Modern Prometheus" and Percy Shelley wrote his

Prometheus Unbound frequently invoked America, especially focusing on archetypical figures

such as Washington, Franklin, and Columbus, and the failures of the United States to abolish the

slave trade (438-442); given this, the Patchwork Girl's travel to America may suggest a

significant conceptual move. During her travels, the Patchwork Girl encounters some

determined seagulls: "[...] though I was far from hungry, I withdrew my handkercheif from my

handbag and fondly unfolded it. The bun lay in my hand, a homely lump, but a reminder of land.

The seagulls careered about like the vigorous ghosts of lunatics and squirted filth on the fly; one

of them made for my bun with a brazen craw, and when I flapped my heavy sleeves to shoo him

he rose with rapid oarings and anointed my shoulder. I recoiled; my bun bounced overboard, so I

ost it after all. Airborne, in a mocking beak, it crossed my path once more as I made my way to

my quarters to seek refuge from a world that seemed intent on my degradation" (*revised*). Given

the association of the Promethean myth with the Americas, perhaps this scene may be read as a

re-enactment of the vultures torturing Prometheus. If we undertake this reading, then again we

see the blurry boundaries between roles: as the Patchwork Girl internalized Mary Shelley

through their shared surgery, she becomes at once the Promethean figure and the Pandora within the narrative.

4   This is the force behind Hayles's deployment of a discussion of intellectual property rather than a discussion of the Romantic Creator as the counterpoint for her reading of *Patchwork Girl*.

5   Jackson acknowledges the two strategies of narration in her text: "I have a letch for sequence, don't doubt it. I am not the agent of absolute multiplicity any more than I am some redoubtable whole. I am a double agent, messing up both territories. I am muscular and convincing because I am whole; I am devious and an escape artist because I am broken" (*double agent*). Through this double agency, Jackson is able to acknowledge the limitations of what Amrohini Sahay describes as the fashionable "post-al" logic of multiplicity in terms of identifying the poltical-economic totality as a project for radical social change: "Oh, I want to be whole, don't doubt it. Jennifer's leg lying next to Bronwyn's foot on the flagstones of Frankenstein's workshop can't kick anyone's butt" (*double agent*).

6   It is also tempting to observe that she should confine these observations to "electronic hypertextual narratives" and "print narratives," as her claims may not hold up to hundreds of thousands of pages of counter examples from a reference library, to many forms of scholarly editions (especially parallel text editions and complex collations), or to obviously printed artifacts like navigational atlases and maps.

Conclusion

Paul Virilio and Friedrich Kittler's observations that the history of media technologies essentially follows the history of military advance and the development of technologies of domination and destruction ring with a certain truth in a world where the the boundary between video game, war simulation, and the remote cockpit of a predator drone seems increasingly permeable (Virilio 1-4; Kittler 40-42). Within the discourse of technofuturism, however, there is still a voice that calls out for a Promethean Age. In this prophetic vision, society will replace physical violence with struggles over information in a narrowcast mediascape and may transcend corporate dominance with micropayments and open source software for all. In a more elaborate version of this utopian desire, which is expressed in different ways by the quasi-academic writings of Ray Kurzweil, by some followers of Richard Stallman, and occasionally in the popular culture venues like *Wired*, *boingboing.net*, *neural.it*, the now-defunct *Mondo 2000*, and others, electronic media technologies may offer the opportunities for the wholesale re-creation of society on a model that emphasizes freedom and creativity. Although these voices are multivocal on many of the issues at stake, each points towards the possibility of a more free world that strays not far from Percy Shelley's vision at the end of *Prometheus Unbound*. As I have suggested, N. Katherine Hayles's reading of *Patchwork Girl* partakes in this techno-optimism when she proposes a media ecology in which newer media compete with print while simultaneously interpolating new subject positions for media users that undermine some of the most limiting modernist myths about the individual as creator, the unitary subject, the possibility and desire for unifying narratives (for instance, theology), and the medium as conduit.

It would be easy to dismiss this strain within our discourse if the emergence of new media technologies was not a continually contested space for emergent modes of power and control. As Elaine Graham has said, what is at stake in these developments is precisely "what (and who) will define authoritative notions of normative, exemplary, desirable humanity into the twenty-first century" (11). Consequently, it is worthwhile to consider what assumptions we have about the roles of coexisting media technologies in our culture and what directions we see media change taking our culture; in particular, maintaining an appreciation of material embodiment as a crucial aspect of human relationships with information and media will enable considerations of how Odin's "border subjectivities" engage in counter-normative use of these media. However, it is worth observing that, because our values and subject positions shift in relation to these new technologies, it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine what is on the "other side" of technological change, in terms of how our culture will construct subject positions in relation to a new mediascape. Even so, given that our human relationships are not only mediated by electronic technologies, but often seem to be supplanted by them[1], engagement with the inverse or cautionary side of the Promethean tendency seems worthwhile. The cautionary spirit of Shelley's *Frankenstein* certainly tempers a utopian view of a Promethean Age, even as it elicits empathy for the products of technological ambition and border subjectivities engendered by technological change. Using the works in the *Frankenstein* tradition here, I have performed a text (in Barthes's sense) that offers an opportunity to begin a conversation between explorations of a properly post-modern subjectivity and a rhizomatic model of media ecology suited to today's increasingly cross-media cultural phenomena. Appreciating these phenomena required that we cautiously deploy N. Katherine Hayles's insight that the assumptions of older media do not

93

always map homologously onto newer media while acknowledging how older media can often contest the claim that new media uniquely offer liberatory spaces for creative play.

While I have taken a particularly critical view towards Hayles's qualified embrace of a media ecological model that proposes conflict between media and hierarchical appropriations across media, she is largely correct to suggest that attention to how these media forms develop and differ from each other may provide fruitful points of intervention in the theory that we use to understand new technologies. In conclusion, I wish to also follow her suggestion that these interventions into discourse also potentially may affect the development of new technologies themselves. I have insisted on a more open-ended and less teleological model than hers, as I believe it is crucial that we appreciate the possibility of a multiplicity of relations between media if there is a chance for us to meaningfully intervene.

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1   See for, instance, the evidence provided media effects researchers working under Clifford Nass's "Media Equation" or ("Computers Are Social Actors"/CASA) model that people's interactions with media technologies mimic their interactions with real humans, even when there is no obvious agent behind the media interface other than the often quite simple interface itself (Nass and Moon 2000; Moon and Nass 1996; Reeves and Nass 1996; Nass, Steuer, and Tauber 1994; etc.).

Appendix A: Illustrations

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