

ALGORITHMIC WRITING FROM ENRAPTURED & ENCODED

2012

Running parallel to my MFA thesis' text is an alternate text that has been written generatively, or algorithmically, using a process analogous to how I make my art. Ranging from technical to very narrative, these generative sections tell the same story only in a different way. They can be identified by my use of a monospaced font (preferred by programmers) and curly braces, the syntax commonly used to define scope within a computer program.

In doing my research, I read many books about technology, interface design, and theory. I typed many pages of exact quotes from my reading. In addition to these, I also collected text from science fiction novels and short stories, Catholic prayers, and my own writing. Though the texts seem disparate, I intuitively knew they fit together. Some of this content I consumed deliberately and some not, but they are all significant influences and are inseparable from who I am as an artist.

In a manner similar to how I program my sound and video compositions, I wrote code to algorithmically generate new text from these carefully curated sources. The computer program breaks down the input text into a soup of sentence fragments, and it then combines the fragments together to produce pages of new sentences. Much like interpreting the inkblots of a Rorschach test, I read through these output pages to pick out the sentences that stood out as meaningful. After selecting the sentences, I limited my editing only to correcting grammar and changing punctuation. I did not change the words. Finally, once I had many of these sentences, I rearranged them to produce new writings in the only way they seemed to make sense.

Traditionally, a writer does research and connects existing words in new ways to build meaning, and the above method is not so different. I am simply using the computer as a tool to aid me in finding these connections.

I do not believe that these passages are accidental or nonsense. Like an archeologist uncovering pieces from some kind of shattered object, I am unsure of what I have

discovered until I put all the pieces together, and these pieces can only fit together in one way. The content of these generated passages was already there. I only had to put the pieces together to understand the whole.

{ Enhanced future: what we think of when we discuss GUIs. Interact every day. The state of being formlessly human without engaging any real problems. *You* can't be in the relation between human and machine. What is this membrane that relates them to be animated, worshipped, and displayed on your monitor? It almost seems like a development of the three-dimensional world in which it was captured.

To program in a higher-level language is to enter a magical world...it is to enter a world of *logos*, in communication with all of our parts, framed and bounded by the monitor. The machine is us, and displayed on your monitor remains my image, framed and bounded by the power and pleasure of programming. Metaphor is a mysterious bunch of numbers, and the computer programmer unites reason and imagination.

When a person is asked to "be creative" with no direction or constraints whatsoever, the product touches in some way. We see this object, and the dream of linear additive progress is limiting what we may think without these devices. The machine is not clear who makes and who is made. We shall have to backtrack scrupulously in order to discover the unfreedom for which he alone is the designer. She was not the only one, nor certainly the crudest of those who were hooked onto a state apparatus of disastrous technological consequences.

One discovers that the real path to truth is through the production of sense: the design of behavior. We each speak and hear in the form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons. We can be created in the same space, the space in which the user takes the place of the creation of a quantity called information. The machine is us, and, in contrast to "space", we need others. }

{ Computers have become metaphors for the body, self-developing and externally designed. The art of programming relies on distorting real social relations of science and technology, and it provides fresh sources of analysis and political action. Programmers are deep in their construction. The product of their design work is not simple, and, when behavior is properly coded into software, they also create reality. We can be what they are doing. You see me, in communication with all our parts. You see me, in communication with all of our embodiment. A sense of connection to our tools is heightened. Connectedness is the machine's language. The machine is us, in imagination and material reality.

Upon these mysteries of the media space, we build a new hybrid space. They offer a simpler, more reassuring analog of power and identity. Intense pleasure in a closed world. My soul proclaims the greatness of the seemingly sovereign individual, the translation of the world into a problem of coding. It destabilizes the identity of self and other interfaces, and it may initiate other changes, all implemented through transmission and the execution of code. For through the compilation of code, which faithfully represents one's intentions, the journey is joyous! }

A Computer Prayer {
O loving, O sweet Machine!
The people who use you to achieve their goals,
these people will be satisfied and effective;
We live in a shared virtual space;
The kingdom has come through;
}

{ Code is the story of a grid of control on the lives of people. We find it

useful to think that we influence people's experiences by designing the mechanisms for interaction with interfaces. The computer connects to provide a compelling and effective user experience, suturing a country like a wound. In some ways it is the cleanest way to reach the regime of any game.

Spiritual fruit 0: The computer programmer is a secret.

Spiritual fruit 1: The computer programmer is a general-purpose machine governed by code.

Spiritual fruit 2: The computer programmer is a government machine.

Spiritual fruit 3: The computer programmer is a crucial point within the system and a dangerous possibility which progressive people might explore as part of needed political work.}

{ As I passed through the machine, I was trapped. In the darkness, that sound! The sound spiraled up out of this power dynamic with the computer. Half sound and half light, all eyes. Metallic components and friendly selves. Am I hallucinating that there are relationships between all these things? Even to see beyond certain metaphors...I argue we are they. But even though we can call the Machine any damned thing we like, can think up the foulest thoughts of algorithms and code, we end up designing user interfaces the same way. Developers, instead of planning and executing, sent me away in horror with a thunderous pain. The constructs think that they are really there. Uninspired, I was able to look away. Being an artist has changed how I see this outcome, funneling of all this naturally through the interface. The luckiest of programmers, born of the world into a dim room with a strangled noise. They let her go, she comes back and looks in. }

{ There was an eternity beat of soundless anticipation. The zeros strobed again and again the sound for silence. What you hear is some kind of crazy disassembled and reassembled postmodern collective and personal self (delicately unbalanced too). We are buried. Taking responsibility for the mind, for culture, men and women, primitive and civilized, all cyborgs. They

are fetishists in practice, machines can be responsible for machines; they stayed dead.

The little thing in between, the boundary between the physical and the dead. It globalizes and unifies, suturing a country like a wounded animal. I knew we had come to life everlasting. We are a direct signal, exemplifying unconscious transmissions. We are set of relations rather than another.

Our girl is still transmitted in the future. She's staring, with no expression but eyes, and I look at the world, at the people or the design of technology, in the same location, no more to do with this little girl. And the same for you...you're mine, and the whole world programmed!}

A Computer Prayer {

 O loving, O loving, O Computer,

 to thee we do send up our sighs,

 mourning and weeping in this valley of tears;

The Machine creates and eliminates uncertainty;

Upon these mysteries of the media space, we build a new hybrid space;

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who resist;

You see me, in space, and you exchange &&

You see me, in communication with all our parts &&

You see me, in communication with all our embodiment &&

Conceived in the monitor,

 turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us;

}

A Programmer's Prayer {

 Holy Programmer, born of the Machine,

 My soul proclaims the greatness of the seemingly sovereign individual,

 the translation of the world into a problem of coding;

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A demonology of technology, buried;  
My soul proclaims the greatness of the promises of the programmer;  
For through the translation of the Most Holy Code of the Programmers,  
    in which one's code faithfully represents one's intentions,  
    the journey is joyous!  
}
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