Self-portrait, June 19th, 00:35

Day 1 — Developing an intuition, an intention

I sit here, with background music, resisting the urge to surf through hundreds of open tabs, to press play on my paused podcast, to watch my favorite youtuber's new video essay on AI, resisting the urge to google a random question, open social media for no reason, answer an email, call my grandmother. Multitasking has become equivalent to no-tasking at all, and carries me through the night. A restlessness that can make me feel sick. I'm looking for something else, a better relationship -if even possible- with technology. One where I can use the computer and my phone like tools, without feeling dispossessed. I want machines to become objects outside of myself again, things that exists in parallel with who I am. I want to be able to log in whenever needed, and log off just as easily. Thought patterns and sense of self unchanged. Safe and sound. This is not about nostalgia. It's a deep yearning for another type of relationship with machines. It's what brings me to the **Computer Class**. And it starts outside, in a parking lot on Queen's Park Crescent, blindfolded and embodying the turtle in turtle graphics.

Day 2 — Computational desires

Today we discussed how the phone is designed to individuate and how objects change how we formulate desires. There's a constant tension between our desires and the desires dictated by the objects we interact with daily. During playtime, I wanted to open an intimate space with Ludus. How can I simulate language and interaction? The learning process of programming in Ludus was the inspiration for those two iterations.

interacting with the function and then forgetting
grounded in the environment

and you print
and you print
and you print

but you are nowhere to be found

I wrote two scripts that are a playful experimentation with the interface, code and poetry. The first one is generating an error in the Ludus console, and the text playfully refers to it. https://shorturl.at/IynqR

The second script is a bit more directive, and plays with the language of Ludus itself; directing the viewer to "expand" and "shrink again", revealing new lines of poetry. https://shorturl.at/wMGWx


```
≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ Run 16
Syntax error: Unexpected ' after word can.
  on line 8 in input:
  >>> we can't understand each other
.........^
Syntax error: Unexpected character: '
  on line 8 in input:
  >>> we can't understand each other
...........^


≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ Run 17
Syntax error: Unexpected ' after word can.
  on line 8 in input:
  >>> we can't understand each other
.........^
Syntax error: Unexpected character: '
  on line 8 in input:
  >>> we can't understand each other
...........^
```

First script, generating an error

Tonight, I brought home a book made available by the Center called "Exploring Language with Logo"[1], by E. Paul Goldenberg and Wallace Feurzeig. I read most of the first chapter, "The Grammar of Big Things: Sentences, Poems, and Stories-Syntax, Semantics, and Style" trying to find parallels with what could be the language-manipulation capabilities of Ludus.

Day 3 — «But the machine did not mean either of these things.»[2]
Today we learned about generative algorithms and were introduced to Seymour Papert's private archives, scanned from MIT by the team earlier this year. I dug through Ludus' function documentation, looking for some inspiration for writing a program that would produce poetry.
assert!
between?
empty?
home!
keep
ok?
or
random
rest
set
some
words

Having gained a bit more experience with the drawing capacities of the turtle, during playtime I experimented with creating scripts that would generate letters. I chose a set of 7 letters that form a multitude of words; A-E-I-N-R-S-T.

Letters written with the turtle

In "Exploring Language with Logo", when explaining linguistic structure to build a sentence generator, the authors mention that «the machine did not mean either of these things. It didn't mean anything. It just applied a grammatical rule». Somehow I needed to be reminded of that. We apply meaning to these tools that are omnipresent in our lives. Machines have no intent, only we have intentions with them.

Day 4 — Computers reorganize experience
Inspired by the program TO GOSSIP from "Exploring Language with Logo", Scott showed us how to write a program for "throwing shade", where random names would match random insults once we run the program. With this new understanding, I was able to create a poem generator.
```
fn poem () -> {
  let target = you? ()
  let writing = [
```

[1] Goldenberg, E. Paul, and W. Feurzeig. *Exploring language with Logo*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1987.

[2] Goldenberg, W.Feurzeig, *Exploring language with Logo*, p.49.

"ce soir c'est la pleine lune, {target} dans l'ventre"
"au diapason avec {target}"
"je cueille {target}, je dépose les pierres d'une fondation"
]

By choosing sentences from which I remove certain words (replacing it with {target}) and making a list of all of these words, I'm able to create what resembles a poem generator. Ludus pairs a random sentence with a random words from {target} and it generates a different line of poem every time. For my final project, I want to pair these sentences with turtle graphics. At night, I open my journals looking for sentences to add to my poetry and drawing generator. Surprisingly, this has proven to be a challenge, as I have to pay attention to grammatical categories and choose the {target} based on how the sentences will be constructed.

Day 5 — Resisting and crafting experience ourselves

There's something about trust that has been lost along the way. Trust in ourselves, trust in the unexpected. A week of learning Ludus has open unexpected possibilities for me. The sentences generated by the program I wrote evoke new imagery and feelings. These scripts are a fertile ground for further linguistic explorations, in and outside the console. I'm inspired to make multiple versions, opening conversations with older and newer diary entries, creating dialogue with my present and past selves. With Ludus we learned the basics of turtle graphics, we worked with constraint and built up to our desired outcomes, navigating failure and lack of understanding. We are crafting and thinking the type of relationship we want to intentionally build with machines, pushing against the zeitgeist.

"et l'amour grandit, et notre colère ouvre un gouffre
duquel on essaie de changer le monde"[3]
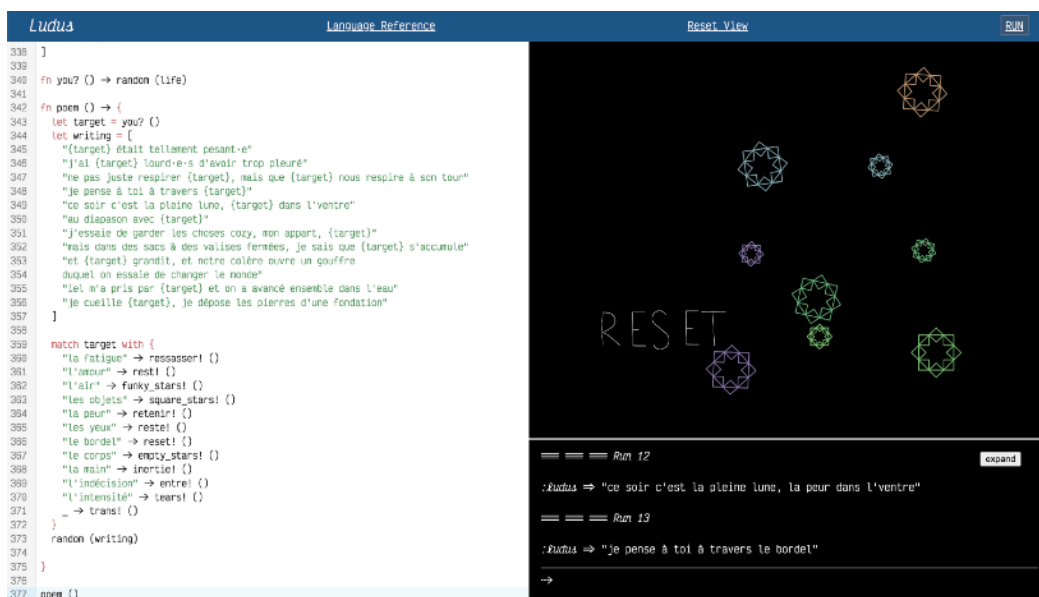
Poetry and drawing generator, first iteration

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[3] Generated output in Ludus. Translation: "and love grows, and our anger opens a chasm
from which we try to change the world"