



Text-Object-Magical-Bean

This project, designed and carried out jointly by Patrícia Reina and me, aimed to create an experimental aesthetic object for the elucidation of concepts and questions about programmability. We approach some methods of speculative inventiveness and critical interpretation to analyse how certain concepts are combined in textual creation.

The concept of “germinative power”, as introduced by Pedro Barbosa, makes possible to think about the centrality of the ideas of latency and potency in programmability. The contingency nature of the code is considered to be associated with the specificity of its operating context, since certain readings only emerge under certain conditions. Apparently, this fact would limit the role of creativity inherent in the reading process. However, it enables the creativity.

The creation of our version of “magical-text-object” (Ana Hatherly) evidences that the process of “meta-reading” - or “creative reading” (Ana Hatherly) - takes place on two levels, both in the execution of the code and in the literary reading of the final object.

The experiment has as its repertoire the words from the fairytale *Jack and the beanstalk*. Some of them form textual compositions conditioned on the germinating power of the beans in which these words were [laser engraved](#). In turn, the germination power of the seeds was conditioned to waterings that correspond the iterations determined by the generator of combinatorial poems, [Poemário](#), produced by Rui Torres and Nuno Ferreira.

The words written on the beans had specific syntactic structures: subject, verb, adjective and object. In order to select the words that were part of the work, we wrote some sentences containing elements of the story of *Jack and the beanstalk* (English version by Joseph Jacobs, 1890): characters, objects and actions. The sentences corresponded on the events of the story.

At the moment of generation of iterations by *Poemário*, the paradigms of the sentences change positions and give rise to new sentences and new meanings. From the generation of these new sentences, a watering guide is created. Thus, the beans whose words were selected by this generative engine were watered with 10 mL of water.

The conception of such a project also sought to highlight how the objective attributes of programmability eventually establish non-programmable variables, taking as metaphor the seed's projectual nature and the control of conditions for its germination (which may or may not correspond to the growth results).

The experiment was the first to take place in MatLit Lab, the laboratory of the PhD Program in Materialities of Literature, University of Coimbra (Portugal).

The results were presented at the conference [“Ana Hatherly: Programmability and Creation”](#).

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