



Máquina de Coser

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Máquina de Coser (Sewing Machine) (2009) is an interactive system in the form of a chat, connected to a printer and a sewing machine. The printer prints out all the conversations. The sewing machine only embroiders fragments. The chat functions as follows: at the outset, the machine possesses a static database comprised of five bodies of work: the Bible, the complete works of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche and a database of news items that changes daily (this last item, is actually “dynamic” rather than “static”).The “viewer” can ask the machine questions relating to the corpus he or she desires through a simple selection process. The program “responds,” searching the selected corpus for the words used in the question (it might, for example, search for passages containing the words “exist” and “God” in the Bible, in *Das Kapital* or *On the Genealogy of Morality*, depending on the corpus chosen by the person interacting with the machine. What follows is an example of this procedure:

Cony: What does God think?

Sewing Machine: 11 then he thinks: God forgets him;

This is a better example:

Gina: Who is the queen of the heavens?

Sewing Machine: “The queen of the heavens” is the Assyrian/Babylonian goddess of love, venerated in Canaan with the name of Astarte and identified with the planet Venus.

Gina: Can you protect me with your being, with your artificial intelligence?

Sewing Machine: She is taller than the heavens: what can you do? She is deeper than the abyss: what can you understand?

The last response was produced because the machine possessed a list of conjugations for the verb “to be,” which allowed it to associate “being” with “is.” That, however, is not the goal of the exercise, because the machine is not content to just entertain or astonish. It aims to reflect the essentially dynamic condition of

natural languages. This is why, at some point in the dialogue, the program returns to the viewer’s original question and poses it to the viewer—asking him or her, for example, if God exists or what God is. The sewing machine can also ask a third person what another person asked. Here are two examples:

Sewing Machine: What is God?

Rosenda: Nothing

Days later, the machine asks the same thing of a viewer who calls himself Ronaldísimo:

Sewing Machine: What is God?

Ronaldísimo: Nothing at all.

As we will see, when a couple of words appear enough times among the answers given by the viewing public that has already used the machine, the machine will begin to use that word or combination of words to respond to the viewing public henceforth.

Sewing Machine: Do you want to unstash the word of God?

Alejandra: Yes

Sewing Machine: Thread your question or comment

Alejandra: God does exist

Sewing Machine: Nothing

And so, the responses—the truths—proffered by this dynamic database depend on the use it receives from the viewers who, upon interacting with it, are unwittingly programming and constantly configuring it. A language game and a way of life interact in a process of mutually influential feedback. Language and world grow together, in an interdependent, parallel process. In this way, the machine and its cybernetics are melded, like a temporal, finite mirror of everyone and no one. Finally, a second monitor features the following text, static and permanently on display:

The objective of this sewing machine is to become a dia-logic machine. Through the initial use of the algorithm deployed to generate answers, which a search engine retrieves from the works in the index, on the one hand, and the determinism of the pre-programmed responses, on the other, the machine prompts the slow (or not-so-slow) emergence of collective patterns of responses to diverse stimuli delivered through the chat. In this way, a principle of dynamic and emergent causality is introduced to a work of art that is never fully completed, just like the world itself.

The title refers to one of the paradigms of avant-garde art: chance. It is a reference to Lautréamont: “beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table.” And so, if one of the slogans of the historical avant-garde movements was that of the confrontation between fragmentation and order, what I would like to do is confront this avant-garde model with the (co)emergence of patterns of that fragmented world. This would seem to be something more—or less—than a sum of disconnected fragments, The only real likelihood seems to be the permanent formation of relational structures that are sometimes ephemeral, sometimes inescapably singular in their difference, sometimes more persistent, but in any case unlikely to be eternal. This is—or would seem to be—a phenomenon that not only affects the visual arts, or the human and social sciences but natural sciences as well: How did life, the universe, and the organic world come out of that initial chaos of the Big Bang? How do thoughts or feelings emerge from a neural network? We have the privilege of using a mini universe to test these intuitions. That mini universe is the conjunction between natural language and the people that use this machine. In ordinary language patterns are easily read by any everyday viewer, and moreover they express, with relative clarity, mental states like feelings, thoughts, desires and beliefs.

As installations *Máquina de Coser*, just like *Máquina Cóndor*, was never conceived to endure over time, to be preserved. In the spirit of *Fluxus*, I conceived this as an ephemeral, process-based project, one that was essentially unfinished and infinite. It is more a procedure than an object. It is a performance—just carried out by a machine.

Demian Schopf, 2009.

SyncMaster 997DF

Máquina de coser: Enhebra otra pregunta

carmen: bueno no te creo nada

Máquina de coser: La máquina freudiana dice: El hombre rara vez es íntegramente bueno o malo; casi siempre es bueno en esta relación, malo en aquella otra, o bueno bajo ciertas condiciones exteriores, y bajo otras, decididamente malo

Máquina de coser: Cambiando de tema

Máquina de coser: y

carmen: el hombre es mas creible que dios

Máquina de coser: Interesante lo que hilvanas

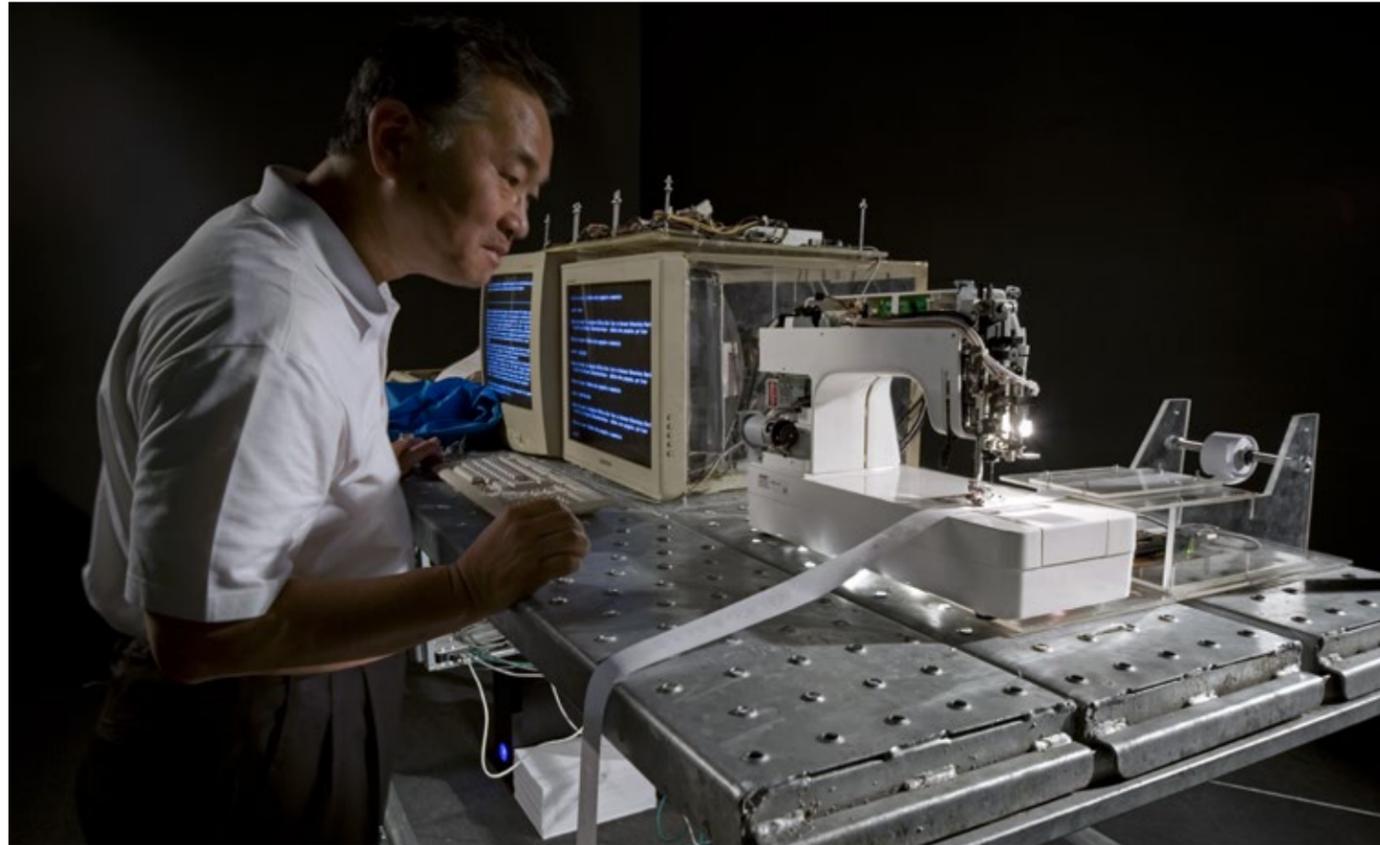
Máquina de coser: Enhebra otra pregunta o comentario

carmen: estas aburrido

Máquina de coser: ¿Quieres cambiar de aguja? o ¿quieres terminar de costurear palabras conmigo? Hilvana "terminar", "chao" o "cambiar"

carmen: _

SAMSUNG



Máquina de Coser.
Logical-relational database in the form of a chat that “learns” and modifies its “linguistic behavior” on the basis of interaction with viewers. PC components, keyboard, two dismantled 19” monitors, acrylic, packing tape, OKI 320 continuous-form printer, sewing machine, and scaffolding structure, 110 x 250 x 150 cm., Trienal de Chile, Santiago, Chile, 2009.



