Creative Search Using Pataphysics

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Pataphysics

• is the science of the **particular**
• examines the laws governing **exceptions**
• explains a universe supplementary to this one
• is the science of **imaginary** solutions
• is to metaphysics as metaphysics is to physics

“To understand ’pataphysics is to fail to understand ’pataphysics”
(Andrew Hugill’s Useless Guide to ‘Pataphysics)
Pataphysics

• the clinamen or the chance
• particular over the general
• exceptions over the ordinary
• the paradox or antinomy
• simultaneous existence of mutually exclusive opposites

• subjective
• symmetry, duality
• absurd anomalies
• transcended reality or the absolute
• epiphenomenalism
• unexpected alignment, syzygy
Definition of “animal”

- those that belong to the Emperor,
- embalmed ones,
- those that are trained,
- suckling pigs,
- mermaids,
- fabulous ones,
- stray dogs,
- those included in the present classification,
- those that tremble as if they were mad,
- innumerable ones,
- those drawn with a very fine camelhair brush,
- others,
- those that have just broken a flower vase,
- those that from a long way off look like flies.
Creative Search Using Pataphysics

**Aim:** surprising, novel, inspiring, humorous search

- Exploratory search, not information lookup
- Creative computing by using pataphysical algorithms
- Generate creative search results rather than relevant ones

**Pataphysicalisation** = applying pataphysical techniques to data
Information Retrieval

1. Information need
2. Query formulation
3. Retrieval process
4. Ranking
5. Results evaluation
Prototype

• Local search in book
• Text only, no images
• Tiny index
• No ranking
• Three algorithms

*Exploits and Opinions of Dr Faustroll, Pataphysician (Jarry 1907)*
Algorithms

Clinamen  clear - leaf
Deliberate spelling errors

Syzygy  clear – disappear - vanish
Query ➔ synonyms ➔ hypo/hyper/holonyms

Antinomy  clear – allow light to pass through - opaque
Antonyms of query & antonyms of synonyms
## Experimental Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUERY</th>
<th>CLINAMEN</th>
<th>SYZYGY</th>
<th>ANTIMONY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clear</td>
<td>altar, leaf, pleas, cellar</td>
<td>vanish, allow, bare, pronounce</td>
<td>opaque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solid</td>
<td>sound, valid, solar, slide</td>
<td>block, form, matter, crystal, powder</td>
<td>liquid, hollow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>books</td>
<td>boot, bones, hooks, rocks, banks</td>
<td>dialogue, authority, record, fact</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>troll</td>
<td>grill, role, tell</td>
<td>wheel, roll, mouth, speak</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>live</td>
<td>love, lies, river, wave, size, bite</td>
<td>breathe, people, domicile, taste, see, be</td>
<td>recorded, dead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

• Algorithms
• Larger Index
• Web
• Multimedia

• Evaluation
• Interpretation
• Apparent randomness
• Transparency

a pataphysical approach to making a creative exploratory search tool
References