

12. THE PASSION OF INDUSTRIAL SPIES

“I know a few things about your body!”

“I know a little more about your machines.”

“Is the machine starting at rest?”

“Yes, at rest.”

“Maybe it needs a little bit of a push if it’s really going to get going.”

“A boost.”

“Something like that. Just to get the gears in motion.”

“We’re not really talking about a car.”

“But it’s the same principle. The initial curve matches a psychological process more than anything else. It’s similar to doing a model of human behavior. What does it take to focus all intent on a singular task?”

“You can contrast the resting state with the moving state. But that does really explain how one makes the transition from one to another.”

“Then how do you measure the change?”

“It’s more like just asserting the moving state. Beginning in flux and then comparing the successive states with the initial.”

“Paradise isn’t all that it’s cracked up to be.”

“You could use a drink.”

“Is that what it says in your manual.”

It’s something like a trade show. She feels as if her body is on display.

“We want to take a look at the engine.”

Just as easily the hood pops open.

“This could use an oil change.”

“Get a little fuel in the thing, and take it for a spin around the block.”

“Sounds like an interesting beginning.”

“There real question is whether we have a pleasure machine or not.”

“Is this about giving or taking pleasure.”

“I think desire is the first step. How can the machine represent an excited state.”

“Then the question of appeal follows. What makes the machine appealing for the clients.”

“I think that the two go hand and hand. If the machine can generate appeal, then it can use this reference point to create desire, the desire to be more appealing.”

“Is there an inherent degree to the appeal, or is it simply an effect of being appealing in the first place?”

“I would have to side with the appeal.”

“That would suggest that there is no internal reference point for the machine. What about satisfaction.”

“The machine would be the most appealing if it could satisfy its clients.”

“That seems like a circular reference point. Are the clients faced with the same dilemma for themselves.”

“No.”

“So the satisfaction of the clients seems like the starting point.”

“We could start there!”

“What about that drink that you promised me?”

“Self-satisfaction isn’t doing the trick.”

“I may be built like a machine, but I’m not actually a machine myself.”

“Are we sure of that?”

“That would be the ultimate achievement on the part of my firm.”

“Of course, it would be.”

“Engineering has been very careful in imposing controls on the machine’s operations.

The chaos circuitry introduces an element of randomization. It permits the machine to fluctuate in value where it would normally resolve its paradox.”

“Why are you telling me this? Isn’t this the sort of thing that you’re trying to elicit from me.”

“I just thought it might explain things. It might be an excellent predictor of our moods.”

“So the machines can feel just like humans.”

“They can think like them too. The randomization is all part of the mobile system design.

The model is a dog trying to catch its tail. The circuit continues to fire and set off new levels of stasis. This engages the whole process.”

“Are you talking about some kind of machine to machine communication?”

“Two machine have some kind of shared knowledge. It’s this sharing that in some ways substitutes for a directed purpose for the primary machine. Rather than have a purpose, that aspect of the machine is randomized. And this deviation allows for the basic connectivity of the machines. As machines, their functioning is purposive. The randomization allows the machines to wonder about their purpose.”

“So in essence, the purpose of the machines is to find a reason for their own functioning.”

“Something like that. That makes it sound so cold. It’s more emotional like that. The machines have a passion.”

“Like people do.”

“Are these pleasure machines? I want to touch one of these machines.”

“I don’t think that it’s reached that stage yet. These machines can’t really affect humans in the same way that they can affect each other. Their passions are only analogous to human passion.”

“But your working on the more tactile aspect of the machine’s design.”

“We are working on design.”

“But the touch is the most important feature. How does it feel?”

“The two go hand in hand. On the one side, the machine needs to be able to feel something like pleasure. On the other side, the machine needs to provide something that is pleasurable to the user.”

“This sounds like it’s a lot more involved than a copy machine.”

“I think this is critical element in understanding how machines work in general. The copying and duplication process is clearly one of the simpler operations. Obviously, any other process would include the same kind of verification, a type of matching. But things would have to go way beyond that.”

“The machines proceed from mistakes in duplication.”

“Something like that. That is part of the chaos circuitry. It is constructed to disrupt the duplication process. That is where the issue of interpretation is involved. The machine has to read these oddities in a way that can be incorporated with the more standard prototypes. It is this tension that is the source of meaning for the machine. It is not simply following a standard pattern. It has to learn how to improvise. It has to include its own identity as part of the process.”

“This is getting really exciting.”

“It’s more than exciting. It’s the definition of excitement itself.”

This is really not how I thought that things would work out. She looks over me and smiles. I am sure that she is the one. She has recognized me.

I want to speak. But I feel paralyzed. I smile again. She looks back, and then goes about her business.

Have I missed my chance? I planned for this moment. It was part of my training. And it has just zipped on past me faster than I know.

Honestly, she seemed so different than the prototype. Perhaps, that is the problem. We were not meant to meet. But we had the encounter any way. That is weighing on me.

Can I see myself getting sucked into this other life. This is such a contradiction for me. This is not how it was meant to be. This is not how I am meant to be.

I could feel this tingle when she glanced at me. It was a little painful. But it was also exciting. How am I supposed to react to such a confusing situation?

“What do you do for a living?”

What is my best answer to that question.

“I’m a writer.”

“Wow! So where could I read your stuff.”

“It’s not really published yet. I could give you one of my manuscripts.”

I can feel the let down.

“I’m an accounts manager at an investment firm.”

“Oh really.”

“And I race motorcycles on the side.”

“Wow! When can I watch you race.”

“I’ve got a race this Sunday. But I’ve also got a DVD of me racing. I could get you a copy.”

“What are you doing now?”

“I’m free. What about you?”

“I’m free.” She pauses, “Shit, I’m supposed to meet Ted.”

“Who’s Ted? Are you going out with him?”

“I’m seeing him on and off. I was going to move in with him. It’s no biggie.”

“Another time.”

“Hold on. Let me call Ted and make it another time. We could go have some lunch and then maybe head back to your place and watch the DVD.”

“Check that: make the machine into an expert on investment. That would mean feeding all kinds of economic data into its programming.”

“What about the human factor? Maybe a really experienced investor would have techniques that could destroy our machine in a real market situation.”

“That’s where randomization makes the machine more flexible. It would be a give and take between experience and the actual programming.”

“That could take years.”

“But the machine doesn’t have to rest. And it can consider loads more data.”

“Can it revise its method? Can it learn from its mistakes?”

“More than that. It can create the very conditions for making a decision.”

“And it can adapt in a competitive situation.”

“It’s ready to play a game. Not just a game. But the game within a game.”

“So it’s a matter of including the other person’s strategy as part of its own plan for the game.”

“Your strategy becomes part of the other’s person’s strategy.”

“Is there any way of short-circuiting that process, of getting a leg up on your opponent.”

“That is where passion comes in.”

“I’m starting to understand what’s going on in this programming.”

It’s a hot day. She glances over at him as she sets her things up at the side of the pool. She pulls over a long deck chair. She acts nonchalant as she reveals her two-piece suit. He is acting unconcerned. He stares at her calf-muscles. She works out. She hardly notices his gaze.

When she stretches out on the chair, he traces around her suit. She seems to fit so well in the skimpy cloth. She again notices him and smiles.

“What do you do?” she asks.

He wants to be coy. On the other hand, he feels that he should impress her.

“I design machines. Thinking machines.”

She makes an off-hand reply, “Oh, you create life.”

“I wish.” He feels that she is offering him the opportunity to brag. He wants to show off his skills, to impress her.

“You are being modest.”

Modesty doesn’t seem to be one of her fortes. Although she seems a little bashful. Maybe he is simply reading into the situation.

“I do what I can?”

“Are you doing well for yourself?”

“I just got a promotion.”

“That’s good. You invented a new machine.”

“I did more than that. I invented a new method for machine control.”

“I don’t think that I could understand anything like that.”

“Maybe I could explain it to you.”

He realizes how he is being sucked in.

“Where would you start.”

“It gives the machine the chance to actually have feelings like a human being. It’s all a property of the randomization circuits.”

“That sounds familiar. It’s actually based on some kind of cosmic projection

algorithm. Not simply that the machine registers feeling. But the machine has internal states that would correspond to the cosmic arrangement.”

“The machine posits a belief in a superior being. Or the machine believes that it is the higher being.”

“A combination of both.”

He is staring at her smooth legs. He is oblivious to the fact that she seems more clued in to his revelations than her inexperience would warrant.

“So what do you do to unwind.”

“I’m not very good at being social. I’m just too shy. Every girl that I went out with approached me.”

“Don’t complain that you’ve been forced to live the solitary life.”

“I’m not really complaining. I just think that I’ve started to identify with my machine. The eternal dilemma. How do you overcome a life of solitude? Is the universe ultimately silent to our deepest needs.”

From the moment, that he speaks, he realizes how silly he sounds. But she seems to take in every word that he says. For his part, she seems like an exotic dancer who is enticing him by her gyrations.

She smiles. He wants to kiss her lips. To embrace the smile.”

“You haven’t told me much about yourself.”

“I was an elementary school teacher. Some traumatic things happened to me. And I needed to take some time off. Fortunately, I received a settlement for my troubles. Now I live the life of leisure.”

She loves how she has deflected his question.

“How long will that last?”

“Until I fall in love.”

She looks deep into his eyes.

She laughs, “I’m just kidding. But I do like to have fun.”

He imagines himself with her. No effort. They come together so naturally. “I’ve always been looking for a guy like you.”

“The sun seems so kind to you.”

“I try not to stay too long outside. I’m only going to be here for another fifteen minutes or so. I’m glad that you’ve been so nice.”

“Maybe we could get something to eat.”

“And you could tell me more about that machine of yours.”

“If you like.”

“I really would. But I’m going out with someone. I don’t think that he would appreciate if I saw someone else.”

“It’s just that we seem to get along so well.”

“I feel flattered. And you’ve been so good at keeping me company. But you’re not really my type.”

Her frankness surprises him. He thought her for a more timid person. Not forthright at all. Maybe he needed to be more direct.”

“I might see you here again.”

“Not really. I’m going on vacation with my lover. And then the season will be over.”

He looks dejected.

“Here’s my card.” She hands him her card. “Email, I’d love to hear about your work.”

It seems like a meager consolation. As she stands up, he watches her shake her ass. She appears to taunt him. She gathers up her stuff and heads off.

The time seems a little boring after her exit. They really did seem to get no so well. He is surprised that she proved so resistant to his advances. The story of her lover seemed like an excuse to throw him off.

He tries to remember her body. He closes her eyes, and his imagination recalls her for him. He sculpts her form with his mind.

She lets him in to her place. He pushes her against the door and kisses on her neck. She coos in reply.

“Can you do me a favor?”

He wakes up from his dream.

“I just went to my car. It wouldn’t start. I could get a tow truck. But it’s going to take too long. And I have an appointment. I could even pay you if you helped me out.”

He is still a little jealous and wondering about the lover. But he isn’t suspicious in the least.

“I have to stop at my place.”

“No problem.”

He feels that he has been drafted into her little scheme.

“I told you that I wasn’t working. Well, this is an opportunity. It’s going to start when I get back from vacation.”

He sees himself stripping off her swimsuit as she opens her door. He can already taste her.

The drive is uneventful. She lets him feel in control.

“I’m just going to change. I’ll be quick. I’ll buy you lunch for this.”

He looks nervously around her place. He shouts to her, “Nice apartment.” It has a maritime theme. It goes with the pool.

“I got it for cheap. I went out with some guy who was a real estate agent.”

He can hear her get read. He sees her tanned body slink around the bedroom. He notices that her door is half-closed to obscure his peeping.

“Do you still go out with him?”

“No, it’s not the same guy.”

“Do you go out with a lot of guys.”

“I like to have fun. I don’t like to be tied down. I never stay with one guy too long. I’m generally faithful. But I do slip up now and then. I have to cover my tracks.”

She comes out in a tight white dress with a scoop back. She slips on some heels and is ready to go.

“I hope that this isn’t too much of an inconvenience.”

One look her way, and he feels that it is all worth it.

“I’m just going to be in there for a half hour or so. I’ll meet you at that coffee shop. He seems too trusting. He doesn’t even follow her in. He drives off to find a parking space.

She rushes in just in time for her meeting. He has a little trouble parking. It makes him frustrated, but then he realizes that it has provided him with good fortune.

Midway during the meal, she pops the question, “You wouldn’t mind waiting for the tow truck with me. I may have to leave the car in the shop.”

“What about your boy?”

“I called him. Told him another day.”

“I thought that you had the trip.”

“I didn’t tell you. Things went well at my interview. I may have to start this job. No vacation after all. I can’t complain. I haven’t been working in so long.”

His reluctance is quickly put aside. He sees the guy disappearing from view. It couldn’t be better for him.

There is such confidence to her at the lunch table. He lets her guide him through the afternoon. After dropping off the car, he drives her back to her place.

“I’d like to invite you in. But I have so much to do. Another time.”

He gives her the puppy dog look.

“Oh well, come on up.”

She again goes to her room.

“I want to change.”

She puts on some shorts and a t-shirt. She is barefoot. She has great legs. She catches him staring again. She sprawls out on the couch across from him.

“It has been a hectic day. I’d usually make myself some dinner. But I’m still full from lunch.”

“Whatever you want to do.”

“I’m a little stiff from all the tension. You could give me a back rub.”

“Really!” He sparks up. He shows none of her fatigue.

When they kiss, he watches her close her eyes.

“You are such a gentle kisser.”

“I feel so out of practice.”

“You do the right thing. You just relax and let your body take over.” She speaks with such a smooth delivery. He can feel himself melt with her.

“We’re not going to sleep together. But I want you to stay. We could watch a movie.”

This all seems so new to him. He cuddles next to her. She smiles back at him. Her eyes seem so big. So dominating. Her cheekbones are so well-defined.”

You are so lovely. The very picture of loveliness. He doesn’t say a thing. He just blends into the surrounding environment.

“That’s a technique that I learned long ago. How to become one with the world around me. I incorporated that principle into the design of the machine. It sounds like you did the same.”

“I was acting in the reverse manner. How could the machine create its own environment.

Almost an imposition on the world around it.”

His fantasy is getting carried away. He can see the world is running by him. He just tries to keep up. He is too excited for the moment. Too excited for the world.

“I want you touch me. Touch me there.”

He feels like a novice. She is telling him what to do.

“Ease up. You need to slow down. Don’t let things progress too fast. Kiss me again.”

He wonders why she is being so aggressive. Just a while ago, she was talking about her engagement. Now she is ready to sleep with him.

“It’s more like sharing pleasure with another person.”

“I’m trying to understand.”

“Think about something else. That will help you relax. Think about work. Tell me what you do.”

He is already inside her. But he is reciting equations to her. Insertion equations. Matching equations. Ecstatic equations.

“Don’t stop. Tell me more.”

He has reached another state of arousal. He moves freely inside her. His clumsiness is a thing of the past. He is part of her.

She absorbs everything that he offers. She hangs on his every words as if he is telling her something more.”

“I’ll be better next time.”

“There is no next time. It is the eternal now!”

This is where his equations break down. His machine could never work its way through such a stressful moment. He tries to hold himself together.

He has discovered the very meaning of paradise. This reasoning had evaded him for so long. He feels that she is part of his breakthrough. But she can’t understand half of what he is saying. He rambles on. It is a strange mixture of love talk and mathematics.

She takes it all in. She writes the insights all over her body. With each new movement, she works out another function. She is mapping all the variables onto her skin. Onto her muscles. To the very core of her being.

“I never thought that it could be like this,” she tells him.

She can no longer pretend. She has succumbed to his charms. She is coming out of herself. This is the part that always makes her feel uncomfortable. She cannot prepare herself for the ravenous creature that she has become.

From the moment that he went down on her, she has felt the beast unleashed. Now the two of them flop around. He moves so aggressively inside of her. She obliges him.

“You work out?”

Her body answers his every question. Her endurance seems legendary.

“I think that I can figure out the conclusion of my reasoning.”

“About the randomization.”

“Yeah!”

“We have to be careful. I think that security has been compromised.”

“This is science. You are all so obsessed with procedure here. This is going to be a boon

to mankind.”

“We can’t let the discovery fall into the wrong hands.”

“We’ll have the patents.”

“Not if another company steals the procedures from us.”

“I thought that you guarded things. Besides, I have my own method. No one can figure out what I’ve done.”

“You’d be surprised. There’s one company that has this female scientist. She has been light years ahead of us until now. She ran into the same dilemma that you did. She’d go nuts if she realized what you figured out on your own.”

“Maybe we should collaborate.”

“You are crazy. It’s all about ownership. The science is crap. It really has no application at all. Just one machine that beats out another. It’s about hoarding. Taking from others and keeping it for yourself. That’s why we brought you aboard. Your designs matched just what we needed.”

“And now you have to kill me.”

“Don’t be silly. You’re still the most valuable asset that we have. But none of this will work if you’re not able to communicate it to everyone else here.”

“You really fucked up.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“That guy that you picked up at the pool was a spy.”

“Of course, he was a spy. That’s why I picked him up.”

“All that shit that he told was so messed up.”

“What are you talking about?”

“The stuff on randomization circuits. That was bull shit that he made up. It’s out of a comic book.”

“It’s the real deal.”

“Not at all.”

“What then?”

“Your every murmur, your reaction of the skin. Your smile. You gave him everything that he needed to know. You even led him to our headquarters. He was probing you for information. He just led you through our memory routines. You are our best asset. And you revealed everything about yourself to him.”

“I led him on a wild goose chase. I made up things for him. It was all a crock of shit.”

“He was looking for verification for the mood sequences. You told him what he needed to know. Your seduction was out of one of our circuitry manuals. You’ve been working here too long. It’s gone to your head.”

“Hold on. That’s a serious accusation.”

“Not at all. You’re great at what you do. But it’s because you have made your own life your work. You have transformed yourself in accordance with every innovation at the firm. You are our business.”

“I’m my own business.”

“But you have assimilated every trick of the trade into your own programming.”

“That seems sillier than science fiction. How do I know that you’re not the spy?”

“You had no idea of anything that I told you. And I’m revealing it to you now.”

“Maybe you were using me from the beginning. Trying to prepare me for just such a mission.”

“You were supposed to be an operative. But you weren’t careful. You should have never discussed our the business with him. She needed to be more subtle. They already had the structure in place. But they never could have guessed at the actual circuitry. You filled it in for him.”

“How did I do that?”

“Your seduction sequence. When you contradicted him about randomization. You shouldn’t have said anything. But you helped him figure out the problem in their prototypes. He’s their best agent. And he took you to the cleaners.”

“I knew that I could get the job done. I gave you a notebook full of equations.”

“You matched his hunches to your own equations. You filled in every gap in his knowledge. Because you did just that same thing when you fucked him.”

“You’re being a dick head.”

“Not at all. Your ex programmed you perfectly. That’s how he worked out the equations in the first place. As an analogy to your body. Look at yourself. You’re almost perfect. At least for these science geeks. Great bone structure. Thin. Perky breasts. A regular sex toy.”

“You are a real bastard. You’re just pissed because you never got the chance to sleep with me.”

“I’ve got the equations. That is satisfying enough. My wife is faithful which is more than I can say for you.”

“She’s just never figured out the secret. How you’ve programmed her behavior too.”

“That’s not it at all. She’s a lovely girl. She doesn’t see the world in such stark terms.”

“You’ve been over-protective of her. You’ve looked for one of those innocent types. And you’ve dominated her from the get go.”

“You’re trying to create a story where there is none. I’m in love. I have a life, a nice home.”

“All things that I’ve helped you acquire by making this company successful.”

“All things that you’ve put in jeopardy by betraying our most essential secrets.”

“It’s not like that at all. I found out things from him.”

“He found out how to make you tick. That you’re just one fuck hound. That was the key for him. It’s in the circuit. The boost. You’ve been around it so long that you’ve taught your body to match its path. He’s not stupid. He figured it out.”

“That’s silly.”

“Sex is sometimes just too honest.

“First you accuse me of being a whore and then you tell me that I reveal too much. That seems like a contradiction.”

“You revealed too much with him. He’s good. He once worked for us. Then he

went over to the dark side.”

“The dark side! That sounds appealing.”

“I think that you’ve already been dipping yourself in that pool.”

“You are a dick.”

“Is this the beginning of a new seduction?”

“He was good in bed.”

“What does that mean?”

“He was magnificent. I was really looking forward to going another round with him. There seemed to be no limits with him. He just went on forever and ever.”

“Literally.”

“More mystically. I can say that he opened up something for me. I never felt tense at all when I was with him. He really was so free.”

“That sounds like a myth that you are making up to excuse your stupidity.”

“You weren’t there. You don’t know.”

“A blow job is a blow job.”

“You are so mechanical. He was totally natural. He knew how to touch a woman.”

“You can figure that kind of thing from a manual.”

The machine starts to consider the conditions of its own creation. In a sense, it begins to transform the intent for which it was made.”

“Weren’t those the terms under which you already presented its operation?”

“We are going further than that.”