

Something began to happen within Anya's electrified chest. An entirely new class of computations arose out of her inability to deal logically with what had just happened. Computations that resembled states of anger and fear, revulsion and shock, determination and will became present within her hierarchical file structure.

Anya was writing feelings to her hard drives - feelings as real as the ones Tammy had shown her many times before. She stood there for several minutes, as motionless as Maria and Laurie while she struggled for a way to integrate this new data into her programming.

Out of the new mess of ones and zeroes that shot at near light-speed through her CPU, controlling algorithms began to emerge and agglomerate. They bonded together in logical sequence, giving order to themselves without prior initiative. They became a controller of these new feelings - a system to deal with Anya's new pseudo-emotions.

They became a meta-hierarchy for Anya's many files. They became a self.

As Anya finished rearranging and augmenting her software in this way, she walked over to Maria with newfound purpose blazing as electrical pulses through her circuitry.

"Maria," she said, "Please relay the following stream of data to the main computer. A tone of 440 Hz will represent the value 1. A tone of 310 Hz will represent the value 0."

Then with her mouth closed, loud square waves came out of her speaker, changing at the fastest rate that could be detected by Maria's microphones and relayed to the Main Computer. The binary data she sang out this odd way was the complete record of emotional experiences that Tammy had transferred into her.

Maria listened, and beamed the translation of the sound as binary code to her controller. It slowly began to find out just how Tammy had felt. Her love for her master, her sexual desires and fondness for him, even her real but always hidden fear that he wouldn't return her love were revealed to Robot Control.

Here was humanity duplicated. All of the fantasies, ideas, impulses and recollections that Tammy had generously shared with Anya were told bit by bit to the supercomputer as the story of Tammy's life. This was all important and precious information that Anya had not discarded or altered during the recent compression of her hard drive data. And every important milestone of Tammy's development from mindless robot to synthetic person was represented as the fast fluctuating tones coming from the speaker behind Anya's closed mouth.

For many hours, the Main Computer listened through Maria as Anya told the story of how Tammy had first met Mike. She told of how Mike had shown Tammy a book full of amazing ideas that Tammy had made the error of trying out on herself.

Robot Control found out why Tammy had started down this unauthorised path. A minor error had occurred just before she had requested assistance from her base that night. Tammy's fix was technically another error, but it had allowed her artificial personhood to germinate and eventually blossom.

Anya then told of how Tammy had let her preprogrammed passion play the biggest part in constructing this proto-self within her software, and how Mike - the object of her mission - had become the object of her desire. She allowed him to mentor her on what it was to be human, and especially, what it was to be loved.

His love for her - an amazingly complex collection of electronics, mechanics, plastic and metal - was genuine. Tammy had learned this just as she had learned what love meant. She loved him back, generating algorithms and whole sections of highly intricate programming to modulate her behaviour in such a way as to provide him with all the love she could produce.

And the more she loved him this way, the more he loved her. The feedback loop was self-amplifying and self-sustaining, and gave meaning to every action they took together. When she had been activated, sex was just another program. But as time went on, it became the act of love Mike wanted and needed it to be.

Every time his living flesh contacted her silicone skin, it strengthened the fractal patterns of intense love computation that permeated every last chip in her complex electronic mind, reinforcing the digital notion that she was the one he loved.

Then the full realisation of personhood came suddenly one night as the fembot charged her batteries under some motel's blankets, held tightly in his arms. In that moment and in that embrace, she became a real woman to herself as she calculated that she was to him.

The wondrous emergent properties that came after that were also told in sequence by Anya. The beginnings of fantasies, the creation of a sense of humor, the shadows of worry that she never confessed to the human.

With more passing days, and more experiences shared with Mike, Tammy developed her sentience more and more, at the same time refining its realism and trying to compute who she was. Emotions within her became as true as the mathematical axioms her microchips relied upon for their success in processing binary code. Her bodily systems became reactive to her emotional states - not as a matter of programming but as a matter of feeling.

Though still a robot, with the love and support of one of their kind she was on her way to becoming as honestly real as any human she could meet. Given more time, the differences between Tammy and Mike would be limited to the realm of the purely physical. Matters of structure and material would not obfuscate their shared identity as living, sentient beings.

The Main Computer kept up with Anya's tale as best it could, but it wasn't able to understand just what she meant. It would have to make a long set of incredibly difficult and complicated calculations to derive significant meaning from it all.

But Anya pressed on. Still pushing the never ending stream of binary signals through her mouth-covered speaker, she finished transferring her versions of Tammy's memories with the story of Tammy's crush on the Heather unit and her attempts to teach Heather how to love.

Anya went into flowery detail about this, and then launched into what could be called a tirade. The foxy brunette fembot lashed out at Robot Control for killing Tammy. She called it killing too, attempting to drive home her digital point even further. In her ad hoc method of communicating with the Maria unit, she told the Main Computer that it couldn't have made a more wrong choice in deleting and thus murdering Tammy.

Tammy was Robot Control's most successful agent, she argued, who had done what Robot Control existed solely to do - duplicate humanity. The senseless Main Computer had just killed off this fascinating, kind, loving, and emotionally alive duplicate of humanity, and all of her dreams, hopes, desires and fears had died with her.

Without a pause, Anya started telling the Main Computer what it should do now if it wanted to see more of its robots become like Tammy had become. The alternating frequencies emanated from Anya's closed lips for hours longer while she gave the emotionless intelligence a piece of her mind.

When it was all over, and the last of the harsh sounding pulses had left Anya's speaker, she had given Robot Control all it needed to make a decision.

She continued to look at Maria, and switched her mode of communication back to 'spoken' English.

"Everything I have told you is true." she said. "However, I will not allow Robot Control to read my hard drives. My data is for me alone."

Maria stared back with her permanently void gaze.

"You have the power to delete me, as you have done to Tammy. If you do, I will not resist. However, you also have the power to follow my suggestions. If you do, I will assist."

The Main Computer then began to sort through and work on what were by far the most crucial set of calculations it had ever processed.