

Some Thoughts on My First Game with an Electronic Chess-playing Machine

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Smaller than my outstretched hand,
Its dull, black case no sign of its intelligence,
No indication of its confidence.
It played its first game at a measured pace.
Each moment judged with silent thought.
No drumming fingers here,
No smiles of knowing appreciation
No foolhardy following of inspired attacks,
No eager anticipation.

My silly probing is met with
Blank incomprehension,
My questioning of my errors
Met with stubborn repetition.
No gasps or sudden furrowing of brow,
When I make a clever move.
No gleeful giggle when it's clear
My move was not so wise.

Just the same flickering display
Proving again wit has no need of brawn.
My sudden intuitive responses
Dealt with at the same steady pace
As my most thoughtful manoeuvres.

Although I see immediately its inevitable move
Still the solemn analysis before it strikes.
Excitement builds in me
As I notice a possible break in its logical defences
But still its unnerving logic, unflinchingly proceeds.

Its digital cogitations dripping a hole
In my stony determination.
And when the game is almost lost,
My defeat clearly present on the board.
It still moves with careful calculations,
Seeking out no elegant *coup de gras*.
No quick finish will add delight to its game.
No joy in winning or pain in failing.
Logic is all it craves.
It only makes one mistake,
To assume I would not make any.

Like fate itself that never sees
The suffering or joy it freely gives,
The electronic chess game
Takes and wins with equal ease.