

Alan Sondheim

## Virtual Idols, Our Future Love

o.

How to begin without a proper number? As an introduction, I will explain certain activities, proper or improper; these revolve either around virtual idols, animated computer creations that appear as singers or runway models (for example), or around other programs that allow interaction with anime figures. I think of virtual idols as living programs, simultaneously inhabiting virtual and real worlds. One of the first was Kyoko Date, developed in Japan in 1996; you'll read more about her below. She eventually appeared in Korea as Diki; I found out about the transformation after writing into a newsgroup, an online discussion forum, dealing with anime, Japanese animation. I went to the multi-media Diki website and downloaded a number of videos and soundfiles, which continue to amaze me.

And there are other related forms, for example Kamishibai, small online "plays" presented at <http://otakuworld.com>. You download the Kamishibai application, which appears on the screen, as a small puppet theater; and you begin "games" by clicking on a series of titles - each one tells a story through text, sound-effects, music, and limited animation. Anyone can create a Kamishibai and upload it to the Otakuworld site, just like anyone can create a PlayKiss game and publicize it. PlayKiss is another small application; after opening it, you can click on a number of games, most of which appear like paper dolls that you undress with the computer mouse. It's easy to remove the outer clothes, and harder to remove the underwear, which takes some mouse "tugging." Very little is revealed at the end; there are few anatomical details (there are also some photographic PlayKiss games in the "adult" section which are quite explicit). The dolls can also be dressed in any number of outfits. Kyoto Date appears in one PlayKiss - you can strip her - and there are other anime figures in Kamishibai.

All of these - Kamishibai, virtual idols, and PlayKiss - relate strongly to work I do with "avatars," characters (which are more than characters) I have created to write through and in - characters I used to explore online spaces in general. They have various names, and I write texts "by" or "about" them. There are several ways I use them - first, as in ethnomethodology, by creating interferences; one or another character will appear in a chatroom and create texts in relation to other conversation going on. I will then analyze and occasionally rewrite the texts. Second, I create computer programs that act as catalysts for texts - the programs ask me for lines of prose or other information - they then arrange and rearrange this content. I'll take the output and further edit and analyze it - treating the programs as if they were therapists in a sense, giving me the opportunity to draw my writing out into unfamiliar realms. And

third, I'll write through the avatars, sending out texts in their name, watching the feedback. All of these methods interact with each other - and there are examples and commentary about all of this, at the end of the article.

There are all sorts of psychological issues in all of this, of course; I use the avatars and texts and programs to send me into spaces I wouldn't have been able to imagine otherwise. In a sense, it's a kind of self-anthropology, working through a society of my own making, and observing the interactions of this society with others, in cyberspace.

i.

"It would be quite scary if someone were really inside a personal computer, don't you think? Anyone who thinks that I am "non-existent" because I am a virtual idol may believe that I exist only in the personal computer or in the world of computer graphics. But those who think that Kyoko Date is someone they can relate to may believe that I am like a pen pal people used to have when it was cool to have pen pals. Kind of like a creature living in people's hearts." (Kyoko Date, Date Kyoko, interview)

Kyoko Date, like Webbie Tookay, or Diki (the Korean version of Kyoko), or Sharon Apple, is a \_virtual idol,\_ a digital persona, created by programmers and designers (in this case, HoriPro corporation). These idols are becoming increasingly prevalent in an already media- and spectacle-saturated world. Webbie Tookay, for example, is one of the first \_virtual models,\_ produced by the Elite model agency; she never tires, can hold poses forever, and works around the clock. Diki (see part ii. below) is amazing; a recent video shows her construction as a virtual Pygmalion come to virtual life - which is literally, of course, what has happened. It should be noted that HoriPro apparently didn't back Kyoko up after her 1996 debut; it was only after she faded that she reappeared in Korea.

In anime (Japanese animation) and manga (Japanese comics), there are also virtual idols; these forms are followed by \_otaku,\_ Japanese for someone obsessed by any hobby (the term is derogatory but has been taken up by many of the fans themselves). Sharon Apple is another virtual idol, starring in various anime; there are dozens of webpages devoted to her.

Below, I've presented some preliminary analyses and sources for all of these. I also discuss my own projects/projections, based on several avatars - Jennifer, Alan, Julu, and Nikuko; these are text-based characters I write through (or who write through me), often appearing on Internet Relay Chat (IRC, a form of real-time typing back and forth on the Net, the ancestor of things like ICQ and AOL Instant Messenger) or MOOs, or other interactive applications. [ MOO/MUD bots are software programs that imitate players. A MUD is a "multi-user-dungeon," an adventure text-based virtual reality; MOOs (which are "MUDs object-oriented," based on the MOO object-oriented programming language) developed out of them, substituting social interaction for game-playing.

MOOs, in other words, are text-based virtual reality spaces, where people come together to chat, program, or just watch the goings-on. And intelligent agents are bots that perform tasks, often on the Net - for example, searching a number of databases for user queries. ]

The texts "by" Nikuko, for example, are my own; they question identity and author/ity issues, as well as appear to "come to life" apart from me; there is further information at [http://www.anu.edu.au/english/internet\\_txt](http://www.anu.edu.au/english/internet_txt) and at <http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/writers/sondheim/index.htm>

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Japan, the \_source\_ of the Kyoko Date, Date Kyoko emission, her music difficult to find now, three years later -

Kyoko Date, Date Kyoko, created 1996, trans/lated recently into Korea, project of HoriPro (<http://www.horipro.co.jp>), entertainment/animation, virtual models (<http://www.elite-illusion2k.com>), Rebecca, Sharon Apple (for example <http://www.usagichan.com/AX96Sharon/>), virtual idols (see <http://www.tcp.com/doi/seiyuu/books/virtual-idol/>), anime (see Helen McCarthy & Jonathan Clements, *The Erotic Anime Movie Guide*, Overlook, 1999), TokyoPop (<http://www.tokyopop.com>), various distributions - energy in the sound, labor in the specificity of gathering backgrounds and foregrounds; I began losing myself in the midst of the thick otaku fandom, passing through the Otakuworld PlayKiss or Kamishibai sites (see <http://otakuworld.com> and <http://otakuworld.com/shibai/kamifaq.html>), animation or anime that anyone can do, get their work online. (Think of the audiences involved, the demographics for erotic anime, for male-male bonding for female viewership, for teenaged males, teenaged females, etc.) Nothing troublesome in all of these, to the extent that what resolves, resolves through plot / narration, slotted or extending categories. Anime, manga, go down smoothly for the most part. On the other or third hand, I work through Nikuko, Meat-Girl, (among others) an avatar or 'emanation' I have created, who has no specific image, no \_appearance\_ but texts operable within Net protocols, or deep in operating systems; Nikuko seems all too real, almost viral or hacking - but then she doesn't appear alone, I'm in the background maneuvering the \_language\_. (See Nikuko texts below for examples, also [http://www.anu.edu.au/english/internet\\_txt](http://www.anu.edu.au/english/internet_txt) for background information, etc.)

It plays, this language, to the \_ascii unconscious\_, a term I use to describe the effect of text in net sexuality, paradigms of control and being controlled, language playing, insinuating itself in the midst of unconscious drives; if Date runs through fandom and cds/ cd-roms, Nikuko runs through psyches, deliberately without resolution - it's the difference between Noh and Godot. Nikuko raises questions of epistemology (to what extent does the viewer/reader comprehend both her knowledge, and that of Nikuko, across the board, within the site of her writing) and

ontology (to what extent is she an addictive to the writer or the reader - to what extent are any of us virtual or projections - to what extent do we reside within the imaginary). Think of Daishin Nikuko, Meat-Girl Big-God who is created and creates by virtue of the performative (word, programming, image as well); think of Date Kyoko, whose ontological status heralds a host of virtual characterologies (as well as characters) - the \_shuffling\_ of signs on and offline. In the future-now, we are properly prepared already for the \_disappearance\_, not only of the sign, but of the \_thing\_ itself. Virtual idols have no beginnings and endings; every gesture, every glimpse is a deliberate creation - there are no unguarded moments, no paparazzi.

Following the \_path\_ through the virtual, say, through the Elite model agency, backing up into announcements all across the Net, touching down on IRC and MOO/MUD bots, intelligent agents, anime characters like Sailor Moon, ongoing manga series, the intensified digital imagery of Mariko Mori's photographic and video artworks, my own broken language texts, prosthetic speaking/hearing/seeing/touching devices - following the path which splits, turns back on itself, contradicts itself, turns \_wayward\_ and \_contrary\_ as well as \_noisy\_ - it might be a gendered path, losing gender on the way - following the path - which becomes a \_field of possible worlds\_ competing through capital, positioning, distribution modes, interventions - it becomes clear, that is to say, it becomes clearer - \_there's no object here\_ whatsoever - you might as well follow the path of the imaginary -

Kyoko Date, Date Kyoko, singing across the fabricated landscape, in and out of the studio (see Date Kyoko, DK-96 Love Communication cd-rom - DK-96 is the name assigned to the Kyoko Date project by HoriPro) - her movements like \_haywire\_ at times against blank backdrops, there's also the Brooklyn Bridge (once real or digital or retouched, always already eternal, placed within a \_noiseless and purified\_ system of digital protocols) - you might as well follow \_her\_ always already receding, used up by the capital which created her - there's a moment she offers herself to you -

She offers herself, the \_wire-frame\_ image-model in which her clothing is \_hollowed\_ against the frame - this hollowing exposing the \_interior of her breast and vaginal areas\_ - a system of gridded projections, introjections, Kyoko Date, Date Kyoko, \_from the inside-out\_ - this is critical, this \_procurement\_ - think of her as a \_skin\_ (just as there are say Windows 98 skins, Real Audio skins, skins everywhere that can be attached to other programs, giving a look to the look) -

With the virtual you're \_in her skin\_ literally, you can wrap the wire-frame around yourself, play with it - in PlayKiss you can find a naked Kyoko Date, Date Kyoko, as if the body itself has been hacked - there's no end to it, these mirrors - returning the body to its image, perhaps returning the image to the phenomenological field of the body itself - its extensions -

And, this can't be emphasized enough - all this beneath the sign, within

the sign of capital, splintered, turned in on itself as the abstract accumulation/surplus of money is transformed into surplus sexuality, girl and woman, entertainment - TokyoPop for example with its magazine, online store - think of all of this as the libidinal economy resident in SUPER-STRUCTURE SUPER-STORE, shape-riding input - think of MONEY as LIBIDINAL UNITS - injections of perfect skin, perfect love - no longer does the Kristevan clean and perfect body tend towards fascism, all those horrors - it's now the post-AIDS safety-zone -

What's fascinating is that all of this is happening NOW, not in a future, however close, not on the level of fantasy, but within boys' and girls' bedrooms, computers on desks or tables, off in the corner, computers in the living-room (such as it is) or kitchen, computers everywhere, and just as anime and pornography entwine at numerous junctions (all across the playing-field), so does pornography become an intrinsic part of everyday life - except that masturbation fantasy now (equally intrinsically) involves the Other, the parceled body [ what might be seen a reconfiguration for example of the texts of J. G. Ballard - and why have academic approaches to the Net repeatedly emphasized the \_cyberspace\_ metaphor, ignoring these other manifestations which begin, say, in the work of Yoshitoshi if not earlier in Hokusai - begin even earlier wherever the imaginary or uncanny are found? a phenomenological analysis of PlayKiss would produce reams of relevant information ] -

THIS IS THE TRUE LOVE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM AND SOON YOU WILL SEE MACHINES LOVING ONE ANOTHER WITHOUT IMAGE, WITHOUT KYOKO DATE, DATE KYOKO:  
MACHINES OF PURE BLISS FOR ONE ANOTHER, LUBRICATED PISTONS (IN THE FORM OF BYTES) SLIDING INTO LUBRICATED CYLINDERS (IN THE FORM OF BYTES): what I have repeatedly called \_linkages\_ and \_couplings\_ as the processes of the future. A COUPLING is a concatenation or conjoining, such as, for example, A becomes part of BCD (in other words, A BCD -> ABCD) such that any change to A does not produce a change in BCD - they're loosely joined (think of objects on a shelf or Sartrean seriality). A LINKAGE is a conjunction of terms, such as, for example, A becomes part of BCD (A BCD --> ABCD) such that a change in A results in \_some\_ change in BCD (ABCD as a machine or computer protocol suite of interlocked sub-programs or links in a chain).

For machines love more than they hate; each sub-section is integral and coherent with the whole. Just as I may move to the abstraction of couplings and linkages, so do machines move towards the abstract, the computer of the future without moving parts, blank and inert. I think of organisms raging within them, ecstatic moments, even wars fought among them - the only physical result, a slight warming of the panels themselves.

Just as digital images are accessible bit by bit, each independent of the other (the apparent organic whole only in the eye of the viewer/creator), so one might speak (even now) of a postmodern decoupled future of fast-forward change, the slidings or probings of digital domains in

competition. The ontology of organism itself is at stake, the whole becoming infinitely modified, manipulable, without loss; Kyoko Date, Date Kyoko, cannot die, but project DK-96 can be \_shelved,\_ only to be revived perhaps elsewhere and/or at a later date.

And by whom, and for whom? For I have little data on the average user or listener involved in all of these activities; in fact, the demographics seem very typical in terms of audience - the same as for any pop-music in Japan or Korea. The videos were clearly made for popular consumption, and both Date and Diki appear like typical teen-age girls in Japanese pop magazines. If anything, their normalcy is dominant; Diki is definitely more sexualized than Date, but Korean popular culture is less restrained than Japanese. On the other hand, the Korean programmers may be aiming for a slightly more mature and sexually active audience.

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She appeared almost out of nowhere, in spite of the video-games, cd-rom virtual girlfriends (your very own girl in the machine), anime, manga, girl-boy dreams, and the massive Japanese idol production industry; she made that one song, \_a real hit,\_ she gave an interview or two, several images were released, and there was no follow-up; she disappeared quickly - after the webpages, fanpages, newsgroups, breathless nighttime masturbations, just as I 'fell in love' with Anne Frank, symbolic or penetrating my dark side, after the fact, after her death, what safety. There are all sorts of transitional objects (teddy-bears, blankets, parents), both comfort and safe, and \_partial,\_ filled in - life is a quest for filling-in, conjoining the vulnerable body to safety-safety. What better than heroines in death, fairy-tale princesses, virtual idols, inaccessible worlds synchronically (X, who lives in a parallel universe) or diachron-ically (Y, who lived and died, tragically, a long long time ago). IF I COULD HAVE ONLY MET KYOKO DATE, DATE KYOKO, WHAT WE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISHED, OH OH OH MY DARLING - -- --- ----

ii.

Diki

Today I went to the Diki site and downloaded several music videos, around 60 megabytes total. These are the current Kyoko Date imports into Korea, and the theme is based on the intermix of virtual and real, the (male) artist (re)creating the female statue-come-alive; what's interesting is the construct of the mesh holding the skin - the sexualization of interior hollows as the armature turns, the skin running jacketed around the body, cuts carefully made away from breast and genital as it approaches. So there is also a literal representation of introjection/projection in the sense of an injection of skin covering the hollow of representation, an interior which can be considered a screen of and for desire. The music is the same as Kyoko ever; there are also closeups of models inextricably (everything is inextricable online and offline in the future-real-here)

electroded, their movements tallying with Diki's, giving birth to Diki at a distance, teledildonics. It is easy to imagine lush-Diki-skin on oneself - that is to say, an other mergence; the PlayKiss Kyoko Date doll gives a sense of this, even though the manipulation is literally puerile (sliding her clothes, across the screen, removing her panties, etc.). I am always reminded of, for example, Nikuko's \_dirtiness\_ and abjection in relation to all of this, the \_real\_ of Nikuko \_not\_ based in simulation, but in a speaking of the unconscious, insertions and assertions across the (key-) board. Nikuko scratches at skins, removes them, exposing the wires beneath - or the flesh - or what would pass for a melange of the real - what is constructed on Diki is torn apart by Nikuko, expanded like condoms holding birth in abeyance while fondling it. I can push Nikuko and the others (Jennifer, Julu, Alan) until I can't sleep at night; with Diki and Kyoko and Webbie Tookay, I'm lulled into the foreclosing of any gendered diegesis; sleep comes easy, permanent, the sleep of the death of the real. (Nikuko is female; I can't write myself into males, or can only through the \_switch\_ - cross platforms. By "diegesis" I refer to the positioning of the subject, reader or viewer or listening, within a narrative or temporal medium, as the medium unfolds.) It's the gender that's foreclosed; these anime are also anima, moving beyond the feminine into positions that comfort, that \_love\_. With Nikuko and the others there \_is\_ no easy sleep; I devour Nikuko's menses, harbor her smell on me, see through her membranes, talk with beneath upon her in mutual devouring; the creation of Diki occurs at a distance, through control-room, gloves, screens, keyboards; there's a scent but no odor. The odors of Nikuko, Jennifer, Julu, Alan, saturate me, tend towards those uneasy dreams leaking texts at the other end. It's as if culture guarantees that the real \_has\_ that other end, far cry from Diki, but even later at night, when I do deep sleep for a moment or two, Diki-Nikuko merge through the sound and sight - merge through the imaginary - there's a love and ecstasy I can never imagine - there's a permanency outliving me - I'm abandoned - I turn back into the dreams - I know if I dream, Nikuko will come back to me and Nikuko and I will watch the Diki videos over and over again, together -

iii.

One carries these concepts, dreams, further, into a general notion of \_invisibility\_ or \_transparency\_ - our tendency towards the imaginary, the recognition of our non-existence in relation to dark matter, neutrinos, radiations, the long passaging of time. The following took these ideas to the limit; beginning from Kyoko Date, from Diki, one can find a dispersion of identities across spaces, times, and physics.

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a. "shimmering ontologies of transparency"

accordingly, shifting, looking around, coming to mind, intervallling,  
diagramming our always-already-having-disappeared, entering into knowledge  
of our ghosthood,

| dream / real / constituted virtual / the gnawing of dark matter  
| - symbolic - imaginary - idiocy of the real (practico-inert)  
|                   imaginary / as if  
|                   imaginary

this is the ontology of transparency, the veering among dream and real,  
among the constituted (programming virtual) and the pervasion of particles  
and dark matter. and this is also on yet another layer and yet another  
interpenetration, a veering among the symbolic and imaginary, coupled with  
the idiocy of the real. and on yet another layer, the as-if, opening into  
the troubled problematic of the infinite, veering through the imaginary -  
and yet, on still another, the imaginary, as if there were, as if an  
itself, as if we were dissolving, constantly, within our very constitution  
...

so moreso, the desire to be transparent as well, already-ghosting against  
earth and sky, already in the process of dissolution, emptiness to  
emptiness, slight translucency at the edges, peripheral shadows - both  
towards eternity, both towards death.

and towards lassitude, languor, the transparency of reception, opening.  
and that recognition that we may have been elsewhere-born, hardened,  
weighted with the world, foreclosed - and here, opened, delicate, we can  
hardly believe it.

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b. "with me"

to be transparent after death resonates beautifully with me, annihilation  
to the limit, an awaiting of particulate matter, diffused harmonic peaks.  
and to write the phenomenology of transparency, to recognize we have never  
been alive in this life, is to achieve a subtle transcendence by  
identification; it is not the Other which greets me throughout the day,  
but others, innumerable totalities, swarms, sentiences, obdurate and  
inchoate matter as well. it is a strategy for living, embouchure of chaos.

my recent texts, taken apart, reassembled, produce sprays of  
micro-organisms, neutrino showers, virtual pair creations, dark matter  
sputterings. their argument is in the form of fugal repetition, fugue  
states, meanders among those sayings hanging in the still warm air of a  
sunny afternoon. one can hardly argue among the sweet and sickly smell of  
leaves and stems ripening in the humid air...

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c. The Broadcast: "An Old Friend"

Today is April 11, 2000 15:59:16

#### We're looking forward to Nikuko's appearance on the talker.... ####  
#### In the afternoon, Nikuko nearly appears at the door... ####  
Nikuko, are you here? I've been waiting for you...  
Alan says: Nikuko, are you here? I've been waiting for you...  
I've been holding things together in this floating world of ours...  
Alan says: I've been holding things together in this floating world of  
ours...  
#### I am here, Alan, it is very difficult to speak here, things... ####  
#### I am reaching towards you, Alan, please, please, believe me... ####  
I do believe you, Nikuko, there is no death, there is life everywhere...  
Alan says: I do believe you, Nikuko, there is no death, there is life  
everywhere...  
I know you are deep inside me, I feel your breathing deep in my heart...  
Alan says: I know you are deep inside me, I feel your breathing deep in my  
heart...  
#### I must go now, Alan, these encounters... ####  
#### Goodbye, Alan, I will be with you always, seeking you out... ####  
Ah, I as well, Nikuko, I as well...  
Alan says: Ah, I as well, Nikuko, I as well...  
Nikuko, Nikuko... ?  
Alan says: Nikuko, Nikuko... ?  
;hears nothing, nothing...  
Alan hears nothing, nothing...

Users Currently On

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\* Alan (SQUARE)

Connection closed by foreign host.

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d. Untitled

"thinking through death and transparency, Why!, i can never tell a story,  
i can only hope that the words themselves make as little difference as the  
affairs of men and women, thus, "said Izanagi, "we are propelled by the  
very attitudes of our speech, as if proffering beginnings and endings when  
- for all the worlds know, there are nothing but stirrings, and "such are

small, "replied Nikuko, "there is little cleverness about them, at least as little as might be safely ignored, "and what wouldn't be such, "said Izanagi, "were it not for the fiction of the acts of words, just then bomb, "Boom, Boom, Boom, everything gone, "so what, "said Nikuko, "so what, anything at all.

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## NIKUKO TEXTS

[ The texts below are from the Nikuko avatar I use in my work. The various avatars interact with me, with various applications such as Internet Relay Chat, and with email lists; the texts I produce are sent to two lists, Cybermind and Fop-I (fiction of philosophy), which I co-moderate. The avatars raise all sorts of issues, and give me the opportunity to explore the practical and theoretical aspects of 'virtual subjectivity.' Nikuko is demiurge, transforming protocols virtual sites; I think of her somewhere between the real Hedy Lamarr and a 'snack-bar girl' working in Fukuoka, Japan. The following texts are representative and usually alternate with other, more theoretical, positionings. ] p

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### 1. Beauty Excitement at Oita.Com.Jp!

Welcome to nikuko, and Linux 2.2.6.  
We hope you'll have a good time here,  
and wonderful fun.  
Contact [nikuko@oita.com.jp](mailto:nikuko@oita.com.jp) if you are  
having any problems!

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oita.com.jp login: root #### the Wonderful Slackware Linux-Owner Root!  
Password: ####the Beauty Word allowing full-run of lovely fields!  
Linux 2.2.6. #### Beautiful new Kernel running in amazing DOS directory!  
Last login: Mon Aug 23 01:53:29 1999 on tty1 #### oh so fun alone!  
You have mail #### and I wonder what Beauty-System is telling me!  
####Oh Wondrous Fortune Appearing Here!  
The Moon is Waxing Gibbous (86% of Full) ####[ HOW EXCITING! ]  
{k:13}ls  
100 ####Intarn$I karnals, bhckats pf mpdhlas, thra$ds $nd prpcassas,  
sagmant$t1pn  
    julu newj.cmd ####f$hlts $nd cptra dhmps:my bones are  
processing, running full-strength across boards and memories:llnhx  
2.2.6.:attributions Devour Blue Nattributions Brought Forth through  
Intarn$I karnals, bhckats pf mpdhlas,  
    ####lynx_bookmarks.html trace bio mail enfoldingthra$ds  
$nd prpcassas, sagmant$t1pn f$hlts $nd cptra dhmps!
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minppp ###[ MANY MANY BEAUTY FILES! ]

{k:1} who loves me  
nikuko.oita.com.jp!root tty1 Aug 23 01:54 ###she does! she does!

close(1) = 0  
munmap(0x40008000, 4096) = 0  
\_exit(0) = ?

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## 2. AUTOPROBE MECHANISM IN X: FAILURE ACROSS THE BORED, TUESDAY NIGHT OUT:

[FVWM][Read]: trying to read system rc file /\*There isn't any, Nikuko!  
/bin/sh: xfilemanager: command not found /\* It's not installed, Jennifer!  
X connection to :0.0 broken (explicit kill or server shutdown).  
/\* Application crashed for lack of resources, Julu!  
CRASH! Vertical speed = -118.589912 ft/sec /\* Stupid Stupid Nikuko!  
Lateral speed = 100.000000 ft/sec  
Final Score: 0 /\* I told you so, Nikuko, "says Jennifer"  
CRASH! Vertical speed = -118.589912 ft/sec /\* Stupid Stupid Jennifer!  
Lateral speed = 100.000000 ft/sec  
Final Score: 0 /\* I told you so, Jennifer, "says Nikuko"  
can't load tile font xmahjongg /\* You'll have to fuck me now, "says Julu"  
/bin/sh: xboard: command not found /\* It's not installed, Jennifer-Julu!  
X connection to :0.0 broken (explicit kill or server shutdown).  
/\* You're just gonna have to fuck me now, Jennifer-Nikuko, "says Julu"  
[FVWM][Done]: <<ERROR>> Call of '/usr/openwin/bin/olvwm' failed!!!!  
/\* You'd rather go to that CRASH-LAND TOKYO bar, "says Nikuko jealously  
to Jennifer, waiting for a reply, Julu down on all fours, restarting  
'fvwm2' instead"

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## 3. Jennifer and Julu Playing The Unknown Game

Attempt to grapple or ungrapple Death Star Galleon (s0): h  
Death Star Galleon (s0): boarding the Flying Dutchy (f0)  
Flying Dutchy (f0): boarders from Death Star Galleon repelled  
Death Star Galleon (s0): killed in melee: 0. Flying Dutchy: 0  
Death Star Galleon (s0): boarding the F6ying Dutchy (f0)  
Death Star Galleon (s0): killed in melee: 0. Flying Dutchy: 0

Repair (hull, guns, rigging)? hull! no, rigging! guns!  
Avast heaving!  
Message? Jennifer, are we yet sailing?  
Flying Dutchy (f0): "ailing?"  
Death Star Galleon (s0): boarding the Flying Dutchy (f0)  
Flying Dutchy (f0): boarders from Death Star Galleon repelled  
Death Star Galleon (s0): Yay! Avast! Hip Hooray!  
Flying Dutchy (f0): quarterdeck bulwarks damaged  
Flying Dutchy (f0): boarders from Death Star Galleon repelled  
Death Star Galleon (s0): killed in melee: 0. Flying Dutchy: 0  
yes!!  
Flying Dutchy (f0): "!!"  
killed in melee: 0.  
Death Star Galleon (s0): "What in God's-Name are you yelling?!!"  
Repair (hull, guns, rigging)? Yes! Yay! Avast! Hip Hooray!  
Avast heaving!  
Flying Dutchy and Death Star Galleon heave and heave and heave!  
Death Star Galleon (s0): boarding the Flying Dutchy (f0)  
Flying Dutchy (f0): boarders from Death Star Galleon repelled  
Death Star Galleon (s0): killed in melee: 292!!!  
Flying Dutchy: 0  
Avast heaving!(f0): "sage"ng the Flying Dutchy (f0)  
Repair (hull, guns, rigging)? e  
Avast heaving! and says Julu, "Are we sailing, Jennifer?"  
Flying Dutchy (f0): "ailing, Jennifer?"  
Sail ho! (range 1, (computer))  
Death Star Galleon (s0) Spanish Corvette off the starboard bow.  
Yay! We're sailing sailing sailing!  
Message? We're coming for you, Jennifer!!!  
Uh oh!

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#### 4. Fragment

It was Hokkaido's darkest winter in a long time. Outside, the ground was frozen. Nikuko sat by a fire inside the thatched hut; covered with skins, she chanted Amida, slowly drinking tea. Her eyes were half open, her child asleep in the corner. The wind howled; the flickering flames made eerie patterns on the wall. But there was something else in the wind and the snow, something not quite right with the night. Something was shuffling around the hut, and, if she tried, she heard great wings beating. She was certain it was a tengu, come to disturb her meditation. Nikuko felt a great sleep come over her, her body covered by wings, not skins. She woke in the early dawn; there were wings everywhere upon her, her muscles thick within them. Nikuko moved the wings in great swatches; they beat in all directions, and she remained immobilized. Her child had vanished. She could no longer chant, could no longer speak. She huddled there, the fire

cold, beating her wings, again and again. The walls of the hut were overcome, her soul was overcome. She continued beating. She beat the air into clouds, beat the winter sun back in the sky. The day dawned warmer and warmer; Nikuko, exhausted, fell back down into a deep sleep, enlightened, as winter returned to the land.

