FLACK ATTACK
FIFTH EDITORIAL MEETING 11 DEC 2005

VoyeurOne Baron: Gonta, at the first meeting you were talking about Kurzweil and the notion of singularity. Now I see that you are “post-singularity”...:

Gonta Maltz: Yes, a group I joined a little while ago.

Stefan Nilsson: Me, I’m post-moral, but need two more members to sustain a group.

VoyeurOne Baron: At the second meeting (I believe) we talked a bit about the issue of singularity in relation to technology as control.

Stefan Nilsson: Haha, Second Life seems to be the dream of greater prominence through dominance, alas, not enough avs to go around – we need more slaves.

VoyeurOne Baron: Did you see the discussion from meeting 3 Stefan?

Stefan Nilsson: Um. Sorry – reading notes from 3rd and 4th meeting. Good stuff!

VoyeurOne Baron: On slavery...

Stefan Nilsson: Autonomy is freedom to dominate.

jesz Murakami: Positive attitude lol

VoyeurOne Baron: Or freedom to be enslaved?

Sorgaard Jacques: As pointed out by Roberta...
jesz Murakami: So then what’s autonomy? Are avatars autonomous?

Stefan Nilsson: Yes. But, in a 1 person = 1 avatar scheme, not enough domination to go round. We end up in a first life scheme.

VoyeurOne Baron: But most people have more than one avatar... no?

Gonta Maltz: The internet has done a very nice job of reducing individuals’ autonomy, in that now people can communicate so effortlessly.

Stefan Nilsson: How depressing. For a while, we lived in the hope of greater freedom in Second Life. Now we find, we cannot break free of the basic constraints of first life.

VoyeurOne Baron: How do you mean Stefan?

Stefan Nilsson: No, I just realized that so far, we’ve only brought with us our first life aspirations.

VoyeurOne Baron: I think we all have loads of avatars (especially if we think of an Avatar as something more than just online representation...)

jesz Murakami: not aspirations, mostly desperations

VoyeurOne Baron: But is it possible to become someone in Second Life (beyond First Life)?

Stefan Nilsson: Actually, I’m currently struggling with that identity issue. Do I WANT to meet other people, or is it my Avatar that is meeting other Avatars? In a web community, you’re more of people-to-people. This is looser.

jesz Murakami: Do you separate your first life avatar from self?

Sorgaard Jacques: When Second Life starts to write its own history and becomes a stable context then the blurring of first life and second life really gets into effect...

Stefan Nilsson: How many of you have tried to make representation of your first life self in here?

Tom Bukowski: I have to some extent... to me the interesting question is how making a representation of oneself in second life differs from first life. The notion of “person”, after all, comes from the Latin persona which originally referred to a mask...

jesz Murakami: How can you avoid making avatar be self?

Gonta Maltz: Would it be wrong to believe everyone in this circle has modeled their avatar at least somewhat from their real life self?

Stefan Nilsson: In my case, an interpretation of an idea.

jesz Murakami: Which avatar?

Sorgaard Jacques: My Avatar was hijacked

Gonta Maltz: There are so very few individuals that strive to make their avatar completely unhuman

Tom Bukowski: People’s representations of self usually starts out with some kind of referentiality link to a first life understanding of self, but that’s a starting point and where the representation goes in second life can often be quite distinct

jesz Murakami: I had a great one the other day

Tom Bukowski: For instance, a human avatar might in some cases be more “different” from real life self than a nonhuman one, but much of it depends on how one defines sameness and difference in the first place

jesz Murakami: She went to an ethics discussion as an energized sphere (blue) with attendant flames

MichaelJohn Turner: I definitely wanted to be the same as in real life, but even more like me than in real?

Stefan Nilsson: I had a really bizarre moment, where I was chatting to a female Second Life friend, and I realized my Avatar was hot for her Avatar. I wasn’t, but my interpretation of my persona was. Everything got kind of complicated since she’s a lesbian and I’m a straight male. And we both got partners in first life, so no hanky-panky.

VoyeurOne Baron: Did you feel that you needed to reveal your “real” self? And are you a straight male here Stefan?

Stefan Nilsson: Voyeur, I’ve always been very
open with who I am first life.

**VoyeurOne Baron:** Just dressed up... then...?

**Stefan Nilsson:** Nope, here, I'm a bisexual female. Kind of... Merely making the point that Avatars go beyond ‘dresses’.

**Sorgaard Jacques:** AV-sexual

**Stefan Nilsson:** It’s an interpretation of a dream. We all become thespians. (no, not lesbians)

**jesz Murakami:** But all avatars are in-human

**Gonta Maltz:** The ability for users of Second Life to represent themselves as they wish is what I believe to be a glimpse of the future, when people will be able to build avatars in real life. I’m a male lesbian in first life

**VoyeurOne Baron:** Sure... but if we think of self as constantly performative we already have avatars in first life

**Stefan Nilsson:** I’m trying to make the point that male/female blurs. A male name does not necessarily mean male gender.

**Benny Pirandello:** Ah so you are going for cognitive dissonance, Stefan

**jesz Murakami:** Avatars are either/neither

**VoyeurOne Baron:** To what extent is this performative self meaningful to you Stefan?

**Stefan Nilsson:** That is not clear to me yet. I do know that I use a somewhat more... deliberate language for my Avatar than I’d do whilst chatting on a web community. Or on MSN. There is always the idea of the avatar, even subconsciously.

**VoyeurOne Baron:** That’s interesting Stefan. Can you expand?

**Stefan Nilsson:** Actually, I do think you all do that, that it’s a part of that phenomenon that makes you subconsciously mimic the other speakers dialect or sociolect.

**Benny Pirandello:** Stefan has triggered my imagination, what if one were to create an avatar that used every aspect available to create cognitive dissonance... flip title, name, clothes, body.... take it to the limit. What sort of reactions would one get?

**VoyeurOne Baron:** Try it benny

**Benny Pirandello:** I’m guessing a lot of anger

**Stefan Nilsson:** Benny, go for it.

**Benny Pirandello:** Well, that’s a big project, and my building and scripting skills are not there yet. Anyway i think I want my avatar to be loved. I aggrivate enough people in real life

**jesz Murakami:** Need to be liked is offering people control over you

**Benny Pirandello:** But it feels so warm and fuzzy
Stefan Nilsson: jesz, true. But wanting to be liked is to try to gain control over them.

MichaelJohn Turner: The Master-slave subject again? Who's in charge?

Funaria Moose: I'll do an interview with a slave tomorrow

MichaelJohn Turner: Interesting Funaria

Funaria Moose: He's a swedish slave, he belongs to a girl for whom I built a lot of furniture. I'll ask him some things about the way he chose his role

Stefan Nilsson: I really can't understand doing dom in Second Life. Dom is so cheap here.

Gonta Maltz: Voluntary ownership of living people. Wonder what different laws there are about that in different countries

Funaria Moose: Has anybody read that notecard from Ar? Let me show you a quote: “You are “slaves” because you have chosen to be, for whatever reason seemed good to you. No one chained you up and dragged you from your dorm room”

MichaelJohn Turner: Stefan, you think Second Life makes things 'cheaper'?

Stefan Nilsson: Yes. Shit, who'd get off on seeing an avatar cringe?

MichaelJohn Turner: Although apparently Avatars can be hijacked or by script locked up (in gor)

Funaria Moose: I once got caught by two guys. It really frightened me, though I could easily escape by teleport

MichaelJohn Turner: Maybe some slaves somehow give up certain control and can't escape by teleport?

Benny Pirandello: That is the essential paradox... the slaves are slaves by choice

Gonta Maltz: I would think the definition of slave requires that the slave be involuntarily enslaved

Benny Pirandello: Yes. Anything else is just playing

Stefan Nilsson: It's the same with first life dom. *shrugs*. The need to relinquish control. The need to be treated like dirt.

VoyeurOne Baron: I think an interesting question is to what extent being a slave in Second Life is a meaningful part of ones identity and notion of self...

Stefan Nilsson: Or, as a mirror of ones self. If you are forced to be strong, you need to be weak.

Funaria Moose: I saw there will be children avatars soon, you'll be able to adopt another player

Gonta Maltz: Really, children avatars?

Funaria Moose: Yes, I was just at Natural Choice. The place where babies come from :)

Stefan Nilsson: Funaria I bet the age game will be awesome. Age play

Funaria Moose: They advertised the kids skins already

Benny Pirandello: That brings up the ugly weird possibility of avatar pedophilia between consenting adults

MichaelJohn Turner: Wonder what a general broader age range would do to this place

Gonta Maltz: It would be interesting to have a meeting, or part of one, with everyone wearing non-primary avatars of themselves

Benny Pirandello: Alteration can be fun... but its too much to keep straight

VoyeurOne Baron: Me and Sorgaard recently went to a costume party here in Second Life. That's when we both became Andy Warhol

Benny Pirandello: That's when i became Lou Reed lol

Stefan Nilsson: Imagine the scenario; a first life late teen girl playing old man using a child avatar played by a thirty-year old man sexually – for money.

jesz Murakami: What does it effect in first life if I take up and play pedo
Benny Pirandello: I gotta say, the whole child avatar thing makes my skin crawl.

Stefan Nilsson: Same here. So, we have this glorious opportunity of exploring the truly taboo... and it'll come.

jesz Murakami: Well maybe put up a bonobo area so it can be ‘healthy’

Benny Pirandello: It’s just not funny to me... and you can imagine where it will go.

Tom Bukowski: lol

Stefan Nilsson: I mean the furries... shit, you’ve all SEEN what THAT community produces.

MichaelJohn Turner: There’s this avatar here that claims to be 16 year old girl, which I think officially is impossible, am torn about what to do or how to behave, because i like her avatar, lol

Stefan Nilsson: Think adolescence.

MichaelJohn Turner: Adolescence seems so long ago lol

Stefan Nilsson: Then welcome back to it, friend.

MichaelJohn Turner: I think my avatar is supposed to be me, but does sneak in some liberties

Funaria Moose: Funaria behaves in some different way than I do in Real Life. Interacts different.

jesz Murakami: MichaelJohn, who is me?

MichaelJohn Turner: I can really appreciate the liberties people take with their avatars! Makes it more interesting and free, but I do prefer human and same sex and my general looks for myself at this point, which connects most easily with my interests. Helps keep me a bit more focussed on what i want to create.

Stefan Nilsson: It seems people go through more or less the same five-step process with avatars.

MichaelJohn Turner: Cool Stefan, enlighten me vendors. Then they find appearance and go wild. Don't forget the box on the head. Then they have a period of using lots of different avatars, and finally, kind of home in on one.

jesz Murakami: The wild ain't true wild

MichaelJohn Turner: Yes, I do see phases in my ‘life’ here

Funaria Moose: I stayed with my avatar since day 3 now

Stefan Nilsson: Haha, part of the ‘wild’ phase is to complain ‘why isn’t anybody REALLY expressing themselves!’

VoyeurOne Baron: Well, Stefan some are home in constant change. I think Roberta has chaged her avatar every week for the past year.

Stefan Nilsson: Voyeur, true. I consider myself one of those. But your focus changes away from your avatar. But then again, I’m trying to master clothing and appearance, so... :)

VoyeurOne Baron: But your avatar can change in other ways than looks. Let’s not forget that.

Stefan Nilsson: Yes, the thespian, persona, role-playing bit...

Funaria Moose: I met a lot of people that don't want to change themself but change Second Life. “Leaving an impression”. Building skyscrapers, film projects, clubs

Stefan Nilsson: .. that’s more challenging, I’d say. To relinquish the security of the known self.

Tom Bukowski: Ok folks, I gotta go for now, but this was a great discussion and let’s do it again soon!

Stefan Nilsson: It’s a piece of cake to move a slider, but to build a second personality...

Tom Bukowski: All my personalities have to go

MichaelJohn Turner: lol, you all have a good time Tom :)}