



Me/my research/avatar

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ABSTRACT

This introspective poem seeks to capture the innermost enlightening and conflict-ridden intellectual and emotional experiences of the consumer research ethnographer. Through an implicit historical overview of the author's consumer research, the poem considers classic anthropological topics such as alterity, entrée, going native, subjectivity versus objectivity, and crises of representation in the light enabled by the synthesis of introspection and poetic rhetoric. Suggesting that much remains hidden about the process and content of ethnography, the poem accretes around 'real' consumer research data: a field note excerpt, a poem, and, mainly, a progressive series of unpublished reflexive field notes and quotations of self-revealing researcher questions from interviews. The poem speaks with a disconcerting multitude of inner voices, contrasting the performance of consumer ethnography depicted enthusiastically as a mystical and spiritual journey with a cynical critical view of it as a tenuous, deceptive, energizing-yet-draining psychological balancing act.

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Seemingly real at
first contact Dark
Freddy stutters:
"I-I-I"
and, buttery slathering, lays it on, baby... "Welcome

[my avatar me
avatar we con
joined at the
lip paying lip
service to the role
call me any
face you'd like to
place your
self within]

Aboard"
to this shimmering and self-defeating,
self-deprecatory awareness i have co-structured
for my

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self. out of depths
half-hidden between voices
between scattered selves, con

stru(fra)ct(ur)ed
out of
shat
ter-

red screens that cascade, careen and
scream like doubling buck shot soap bubbles bursting towards a consumption of presents.
a consuming presence. a consuming of presence in the dark gloom of consumer
envy. the sound of the WAV-form said
“Welcome
Aboard” in
Partrick Stewart's Picard voice. that voice, somehow more authoritative
and more authorial than the
Kirk Off, my friend Barry said yesterday
to which I replied
McCoysturbate. Universals,
like rubbing your

Spock.”

in the ur-interview, the interviewer
Under undue self
influence, reveals (his): “i

mean, yeah.
you know, Mister
Spock.
Science. & the
the whole research project
the whole show
it's really become
a part
of who
i
ya”

Seemingly real
Dark Freddy slurs his words:
“I-ya-I”
and continues
swallowing down deeply inscribed reflux, delicious
ly post-delusional, my reflex
is to chock it up
to miracles:

“people talking
about my re
search as i pass
them at random, it is weird,
and important, this re
searching activity of mine.
My influence feels so ancient and synchro
N(arciss)istically Jung like a nonrandom drawing
Out and In
of these powerful togetherness
Revolutionary Impulses to Love.”

I can't help
it in the in
terview
to connect in
to that im
pulse and state i am
an activist, flip that
card face up and confess

“oh yes
 yes, i’ve
 been involved
 in the green environment, peace movement, the social and untiring
 fight for human and animal welfare all
 My Life I’ve Loved
 and nurtured these social movements
 These social moments
 of Progress,” i profess to protest and
 boycott “the Wizard” who hides
 behind, but joining in
 Love and Revolution, breathing it
 In and Out
 we slowly come to the re
 ason, the real
 ization its why “my re
 search is So Important.”

[metacognizant of this
 metaprogrammer
 of (meta
 physical) meta
 narratives who
 am i
 a small
 but integral
 question, a compliant (e)\$
 cargo(t) pleading
 for mercy from
 the forks of
 vast unknown
 Others]

in the burning field with passion:

“it has been 5
 Days of Almost
 constant living
 no room for fixating
 on past or future—i am
 just in the mystical omnipresent
 now—and effortlessly
 i hear drumming
 blended with my heart,
 my new and open heart
 the wild yelling of our
 ancient souls
 calling
 together
 and the searing re
 ality of this Re
 Search breathing Re
 volutionary fire: Being
 in this state of Love has become strange
 ly comforting, quivering, tenderly, emergingly
 In and Out
 of the penetrant darkness
 these wondrous parts
 of our spirits
 rub together
 and remain
 intact.”

and when it seems dark, you
 will the real
 Dark Freddy to merely utter:
 “I-am-I-am-I”

am a cynical self
 correcting, re
 flective flexive guilty
 poet spy social scientist writing:
 about the “desert pilgrim,
 who scribbles his thoughts—your thoughts! our thoughts!

like writing on water
hiding behind my camera face
our silent mask of science
our veil of words
and badges”

[who and
what is the researcher?
doing the research?
is he different
from the scientist thinking
writer writing the work?]

seeing through
an Other's i's
reading and using each other
's thoughts
speaking through
an Other's words i sculpt
a piece of our e
spn zone out
of diana's notes: her feelings as she falls and she “feels

like she's stepping
into a giant tv screen. sucked
into a black hole, the whole world 4 now
turning and turning” around her i
glimpse, momentarily, through
this power of ours, this
Inner Outer Connect Connect
her words, her world is
so different, this trivial place, this play
ground to me is to her “an inferno
of darkness, television,
noise, games, food, no reason
no reason, trapped,” trapped, in troubles, too much
almost to
touch, too much
to bare.

[this second life
and a third, go forth.
how many ethnographies?
can a self
divide in
to? are “we” a topographically
and consisten(c?tl?)y challenged species or
do
“we”
contain
multiples, infinitely operable
I's ruled by a grand
synthesizer, a metacognizer (ladies and
gentz, the one and z only, Dee
Eff) playing, out of these
familiarily estranged elements,
participatory personality pieces
odes to the adroit handling of
the growing collection of masks,
those i's whose seeing sees
enough, whose partial
is just able to trick the tumblers
to click to connect to
the right network's
locks]

“And the situation
with the study
of the avatar
links
the processes
of learning about Love
Connection and Inspection: identity
as adaptation, exploration and
revolution is a person
an interaction
in and of a virtual world
our own redemption
our own redaction.”

stutteringly, dank, un(d/r)ead
adept with who we are and
who he unseemingly,
seamlessly,
seems to be, Dark
Freddy croaks his final turn:
“I...I”
and ends...

[sharp pains, an
open heart
wounded, surgically
examined,
open i's like an
open door
swinging in the wind,
like a vacant ramshackle
abandoned in a hurry,
no human soul left within
the gaze for you
to abstract away.]