Avatarism

by Rumbidzai Chingosho from Zimbabwe

The Oxford dictionary defines an avatar as "a belief, an incarnate divine instructor, a manifestation of a deity or freed soul in bodily form on earth. The name derives from the Sanskrit word avatara, which means "descent," and its roots are in Hinduism.". Gamers took the concept of an avatar and made it a role with certain qualities in a given game. People on a journey to find themselves took it as a method to express themselves and also manifest into the gods they believe they are and to become whole. It became a concept of self-discovery and it is one of the biggest issues expressed on social media as well-being in the modern-day world.

Avatarism is freedom of form and it appears to people in different ways, in this modern-day world we can already see this through groups of people who express themselves through virtual characters and people who are harmed by different oppressive powers which inhibit their ability to be themselves. Some express it as escaping the boundaries of your imagination, some see it as dreaming big and some see it as the medicine to all the mental health issues our generation is suffering on.

But see avatarism from my point of view, I consider myself an avatar not out of pride but because like everyone else I have a story that defines me, that illuminates my type of avatarism. I'm an African child who grew up learning about pre-colonial history and how it affected our countries. I'm also a Southern African child who grew up under the influence of economic and political instabilities within her natural resource-rich country. I'm also a small-town child who didn't know much about malls or even skyscrapers, all these scenarios have made me understand my limitations on some of my far-fetched dreams.

My culture on its own poses limitations too, I grew up knowing that ladies do all the house chores, I grew up watching women give men so much respect sometimes it looked like slavery, I was taught how to behave and act like a lady

so that one day I would make a fine wife to someone. To this day I respect all the limitations that were put in front of me by my parents and my society, I understand that it is because of their upbringing too and I'm sure they are just looking out for my future and everyone's since they have lived longer than my generation.

Even if I escaped the boundaries of my African heritage I still face limitations. The world we live in is already predefined, be it the fact that I'm a woman, be it the fact that my skin color is different, my financial background is not always stable, and be it my body type. I have grown to understand there are things that I probably won't have that easy access to, for example, my far-fetched dreams, where I see myself creating a research and development facility for the smart kids in different African communities mainly the less fortunate. Although I'm fully aware of the economic, political, social, etc. boundaries that I have to fight against, that doesn't limit me from being my true self.

Despite all this, every day when I wake up I choose myself as my avatar, I could as well adapt to all the limitations posed at me, I could as well conform to the norms in my society, but the avatar in me and the avatar I am made me work hard enough to be a science student and to enjoy it, it made me choose mechanical engineering when everyone asked if I couldn't do a more ladylike degree and it still gives me strength to stand tall in that engineering field and to feel like I belong too. It makes me understand and makes it easy for me to fully navigate this complex biologically integrated vehicle that I am.

I'm not fully there yet but I strongly believe in avatarism being a way forward for me to fully transform into the avatar I am determined to be. I view life as a game just a complex simulation with an algorithm that no one has figured out yet. As much as we think we have figured it out, it always mutates into something different. Me being the main character in this game, I get to have the power to choose how I play the game, my code was designed from scratch by me. Because avatarism is about embracing ones' self, the code is directly sourced from me, so if it means debugging all the other codes I have copied or outsourced over the years that limit

me from being my true self then through the principles and techniques of avatarism I can achieve that.

The greatest minds and the greatest people out there were on a mission to become themselves hence they did all those great things. Avatarism can be seen through, Gandhi and his non-violence philosophy, Nelson Mandela fighting for equality, Steven Hawking the discovery of the origins and structure of the universe, Usain bolt-on being the greatest all-timer sprinter, Michael Jackson the greatest Musician, Diego Maradona being the greatest footballer in the world, Greta Thumbberg standing up for climate change, Elon masks creating tesla, etc.

All these amazing people mastered the art of avatarism and became the giants we know today and every one of us has that same ability to look within and to become. To become the ultimate, you and me in any simulation that this world brings to you. It is the way forward for our new world, it is the way your generation and mine can express themselves, and indeed it is a WEIRD SOCIETY so let's embrace it.