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*Ready Player One's* OASIS in The Real World: An Escape From a Faltering World

The development of a device such as the OASIS device in Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* should not be developed in today's society as it would lead to the overall decline of society. Escaping from problems is not new to humans and with a device that essentially gives them whatever they could imagine, escaping from anything in the real world becomes much more appealing and accessible. The ease of access and even ease of use of these types of devices enable chronic laziness and general neglect of the entire society's needs. Furthermore, devices such as the OASIS would shatter the self-esteem of players because players can create their perfect selves inside the device. Many people struggle with having a good self-image and with a device that allows them to do the things they could never imagine in real life. The stark contrast of one's mundane and stressful life to a peaceful or super fun life would prevent today's society from having good confidence and bravery outside of a small device. Society is already glued to their phones but the immersiveness dopamine rush from a device mirroring the OASIS would be orders of magnitude more addicting. People with less than perfect but more than satisfactory lives would still choose to avoid their responsibilities over actually doing them.

Regardless of how big the inconvenience is, when humans are given the chance, they will choose to escape from arising problems. In the novel *Ready Player One* humanity, as a whole, decides to run from the problems they created. The OASIS is used daily by everyone in the world while global warming, diseases, and poverty run rampant. Ogden Morrow argues, "It had

become a self-imposed prison for humanity, ... A pleasant place for the world to hide from its problems while human civilization slowly collapses, primarily due to neglect” (Cline 120).

Ogden Morrow, the co-creator of the OASIS device, states himself that the device he crafted alongside his partner has become a sort of jail for humanity. If developers in the real world were to create such a device the same fate would fall onto today’s civilization, and if the device was as cheap and accessible as the OASIS device that theory may just become the reality. In the present day, without much of what makes the world of Ready Player One unbearable, anybody would flock to a device that lets them escape even the slightest of inconvenience. The OASIS or a device that was similar would allow users to create their own avatar with characteristics that may contrast their own. Characteristics that the user may have already had low confidence in would end up in the user having even lower confidence in that trait. If they left the virtual world they would despise the traits that they modified because they are more insecure after they felt how it was to not be insecure about that trait. The ability to create ideal avatars inside the virtual world can give a confidence boost but only in the virtual world.

There is a strong disconnect between a user’s identities inside and outside the virtual world. A perfect avatar will shatter a player’s self-esteem. When creating an idealized self the user will become engrossed in their own achievements, looks, or fame inside the virtual world. The detachment is specifically highlighted when Wade Watts shows his morning routine. Going from fit to fat and from world-famous to lonely loser. Ernest Cline writes, “The hour or so after I woke up was my least favorite part of each day, because I spent it in the real world ... everything about it contradicted my other life ... they all served as a harsh reminder that the world I spent my days in was not, in fact, the real one” (195). From Wade’s description of his life away from the virtual world he is miserable and has immensely low opinions on himself. Wade hates the

real world because, in the virtual world, he is something that he is not in real life. The stark contrast between his realities shatters his self-image. Much like Wade, people with access to immersive devices would share his views on themselves. As a whole the player would hate their own self-image and not want to leave the immersion device. What separates their reality from their perfection would just be a handheld portable device. As horrible as it sounds it would be the reality if a device like the OASIS was developed in the real world. Ignorance is not always bliss, especially when it could lead to the entire world falling apart as more and more people get stuck inside an OASIS like device. He sits in his haptic chair all day and gets little to no exercise.

A device like the OASIS will turn society into sitting husks. After Wade starts getting really into the hunt for Anorak's egg he completely stops going outside and sits all day in his haptic chair. Much is the same for many users of the OASIS even if they are not looking for the egg. In the novel it says, "But I spent the vast majority of my time sitting in my haptic chair getting almost no exercise at all" (Cline 196). Wade gets no exercise when immersed in the OASIS device. It is also seen in the novel that many people in public would pull out their OASIS device and just sit down. They have no care in the world for where they were and what would happen to them because they are trapped within the grasps of their virtual compound. Users of the OASIS disregard the world no matter the place or time they will trap themselves if there is nothing for them to do. There is no doubt that others would do the exact same as Wade and rot in their skin as they escape the real world.

The development of a device such as the OASIS device from Ernest Cline's best selling sci fi novel, *Ready Player One* would lead to the crumbling of humanity. Humanity will turn to escapism as soon as a device similar to the capabilities of the OASIS arises. Nobody has a perfect life and devices that allow a person to easily create the ideal or perfect simulation for

themselves would easily take the world by storm and quickly become the sole distractor in the real world. Phones could not even compare to the impact a device like this would have as all ages can use it. In addition to escapism, the ability to create virtual avatars that are ideal to a player's mind leads to a detachment from their real identity shattering their self-image. People who strive to be perfect will never end up being perfect. The differences from a user's virtual avatar and real life characteristics leads to self-hatred and a resentment towards the real world. A perfect virtual world without the need to move creates a society of sitting ducks rotting in their devices. An OASIS like device would instantly capture humanity in the ones and zeros of a virtual world. The creation of a device similar to the likes of the OASIS device seen in Ernest Cline's Ready Player One will lead to the downfall of society. Immersive devices are dangerous especially, in the hands of the human race.

Works Cited

Cline, Ernest *Ready Player One*. New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2011.