

Jun Kuang

Mrs. Silva

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### How Cline's OASIS Could Be Made for Escapism

In today's society, people have a hard time dealing with pressure from society or the environment. This common problem was seen throughout Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One*, hence why escapism was presented as an important theme. In the story, OASIS was a virtual world that was built with the ability of enjoying the game and relaxing. In the game, people are able to turn fantasy into virtual reality. Moreover, creating a virtual world will create an alternative place for people to have the freedom to be themselves. Overall, programmers and engineers should build an OASIS-like world because it provides a place away from stressful situations.

First, an OASIS-like world would make an excellent substitute for school. Schools are one of many notorious places that have people constantly enduring societal norms. An example is when Wade and his classmate were rudely ridiculing each other because of looks. Wade stated, "He was about to reply, but I muted him" (Cline 30). Wade's action of muting his classmate shows the great power of being able to silence the provoker. The tool is unique to a virtual world and would not be available in physical school. This shows how a virtual world would be a great alternative option from physical school. To add on, Wade said, "Gunfire was common in the stacks" (Cline 13). With the additional information about Wade's living condition, the ability to attend school from the comfort of his home proves to be the safest option. Overall, school in the virtual realm is a fantastic means for students to avoid bullying and safely go to school.

Secondly, a digital world would allow people to freely express themselves. People do not always have the best or supportive environment to be themselves. Aech said, “My mother, Marie, had used a white male avatar to conduct all of her online business, because of different treatment and opportunity given” (Cline 320). This shows the power of a virtual world to allow people to create a new online persona. This online persona would make people have a fair judgment on an individual based on their actions and not their look. What’s more, Aech said, “I told my mother that I was gay, and she kicked me out of the house” (Cline 320-321). Aech’s situation is not uncommon, but the OASIS-like world gave her the ability to freely express herself. She gets the liberty of choosing how she wants to live her life. To sum up, people have prejudice bias and strong beliefs that affect the people around them. However online communities are more willing to accept who you are.

To add on to the previous paragraph, some people have a difficult time dealing with body dysmorphia. With a digital reality people would be able to change their outer appearance. For instance, Wade messaged Artemis, “The female of the species has always found me repellant” (Cline 171). This self-deprecating humor message from Wade shows that he either lacks social skills or has blemished features. Further down the conversation, Artemis said, “Trust me. If you ever see me in person, you would be repulsed” (Cline 186). She judges herself harshly because of her imperfections. In essence, they both cope with their imperfection by making self-deprecating jokes. Nonetheless, OASIS ability to hide their physical flaw helped boost their self esteem and find friends. This would build up their self esteem to the point where it assists with accepting their flaws. Later on, Wade finds a picture of Artemis and describes how his feelings for her increased. He said, “The birthmark did absolutely nothing to diminish her beauty. If anything the face I saw seemed even more beautiful” (Cline 292). As Wade expresses his

feeling, it shows that OASIS does allow people to run away from reality, but it does not mean that they lose all of their humanity. In summary, virtual reality allows people to create an ideal version of themselves and find people that truly care about them. The people they find online will provide great support to help them accept themselves.

Subsequently, a digital world would provide unique entertainment in different forms. One unique form of enjoyment that OASIS provides its user with the ability to travel between different environments. OASIS is described as having “hundreds of high-resolution 3-D worlds” (Cline 57). This capability by a virtual reality to generate realistic or fantasy-like places for people to interact with the landscape would open the door for endless creative possibilities. Also, the immersiveness provided by the game would allow people to endlessly indulge in. Another unique feature from OASIS, is the means of being able to immerse as a fantasy creature or a humanoid. In the story, Wade said people could become “a giant two-headed hermaphrodite demon unicorn avatars” (Cline 28). The boundless avatar people could make and become would offer an entertaining yet unending game for people to enjoy. In short, the digital realm proves to offer a unique experience and ceaseless amusement.

Despite all the benefits an OASIS-like world could give, it presents a problem for individuals mental health. People in the book were so overly obsessed with the game that it got to the point where people were both physically and mentally disconnected from reality. Wade’s description of the game was that “OASIS is not just an entertainment platform. It has been an integral part of our lives” (Cline 34). Wade’s explanation of the game that offers an utopian virtual world and how it has mentally ruined people, because the game has become a significant part of their life. Although OASIS has created an addiction problem for the people, this is due to their world having to deal with multiple unfortunate events. In the book, Wade talked about

“energy crisis, climate change, famine, poverty, and disease” (Cline 1). The problems listed by Wade paints a dystopian vivid picture of their world and the reason why people are obsessed with euphoria from the game. All in all, their problems were sadly piled up which were out of their control. This caused people to rely on the OASIS to get away from environmental problems that were out of their control, hence why building would provide a place for escapism and not cause such extreme addiction.

Ultimately, making a virtual world would provide a sanctuary to get away from stress by providing endless entertainment. Students have to deal with harassment in school, but a digital world would relieve the problem with tools provided. Similarly, people also suffer from harassment based on their physical appearance, but online people could change their appearance to the ideal figure. The entertainment the game could provide is the ability to travel to fictional or real places. In essence, constructing a virtual game would relieve people from stress by replacing it with unique entertainment and escapism.

Cline, Ernest. *Ready Player One*. Broadway Books, 2015.