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### Ready Player One Analysis: Identity

The idea about having two identities (one for reality and one for virtual) in Ready Player One builds up the growth of the character as the story progresses on. Wade Watts is one example of this - his identity in the real-world is almost like everyone else but different; he is a stereotypical pop-culture geek devoting all of his time in a video game to reach his goal and trying to escape the negative aspects of life in the real-world, while his identity in the virtual world is his one's own desire to try and do what's right about what the Hunt really was by trying hard and putting in effort to find the fabled easter egg hidden in the OASIS. While these two identities are different, they come up with the character that is well-deserved, well-known, and well-determined on his own right.

In the real world, his identity in reality is more or like other people around this time. Over the years, he had suffered through hardships and bad times throughout his time in the real-world, but when he was given access to the OASIS, he was then quickly on the urge to escape the world that he lived in to up to that point and go into a completely virtual world that is separate from reality, making his depressions and hardships go away for some time. As evidenced by this point, Wade says that he "had access to the OASIS, which is like having an escape hatch into a better reality." (pg 18) As a form of escapism in the story, Wade tries to find a way to escape from his frustrations, his stress, and the sad times of his life in order for him to find himself the freedom

he needs in the OASIS, since it was his way to get out of the hard times of his life to find himself happiness, courage, and comfort in the other world.

In the virtual world, where he is named as Parzival, his identity is all unique and unlike everyone else in the OASIS, because like others, he does not have to use his real identity in the real world to represent himself in the OASIS, because the OASIS was specifically designed so that no one will know each avatar's true identity in real-life. Parzival starts out as a level-one newbie on Incipio until he was transferred to Ludus, a place where OASIS public schools were located. While there, he would usually go by his daily subjects and classes every day, but when he is out of school, he seeks himself to find the keys that lead to each door that is located in the OASIS as part of the contest. As a gunter, he aims to be the first to win the contest while trying to risk himself along the way. As evidenced by this point, when Wade/Parzival tries to accept IOI's offer to recruit him, he did so because he wondered how Nolan Sorrento tried to recruit him, or "had been ordered to do it." (pg 133) And because he had what it takes to risk himself into getting all of the keys to get to the egg when everyone was worrying about how IOI is going to take over the OASIS for good when the Orb of Osuvovox was placed over Anorak's Castle, Wade says that he has to do it because he said that "anything was still possible." (pg 266) By taking risky situations like meeting with Sorrento and refusing to be recruited and later transported to IOI's indenturement centers by failing to make payments to IOI with his Bryce Lynch identity, he does this to his advantage to complete the contest like no one has ever done before. Unlike his real-world counterpart, where Wade is an ordinary person that is lost in a world of loneliness, rage, sadness, frustrations, and bad times like other people around his time,

his avatar in the OASIS has the confidence, courage, and braveness when he does every risky things that he has to do for the sake of the contest.

By comparing the two identities for both the real-world and the virtual world, there are some slight similarities and differences between the two identities that both Wade Watts and Parzival have in terms of how they feel and take action on certain situations. In the real world, Wade Watts is an average person living in the Oklahoma City Stacks, and has been attained to loneliness, frustrations, and awkwardness throughout his lifetime in the real world. He often has trouble talking with other people in the real world, as he often has low self-esteem and social skills. As evidenced when Wade recalls being at school in the real world before being transferred to the OASIS school servers, he said that he tends to say “the wrong thing.” (pg 30) However, in the virtual world, he seems to get along well with other people in the OASIS, since he does not need to see one another in-person in the real world and does not get nervous when seeing them. Furthermore, as Wade Watts tends to be in rough shape during school hours in the real world and staying at his apartment room without any body hair, his virtual counterpart, Parzival, maintained his appearance throughout his time at the OASIS. To justify this, Wade says that he was overweight, saying that he had been like that “for as long as I could remember.” (pg 30) Also, he had a set of clothes from “thrift-stores and donation bins” (pg 30), which complicates his time out in the real world. In contrast, his avatar Parzival once had a “black T-shirt and blue jeans” (pg 31), before moving on to his own set of armor he had acquired during his journey to the egg. By comparing the two different identities of Wade Watts and Parzival, both have different personalities and traits, and have different looks within themselves in the real world and the virtual world. Despite their flaws and drawbacks, the two identities would eventually turn into

one entity that has the courage, dependability, strength and bravery of both Wade Watts and Parzival.

To put this all in a short sentence, Wade Watts and Parzival have some differences and similarities between each other on identity, and they can form the one character that everyone will know and like. There are many variations of identity scattered around the OASIS, but the whole point here is that there is a difference of identity in both the real world and the virtual world that makes up that person.

#### Works Cited

- Cline, Ernest. Ready Player One. New York, Broadway Books, 2012.