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E.Q. Section E

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Paper Abstract

For my paper I will be looking at the idea of masks. I will introduce this conflict by detailing the idea that people act differently in various social settings. After this, I plan to explore both sides of the argument.

I will present the idea that a person is still being their true self when they act differently in various social settings (applying masks to be more appropriate in the business world or new groups of people). As an example, when a business man sits down for dinner with his boss he/she will act with a different social behavior to adapt to this new setting. Perhaps they will refrain from using explicit language or present their best food to be someone they are not. Another example of this is how superheroes feel more themselves when they are beneath their physical masks. This side of the issue presents the side that although these people are acting differently than they would naturally would, they are still themselves; maybe even showing their true side more.

Secondly, for the other side I will explore the notion that when people change their behavior to adapt to new situations they are not themselves. This side entails that the masks implied are just that, masks. These masks

are used to hide character flaws that the user deems inappropriate for certain social situations. When a working man sits down for dinner in a refined restaurant, or perhaps with an attractive new lady, he changes his behavior or appearance to seem something he is not. The mask applier acts in this fashion to become more appealing, thus changing their natural attributes. By applying this shield from their natural form, this person is not the true person they once were or are in everyday life.

For both of these arguments I plan to cite Watchmen (Rorschach and the Nite Owl), "The Presentation of the Self" by Goffman, and, "On the Inconcistencies of Our Actions," by Montaigne. After I have detailed each side of the argument I will look into how these changes in behavior provide insight to the human element. I would like to explore the idea that maybe naturally humans are insecure. By manipulating their actions they are able to become something they would like to be. This manipulations would conclude that masks are necessary for the social world to continue. I could also look into how maybe the receiver of the applied masks needs these social manipulations to ease into the people they meets true personality. However, it could also be argued that maybe when humans are put into an uncomfortable new social setting their true form shows. While I am not sure at this point, I am going to look into how this true form affects the relationship of new acquaintances. I would like to conclude with whether it is natural for people to believe that they cannot be liked by people they loosely know by being themselves or not.