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On campus here at Longwood University and in Longwood Seminar, personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and citizen leadership are strongly promoted. They are traits that are consistently displayed throughout many characters in “The Other Wes Moore” by Wes Moore. This book is very relatable and it is easy for college students to connect with it on a personal level.

When thinking about personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and citizen leadership, people normally think positive thoughts and may even envision someone who is very successful but that is not always the case. For the other Wes Moore, he displayed those qualities but in a very negative situation. Sadly, he was successful in the drug world and that is where he displayed those qualities. He was a leader amongst his group that sold drugs, and he had a personal responsibility to that group. He had a position that he saw as very important and he did what he needed to do. He illegally made a lot of money dealing drugs and he used that money to be self-sufficient. He felt it was his personal responsibility to take care of his family, and he was able to support them. The other Wes Moore did enter a program called Job Corps and he stayed with this center in an attempt to change the direction of his life and support his family in a safer, healthier way. Unfortunately, when he left the Job Corps Center, he had trouble finding a well-paid and permanent job. He began to become very stressed and struggled financially. He cracked under the pressure and returned to his drug operation to become self-sufficient once again. Although self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and citizen leadership are all thought to be positive qualities, they can exist in negative situations.

On the other hand, Wes Moore exemplifies those positive situations in which most people envision when they think of personal responsibility, citizen leadership, and self-sufficiency. When he was young, he did not try very hard in school and did poorly. He spent some days on the street corners of his neighborhood and had run-ins with the police. Finally, his mother put him in military school to help him. He attended military school, at first resisting, but he soon matured and grew as a person. He understood the personal responsibility he held for himself and for his family. Higher ranked people at the military school recognized his potential and pushed him to strive for the best he could possibly be, and Wes Moore admired those above him. He quickly moved up in rank and became a citizen leader. Wes Moore is an extremely successful man now and can support himself and his family. He served our country and is now a decorated veteran. Wes Moore is a wonderful example of self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and citizen leadership and he is an inspiration to many.

“The Other Wes Moore” by Wes Moore connects to the lives of college students and I am grateful I got the chance to read this book; I hope other college students out there get to read it as well. This book is a story about how people’s lives can turn out very differently even if they are raised in similar environments. As growing students, we were all raised in different environments, some of them similar to others, and we are who we are today because of those environments. We have also reached that point of our lives where our future relies on us, and we have personal responsibility over that future. Some of us may crack under the pressure of school and life, like the other Wes Moore cracked. Yet others will thrive like Wes Moore and serve our communities or even our country. The stories of both Wes Moore’s can serve as a guide for college students. Hopefully, the students who are at low points in their lives and may be struggling can use Wes Moore’s story to inspire them. This story connects with college students in the way that students and the Wes Moore’s have some control of their lives and where life takes them. Everyone continually creates themselves as they go through life and experience different things. It is just a matter of how we let these experiences define us that shapes our future.

“The Other Wes Moore” plays into nature versus nurture a little. Some of us may face physically challenges or disabilities, or be involved in accidents that were not at our fault, that can shape our futures. That is the nature aspect of it. Furthermore, the direction our lives takes us is more an issue of nurture. The environment we grow up in and the morals that are instilled in us. This novel connects with the lives of college students across the country and displays the important qualities of self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and citizen leadership that can shape the outcomes of our futures.