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Personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and citizen leadership, all of these great qualities are displayed heavily throughout the book The Other Wes Moore. Throughout the duration of this paper I will defend my position and also provide examples from the book using quotes taken straight from the text, to further strengthen my argument. Longwood makes the three qualities expressed earlier a pivotal point in the teaching of their students. The Other Wes Moore was chosen as a summer reading assignment to better expose incoming freshmen to what it means to be what it means to be a Longwood student.

The first quality I will expose in The Other Wes Moore will be personal responsibility. Even from the very beginning of the novel Wes was exposed to a lot of personal responsibility. After Wes had lost his dad to serious illness, he realized that at such a young age he now had the personal responsibility to become the man of the house and take care of his family. One example I can pull from the book was when Wes’ mom had got the news that she could no longer afford to go to college. Wes had picked up that his mother was sad about something and she wouldn’t tell him what it was. On page 20 of the book, the author states “Wes stood undeterred and again asked her what was wrong. Being the man of the house, he wanted answers, and he wasn’t leaving until he got them” (Moore 20). I stated earlier that Wes had attained a greater level of personal responsibility and became the man of the house, or at least in his mind he had. He knew something wasn’t right and that it was his responsibility to do something about it. Wes was still at a very young age so he didn’t have much power to change anything. Even though Wes couldn’t do anything, Wes’ mom did inform Wes of the importance of college to not only her but also to him. Wes then took up another personal responsibility to go graduate college to not only better himself but also his family.

The second quality I will expose in The Other Wes Moore will be self-sufficiency. This quality is very important to have in the environment that both Wes Moores grew up in. During the youthful years both kids were expected to be able to take care of themselves or show some self-sufficiency for sometimes many hours a day. Both mothers worked multiple jobs and were not able to be there to watch either Wes. Although they were given these opportunities to become more self-sufficient, they made some mistakes. In chapter 2, Wes was playing football and a fight broke out between Wes and another kid. Wes got punched and then attempted to stab the other kid till a police man grabbed Wes and arrested him. Wes sat in jail till Tony’s father bailed him out. This is prime example how Wes was unable to be self-sufficient, instead of being able to take care of himself, he managed to get himself punched, arrested, and then had to rely on Tony’s father to bail him out of jail. Wes kept going down a downward spiral, even when his mom sent him to military school he continued to show zero self-sufficiency and needed outside help to direct him back to the path of success. It took Wes three years but he finally learned how to be self-sufficient. Wes describes his new self in the following quote: “I was now a platoon sergeant, a cader master sergeant, and the youngest senior noncommissioned officer in the entire corps. Three years ago I’d been one of the insubordinate kids first entering the gates of Valley Forge. In an ironic turn, I was now one of the ones in charge of them” (Moore 115). Wes had become self-sufficient and could not only take care of himself independently but also look after others too. This is a major turning point of Wes’ character in the novel.

The final quality I will expose in The Other Wes More is citizen leadership. It takes a while into the book before one of the Wes Moores realize what it means to show citizen leadership. The convict Wes was never able to really grasp what it meant citizen leader in his community. He continued to go deeper and deeper into the criminal and drug scene. Wes had not only hurt his own community by shooting another man and a cop but also aided in the destruction of his neighbors by assisting the distribution of drugs in his area. The author Wes Moore, at first was falling the same path of being the complete opposite of a citizen leader until his sudden change of character. From the quote mentioned in the earlier paragraph, Wes shares that he has taken positions of leadership within his corps. Wes later goes abroad to an African village where he learns about the duties and customs of being a man in their culture. A man in their culture takes care of his people and knows how to lead. Wes even to this day now strives to fix the same community that shaped him during his childhood. Wes learned that a citizen leader leads to better his own community.

In conclusion, the qualities I mentioned through this essay were indeed major themes that Wes Moore imbedded into his novel. Longwood made a great choice when The Other Wes Moore was picked as the summer reading. This novel did a great job of introducing the goals of Longwood towards its incoming new students. Personal responsibility was demonstrated throughout the novel. Self-sufficiency had to be later learned by the main character after many bad choices. Finally, citizen leadership was discovered and valued by the main character after he had made a comeback from the self-deteriorating path he was on. I will take these lessons from this novel and thread them into my own life, so that I can also bring these important qualities into the world ahead.