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## Evolving to Survive in the Modern World

One way to make sense of the modern world is to accept that people are what they surround themselves with. No matter where they go, what their thoughts are, or the actions they make, they do them based on their surroundings and what is happening to them. The Modern world forces us to adapt to our environment or else we will die. New technologies pop up, making one profession go out of business and opening a door for another. Those who are smart enough and are willing to change and accept the modern world survive, Those who refuse to change just like the world changes will die. J.D Sanlinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*, and Elie Wiesel's *Night* show us that people have to adapt and change to their surroundings or else they will die.

In *Night*, Elie goes into the German concentration camp extremely religious, believing in God's awesome power but Elie leaves the concentration camp a different person who became like the concentration camp. Elie had lost his innocence and his faith in God which in turned allowed him to survive. After he see the horrors it chages him and he asks, "[w]hy should [he] sanctify His name? The Almighty, the eternal and terrible Master of the universe, chose to silent. What was there to thank Him for?" (Wiesel 33). Elie does not realize but this change allowed him to survive. By adapting to the camp and being tough and only looking out for himself he had a better chance of surviving. Like the modern world, the concentration camp weede out those who could

not change and survive and only kept eh strong. Elie was one of the strong and to become one “[he]...had become a different person. The student of Talmud, the child [that he] was, had been consumed by the flames. All that was left was a shape that resembled [him]. [His] soul had been invaded and devoured by a black flame” (Wiesel 37). By becoming someone that he wasn’t, he was able to survive. That’s what the modern world like the concentration camp does. It takes in people who are new and changes them and those who aren’t willing to change or who aren’t strong enough are left behind in the modern world or are killed in the concentration camp. Those who do survive know it is happening but they can not do anything about it. “I had watched it all happening without moving. I kept silent. In fact, I thought of stealing away in order not to suffer the blows...That was what life in a concentration camp had made of me...” (Wiesel 54). They know what is happening but they can’t change because they already have too much at stake and they have seen what has happened to others that try. The modern world punishes those severely who fail just like the concentration camps. It makes it hard to take a risk because one could lose so much.

In *A Separate Peace*, Leper is originally portrayed as a very happy, innocent young man who likes to look for beaver dams. However he is quickly changed when he enters the army. Before the army Leper seems to have a cloud around him, shielding him from the real world until upon entering the army, that cloud is lifted and “[he] can see what they’re thinking...a lot he never saw before” (Salinger, 143). It took the environment and the people of the army to change his thinking and lift the blinders he seemed to be wearing when he went through life. This is just like the modern world. You don’t really know how it is until you get out on your own and you find out that it is

not what you imagined and that is not the pretty world that you believed that it was. It opens your eyes and shows you are the problems that it has. Leper isn't able to evolve his thinking to the army's thinking so he isn't able to survive in the army. Leper wasn't able to live up to his saying that "...people who've been evolving the right way survive" (Knowles, 125). Leper didn't evolve the right way for the army so he left. Those in the modern world who can't evolve right don't make it like Leper. Leper can't evolve right to fit in so "...he cracked up...[He] found out that the army was just too much for him" (Knowles, 157). Leper was infected by the environment and since he wasn't able to adapt to it he became crazy like many others. A lot of shootings occur because people feel helpless and they can not fit in so they go crazy and start shooting innocent people. Of course mental problems come in to play but the modern world does not accept people with mental problems and there is no one to help them. No one is there to help Leper and he has lost his innocence nobody can look at him the same as the original Leper.

People change due to their surroundings and the people around them. They have to or they don't survive. These two works show that their characters change into someone with no correspondence of their original self because of their environment and those in that environment. Natural selection takes place in the world and those who can't change and become like the people in the environment around them will not be able to survive just like the animals in the wild. No matter how high we put ourselves over other living beings, we are never far from primitive instincts and put in bad situations we will have to use their primitive instinct and lose our morals and original beliefs to survive. Refusing to change to the modern world will leave you out in the cold and probably dead.

Change affects the outcome of things. By changing, the characters survived and are able to live on. By living they are able to affect others during their life time. The environment will always win and change those in the environment into replicas of itself and those unable to do so will not be able to live and affect others. Change is sometimes necessary and it takes place all the time to withstand the cruelty of others and of nature.