

The droughtlander – essay

Environment, Disaster



Name: Abeir Wasim Teacher Name: Mr. Ferguson Course Code: ENG-2D1 Due Date: Friday, December 2nd, 2011 Carrie Mac's novel *The Droughtlanders*, is about twin brothers Seth and Eli Maddox. They are Keylanders brought up within the privileged and protected Eastern Key. Keylanders, the boys are told, must keep within their walls to avoid the filth and disease spread by the Droughtlanders—those who struggle to survive on the parched land between the Keys. But when Eli is introduced to an underground rebel group, Triskelia lead by his own mother, his whole world falls apart.

To find truth in all lies he has been told, he ventures out into the Droughtlands. Seth, on instinct, prepares to follow Eli and bring him back dead or alive, earning him glory and honour. Throughout the experiences in the Droughtlands, Eli and Seth Maddox change socially, mentally, and physically which leads to new self-recognition. Eli and Seth discover they both change socially through the course of their time in the Droughtlands. At first, Eli shows his disgust to the Droughtlanders when he says to his own mother, " Aren't you going to explain?

Aren't you going to report that you touched a Droughtlander? I saw you, Maman! You kissed her! " (10) After time in the Droughtlands Eli gets used to the people and realizes how bad they suffer because of them. He helps Nappo's little brother Teal recover from the skin-eating sick and develops a close relationship with Zari. This proves how Eli's attitude toward the Droughtlanders changes by the end of the novel. Eli portrays his anger at his mother just for touching a Droughtland woman. He does not even know why his mom is with one but demands a full explanation.

When Eli is faced with leaving the Keys to find the rebel group Triskelia, he realizes how wrong his attitude was. Eli's own lost sister, Sabine, is a Droughtlander. As he spends time in their land he discovers a new and more homely family. Before, Eli thought of them as objects worse than filth. Yet after new experiences his feelings for the Droughtlanders turn him against his own father, which pushes him to join the rebels. On the way to Triskelia Eli aids two Droughtland brothers dying of hunger and thirst. Eli helps them by providing water, which is very scarce, and allows them to accompany him on his journey to find Triskelia.

Along with his rebellious behaviour, Eli finds himself talking to people that he never imagined, he even develops an interest in a Droughtland girl named Zari. Eli considered himself as a person open and kind to everyone. So because he changes socially with his experiences and meets the outsiders, it leads him to self-recognize himself as a person who is racist and does prejudices people. Seth having to confess his sins in front of Triskelia admits, " I bought my way onto the Droughtland regiment so that I could hunt down Eli myself. I raped six Droughtland women. I stole from many Droughtlanders, I don't know how many.

I resented the girl who saved my life. I thought she was beneath me. When I started to love her, I didn't tell her and that was very, very wrong of me. "(314) Seth demonstrates how his social status was before he was outcasted in the Droughtlands. He was able to buy his way in to the high military rank. Seth shows that he thought of himself as being better than everyone else. As a Keylander he was able to openly rape six Droughtland women. This passage also shows Seth's relationship with his brother. He

risks his own honour by buying his way into the military just to hunt Eli down by himself.

As Seth admits his wrongs he starts to really recognize everything he did. Seth came to love Rosa, even though she was a Droughtlander. A month before he used Droughtlanders as target practice in training. This shows how the worth of them changed in his mind. Seth was someone to never regret what he did, especially what he did to a Droughtlander. His time in the Droughtlands changed his social feeling and how he expressed himself. Eli and Seth's experiences in the Droughtlands changed the way they interacted with the Droughtlanders as well as the way they showed loyalty to their own land.

You can only change the way you act or interact with other humans when you actually face them. Eli and Seth find this the hard way as they grew up learning that all Droughtlander were worthless. But, because of their want for the truth, that led them to change what they thought of their own people. Eli and Seth recognize that they themselves were wrong. It was because of their people the Droughtlands were even formed. Because of what they experienced in the Droughtlands, Eli and Seth change socially which leads them to self-recognize themselves as being completely different.

Seth who thought himself to be courageous, heroic, and powerful learns when he is faced with reality outside the protection of his father and land, he is really scared and has no real power. Seth and Eli change mentally due to their experiences in the Droughtlands. Riding in the wake of his regiment Seth " could not stop thinking about the girl and her baby. Were they lying dead on the dirt floor of the shabby hut? Had they died because of him? He

hadn't expected the Droughtland to be like this. He hadn't expected that he'd care about them at all. What was happening to him? What was wrong with him?

Was he even cut out for this at all? (167) Seth thinks back to what he was trained about, " These people were the enemy, or so he'd been taught. And his father was his hero. Right? And the Guard was the bastion of justice. But it just wasn't that clear anymore. " (315) Before actually stepping into the Droughtlands, Seth has dreams of dominance and blood spill of Droughtlanders. After three days training in the Droughtlands, Seth realizes his mind is not giving in to what he is assigned to do. For him, being a part of the Guards was honouring, now he considers it punishment from his father.

Seth becomes confused as he battles with his mind trying to confirm to himself what he was taught by the Keylanders was right. It ends as a losing battle, the murder and cruelty he sees makes Seth question his once thought inevitable courage. This leads him to recognize the truth about his father and himself. He realizes what he knew about the Keys was all a lie and the truth was before him. Eli watches Seth cry in pain and confusion of what was going on, Eli forwardly says, " It's all making sense now, isn't it? And you didn't believe me!

Look at you, you stupid bull-headed... Eli tried to remember Seth ever crying before, but he couldn't. "(307-308) Eli again shows his new found confidence, " He'd worked hard to look like this. He wasn't about to let Seth deflate him now. He steeled himself. Afraid I might beat you up now? "(329) Eli shows that he mentally changes with the comfort of new friends and newly found courage. Eli develops confidence that he never had before. At

home, Seth could do anything he wished to Eli, hit him, or almost shoot him. Eli never had the mental strength to stand up for himself.

He always thought of himself to be below Seth. With the challenges Eli faces in the Droughtlands he became confident of his ability to survive on his own. As Seth always saw Eli cry, now in reverse Eli was seeing Seth cry. Eli finds that Seth is nothing to be scared of; he develops strength in his mind to face him when he needs to. With the difficulties adjusting to the Droughtlands Seth and Eli find they change mentally. Eli becomes more confident in his abilities and does not allow Seth to further deflate him. Eli learns that only he can put himself below Seth.

Seth changes mentally as he goes through states of confusion. He loses his own self-esteem because he realizes that Eli was right about their father. The time he spends as a Guard only confirms that he was in fact wrong to believe Keylanders were good. Due to the mental change Eli and Seth go through they find parts of themselves they never knew existed. Eli thought of himself as being small, powerless and without courage to face anything. But he proves himself wrong as he changes mentally which leads to the new self-discovery of him actually having bravery, intelligence and realization of the truth.

Seth also has a moment of self-recognition; his mental change causes him to realize himself to be caring, considerate and conscious of unjustness to those around him. Before, with the structured set up of the Keylands, Seth thought good of his arrogance and believed it didn't matter how others were treated. Eli and Seth change physically from the harsh environment of the Droughtlands. As the twin brothers get dressed for the final circus

performance Seth stares at Eli's image and says, " Where did you get those muscles? " Eli reply's " It's all the circus stuff, probably. Go for it, Seth. Hit me with your scathing wit. Seth blankly reply's, " No. I'm not...you don't have to...it's just that I have to admit, is you had bet me, before everything, that you'd ever be stronger than me, I would've bet everything I had that that would never happen. Now look at me. I've been scrawny ever since the sick. " (329) This shows how much the two characters change from the beginning of the book. Eli was always considered small no matter how much he resembled Seth who was muscular. With their time in the Droughtlands, Eli became strong as he trains for the circus. He unlocks his full potential without Seth agitating him constantly.

Seth converts to become weak, non-muscular and scarred on his body because of the sick he faces. Eli, with his new physical body almost feels superior to Seth now because he knows that he is now stronger. Seth, on the other hand, accepts that he would lose to Eli in a fight. No matter how much Seth regrets this, he knows he cannot change the way he is now. Eli notices his change in appearance, " As far as looks went, his skin was tanned despite his efforts to stay out of the sun, the filth that went along with his daily life in the Droughtlands. His hair was still shorter than most Droughtlanders. " (127) While Rosa admires her skills in ealing Seth as a lifeminder she notices " Seth had been very muscular, never mind heavy, the day the Guard had left him behind. He'd since wasted away from the sick, and the wounds had ravaged his skin. He looked more like a Droughtlander now, or almost. His hair was still too short. " (207) As Eli finally meets up with Seth he has " another look... He hardly looked like himself, the greasy hair, the scars, and

the pale blue pallor of shock. "(302) The twins both notice how their physical appearance changes from their life in the Keys to the Droughtlands. Eli finds he can easily pass for a Droughtlander.

With the limited access to water, filth stains him like a bad sun tan. Seth's entire body changes as the sickness of the Droughtlands embodies him and leaves his skin bathed in scars. The once dashing and attractive Seth melts away like a body that decays. Besides the scars, Seth's hair is drenched in grease and face still in shock of how he changed. Without the water that their own land stole they realize how unlucky the Droughtlanders were, and it was their fault. Without the luxuries of just bare necessities, Eli and Seth find the difference between themselves and the Droughtlanders is defined by one month of time.

The twins both physically change in ways that they never could have bet on. Eli finds he changes for the better as he became physically stronger. Seth finds his arrogance is not of any help when he deals with hardship. He physically becomes weaker than Eli, but learns to accept it. It is because of the challenges they faced in the Droughtlands that Eli and Seth changed physically. This also led them to self-recognize their true abilities and resistance. Eli thought he was physically weak but realized after working hard he had the ability to become strong and also realized his own appearance to be attracting.

Seth discovers he is not as strong, muscular, and good looking as he thought he was. With the disease that he endures he finds he has the physical ability to barely survive. He recognizes his self-esteem has shrunk greatly due to his physical change. The Droughtlander novel shows how two ordinary kids

can change so much from experience. Eli and Seth Maddox are proof of exactly that. They changed socially, mentally and physically as their journey in the Droughtlands continue. This leads them to recognize themselves to what they really are as either being stronger or weaker than the expected.

The Keylanders and Droughtlanders are demonstrative examples of how countries like America and Afghanistan are in terms of power and order. Americans have power over countries like Afghanistan. They are very similar to the Keylanders as they have more access and provision of good healthcare, clean water and better education. While Afghanistan is more like the Droughtlanders who are lacking in those basic needs. It is clear that Carrie Mac meant to send a message of how these two societies resemble countries on our world today. How do two places both on Earth manage to bring such a gap of difference?