The Use Of Symbols In Who Has Seen The Wind Essay, Research Paper

Who Has Seen the Wind has been a Canadian classic for many years. The wind is the most meaningful image from the entire story. It is invisible just like God, but it is also very powerful, also like Him. The prairie is a comfort zone , as opposed to the town. For Brian, the prairie is a more spiritual place, whereas the town is the complete opposite. Brian looks to the wind and the prairie for security since it takes on a special and private role throughout his childhood.

The wind signifies the presence of God, and Brian finds it is, warm and living .

And all about him was the wind now, a pervasive sighing through great emptiness, unhampered by the buildings of the town, warm and living against his face and hair.

(Pg. 11)

After this, Brian encounters the Young Ben for a second time. The Young Ben is a fellow classmate who becomes a very influential character during the story. He is unaware of materialistic morality, like the prairie, but unlike the town. Considerably early in the story, Brian already determined that there exists an association between the Young Ben and the prairie. God, Brian decided, must like the boy s prairie (Pg. 12). This quote demonstrates the God is related with the Young Ben, the prairie, and the wind. The wind offers very powerful imagery, often suggesting that it is trying to illustrate a spiritual appeal to it. Not only is this a story of a young boy maturing, it is also a tale of the wind. Since the wind has been viewed as the strong force from above, this story could also be taken into account as a story of God. Brian comes to the wind because in a sense, it reveals truth to him. Similar to the ways with which God reveals truth to Christ believers. It is these reasons that caused Brian cause Brian to choose to bury both his baby pigeon and dog in the prairie.

The prairie is eternal like God s presence, unlike man, who is born only to die.

People were forever born; people forever died, and never were again. Fathers died and sons were born; the prairie was forever with its wind whispering through the long, dead grasses, through the long and endless silence.

(Pg. 239)

God is ceaseless, and everlasting, but man is only human, and purely mortal. It is this message which God attempts to present through his power, the wind. Brian s compassionate school principal, Mr. Digby, has similar thoughts and that he believes, The prairie wind that lifted over the edge of the prairie world to sing mortality to every living thing (Pg. 30). Brian begins to come to the realization of this message at an extremely valued part of the novel, where his father dies. During this unfortunate experience, Brian does not cry, instead, he somewhat bitterly recalls memories of him and his father together. His father s passing eminently affected much of the town and family members. Brian felt as if he was heartless, without emotion, since he felt no remorse. Instead, he went through his day lifeless, without a purpose, yet feeling as if his like remained the same as it always was. Finally, Brian finds himself crying, with the condolence of the prairie. It is significant to note that his tears were not caused by the death of his father, but rather due to the recognition of the lonely sadness he must now help his mother endure for the rest of her life. But what is the most significant is that Brian clearly sheds tears only in the presence of the spiritually friendly wind of the vast prairie.

The prairie and the wind were more than just mere aspects of the setting in Who Has Seen the Wind. They each offered commiseration, in that they represented God s power, and companionship. But also effectively exposed the harsh realities and pains of growing up.