Who Has Seen The Wind Essay, Research Paper

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND

Over the years there has always been a select minority of people who have had to grow up fast before they were ready, in order to survive. Who Has Seen The Wind by W.O. Mitchell is a novel based on the loss of innocence. The characters in the novel are forced to grow up and mature right before our eyes. They learn to deal with a variety of different situations as a child, and then later on in life as adults. The characters gain wisdom and are less like children as they grow up. They seem to gain independence as the time elapses and as they get older. W.O. Mitchell portrays the loss of innocence through the main character Brain, as he starts off as a trouble free, typical child. But as Brian gets older he confronts many situations and learns hot to adjust, and how to react to these situations. Most important, Brian grows more mature as he gets older.

Brian enters the novel as a typical four year old boy. He has a curious, interested side that wants to gain as much knowledge and experience as possible in life. He has many questions about school, friends, and about church. He also wants to learn about God and heaven so he visits the Reverend, but is still not satisfied with the answers he receives. He becomes confused, so as a result he makes up an imaginary friend and calls him R.W. God. His imaginary friend rides a vacuum and wears rubber boots. ” Brian’s imaginative creation of God is an attempt to understand the unknown and to control a confusing world that continually outrages his natural solipsistic outlook “. ( Canadian and World Encyclopedia by McClelland and Stewart ). Brian also shows how he is young and childish by behaving jealously towards his little brother Bobbie. Bobbie is extremely ill in the beginning of the novel. Even though the doctors say that the pneumonia could be fatal, Brian is still jealous of all the attention his brother receives. Brian tries to make friends and together they try to find the answers to all of life’s questions.

As Brian gets older he encounters many situations that he has to adjust and learn how to deal with. ” Brian is revealed to moments such as birth, hunger, satiety, eternity, and death. They are moments when an inquiring heart seeks finality, and the chain of darkness is broken.” ( Canadian and World Encyclopedia by McClelland and Stewart ). He starts school and not too long after he finds himself in the principal’s office. He didn’t know the proper way to act and felt it was all right to get up in the middle of class and go talk to his friends. After a few more encounters with the principal he learns how to behave at school and never has any problems with teachers again.

Brian starts another friendship in his life when he receives a dog as a gift from his father Gerald. The dog was supposed to be a gift that would enable Brian to forget about his imaginary friend R.W. Unfortunately his dog gets killed later on in the novel and this leaves Brian wondering more about life, death, why people die, and about heaven. After that Brian gets a pigeon because he figures that it would be as good as having a dog for a pet. But he takes it from a nearby nest not realizing that the pigeon would need its mother to survive and the pigeon eventually dies.

Brian makes a new friend named ” The Young Ben”. The Young Ben is portrayed as a rebel and is found mostly in the prairies. The prairie is a symbol in the novel. It symbolizes spiritually and also the wilderness. The Young Ben is kind of wild and untamed because he has no real guidance in his life. The Ben, the Young Ben’s father is a drunk and really doesn’t care a whole lot about his son. One day while on the prairie, Brian, Bobbie, and his friends are chasing a gopher and one of the boys pulls the tail off the gopher. The Young Ben beats the boy up and then kills the gopher. The Young Ben is forced to grow up by having to take care of himself, which leads to him losing his innocence as a child.

Brian becomes older, more mature, and has faced many troublesome times in his life. He has dealt with the death of his dog, his dad and his grandmother. He feels weird when he didn’t cry when his father died and wonders if that is normal. ” Brian must cope with death, his dog Jappy is killed, a gopher is tortured, his father and his grandmother both die. He learns to cope with life’s imperfections and abnormalities. ( Canadian and World Encyclopedia by McClelland and Stewart ). He tries to go on with his life as if nothing had ever happened. He asks his friends if they would cry if they had lost their fathers, but they weren’t sure. Brian is left with the responsibilities his father had and his mother becomes very dependent on him since he is now the man of the house.

Brian has grown up fast, having to deal with these problems, even though he has handled them, these are still questions unanswered. In the final chapters Brian asks, ” Why do people die?, Why do people finish up?, And what is the good of being human”? Even though Brian grew up too quickly, lost his innocence at such an early age and overcame many tough obstacles, he still hasn’t learnt the meaning of life. He is still a child faced with adult situations and problems. He didn’t have much time to be a child. He started this novel as young boy, grows up and becomes older and more mature. He was faced with many adult challenges throughout the novel, which diminishes his child like innocence but gives back a gain of knowledge and maturity.

Who Has Seen the Wind by W.O. Mitchell is a novel based on the loss of innocence. Throughout the novel Brian the main character is forced to grow up quickly to cope with all the tough times in his life. Events such as the death of a father, grandmother, dog, pigeon and gopher at such a young age forced the boy to learn so much more about life. Brian should have been acting like every other normal young child. Most children his age play all sorts of games with friends and have a lot of fun to pass the time in their early years. ” The novel moved through four phases of Brian’s development. The preschool period, the early school years at six and seven, the death of his father at ten, and the initiation into adulthood at twelve where he takes on his father’s role and chooses a career.” ( Who Has Seen the Wind: An Internet-web site source ) An innocent child who has grown up mentally at a young age may seek for fun and enjoyment later on in life because of the lack of it as a child.