English 12 Maria Benitez Block C September 16, 2019

**How a teacher can influence a student's life**

Early childhood experiences can play a big role in a personality development and can shape your adult life. In the short stories, “Long Long After School” by Ernest Buckler and “A Teacher’s Reward” by Robert Phillips, we learn that being a teacher means being a role model, and how the impact of a teacher in a kid’s life is immense, and how it can even influence them in their adult life. These aspects are shown, in a contrasting manner between the two stories, and both authors demonstrate that teachers are those supposed to motivate learners, inspire them to change and develop their personal, social, and professional skills, and are capable of doing much more in the lives of their students. It is stated in both short stories how the behaviors of a teacher when kids are being discriminated can affect who they become later on as adults.

To start off, both characters in the short stories “*Long Long After School*” and “*A Teacher’s Rewards*” have had their life hugely impacted and influenced by their teachers, building their identities positively and negatively. Both characters are discriminated in the short stories by their peers, but in *"A Teacher's Reward",* Miss Scofield's irresponsible teaching actions and habits as a teacher resulted in her being a negative influence in Raybe's childhood. For instance, Raybe was discriminated by his classmates because he was poor and a bit of an outsider; Miss Scofield instead of helping him integrate with the others, would call him out she wouldn't treat others like she treated him. She punished him plenty of times with no proof and unreasonably. "You used to rap my knuckles with your ruler, remember?" Oh, I rapped a lot of knuckles in my time. Boys will be boys," (Phillips, 380) This quote demonstrates indirectly that Ms. Scofield has a very stereotypical view of people, believing that all boys act a certain way, and her having the idea of the "good kid" which always isn’t the case. Ms. Scofield would make Raybe feel left out and leaving him emotionally hurt. In *"Long Long After School*", Miss Trethewey’s behaviors as a teacher resulted in having a positive influence. Miss Trethewey noticed that Wes' classmates were making him feel unwanted because of his skin color and she made him feel more comfortable being who he is. As an illustration of this, Ms. Trethewey stood up for him when no one would hold Wes' hand because his classmate thought his hand was dirty. Ms. Trethewey said, "Why Marilyn, Wes' hands are much cleaner than yours. Maybe Wes doesn't like to get his hands dirty" (Buckler, 50). Miss Trethewey taught Wes that beauty is on the inside, not on the outside; beauty, is seen beyond looks, beyond material possessions, and beyond social status. Beauty lies deep within the soul and exists in our thoughts and in our dreams.

In the short story “*Long Long After School”* Ernest Buckler writes about the main character, Wes, who has just found out that his grade three teacher Miss Trethewey had passed away in her sleep. Wes was deeply affected by his grade three teacher's death because, to him, she was such a beautiful person and had helped him while he was in school. To contrast, in the short story “*A Teacher’s Rewards”*, Robert Phillips talks about an elderly woman and retired teacher, Mrs. Scofield, who receives an unexpected visit from Raybe Simpson who was a student of hers from many years prior. He asks many questions and eventually reminds her of how cruel she was to him back when she taught him. Mrs. Scofield denies so and, uncomfortably, asks him to leave. He refuses to and precedes to get his revenge with a hammer that he had brought with him, as she had deeply impacted his life for the worse. As the story ends before stating what Simpson did with the hammer, many are able to infer that there was not a happy ending for Mrs. Scofield.

On the other hand, both teachers had a big role on influencing the future lives of their students and how they turned out to be. Raybe grew up to be a criminal and went to prison for a while, taking a much hopeless, darker path in his life. Growing up as an orphan with no role models to follow and being at a school where his teacher had implanted ideas of violence and cruelty as something that was okay just affected him more. This can be seen when Raybe is explaining to Miss Scofield that “You never gave me the chance the others had. The other kids left me out of things, because you were always saying I was bad. And you always told me I was dirty. Just because my aunt couldn’t keep me in clean shirts like some of the others” (Phillips, 385). Different from Wes, who turned out to be a very well recognized man in his neighborhood. Wes had been taught good values and goodness by Miss Trethewey, something that later on helped him in his adulthood. Clearly, there is a huge dissimilarity between the trust that Wes and Raybe had with their teachers, and this had a big influence in where they ended up where they did as adults.

All things considered, experiences with teachers during childhood can shape an individual as they become adults. Ms. Scofield and Miss Trethewey both had a huge impact in their students’ life from a very young age, and while teachers might just be expected to teach about certain subjects, teachers are role models and are those supposed to motivate learners, inspire them to change and develop their personal, social, and professional skills.