

by Zachary J.

In Paul Fleischman's *Whirligig*, when the story starts the main character, Brent, is a fairly shallow, not deeply caring person. When he becomes drunk at the party, he tries to commit suicide while driving home. Instead, he accidentally kills a girl. Afterwards, he is depressed. Then, at the request of the girl's mother, he sets out on a journey to build whirligigs in all four corners of the country. During this journey, he changes and grows in many ways.

In the beginning, Brent has killed the girl and is depressed, as I said earlier. He has changed from a person who cares about fitting in, trying to be cool, and girls, to not really caring about anything any more. He hasn't really grown, but he has drastically changed.

When he first sets out, he has isn't all that much different, maybe a little more interested in the world out of necessity. On the bus, he may be growing a little more mature. He is thinking about his life as though it has begun anew after the crash as if he has been born a second time. He is looking at the world differently with a sort of detachment. Things that seemed important before don't seem important any more. Things that he thought of as normal don't seem normal any more. Things that he took for granted he appreciates more.

Slowly, over the rest of the book, he changes and especially grows. He becomes a more caring, thoughtful, and happier person. He starts to read, appreciate nature, and is kind to people he probably would have been annoyed with or ignored before. The crash was a negative action, but he became a fundamentally much better person because of events that ensued. The book had much to do with change, the entire thing basically being about how Brent grew.