

Chapter-6

Childhood

Childhood by Markus Natten

Summary:

The speaker pondered deeply upon the spiritual questions of life and ultimately realized the fact that his childhood days were finally gone down into the past of eternity for good

and would never return. Childhood would now only remain in his memories. He wandered if the end of childhood was the day he ceased to be eleven years old. The time when he realized that Heaven and earth could not be found in Geography and never could be. Where did his childhood go? Was it the time he realized that adults were not all they seemed to be? They talked of love and they preached of love, but did not act so lovingly nor practiced what they preached. Was that the day. Where did his childhood go? Was it when he found out that his mind was really his? To use it whichever way he chose? To produce thoughts that was not those of other people but his and his alone. Was that the day? Where did his childhood go? It went to some forgotten place that is hidden in a baby's face. That was all that he knew and that was all that he remembered. The poet feels that heaven and hell are not real places because they could not be located in geography. In the poem 'Childhood', the poet is trying to realise the age when he lost his childhood, when he became mature enough to understand the worldly things. So he keeps saying, "when did my childhood go?" He finally realises that his his childhood is gone to "some forgotten place", "that is hidden in an infant's face." Wordsworth in his poem, My Heart Leaps Up, said, "Child is the father of the man". Markus Natten in his poem 'Childhood' has tried to explain this thought. It is child who is noble and pure in her/his thoughts and heart. A child appreciates the nature's beauty and the innocence in the world. A child is the one who teaches a mature human to selflessly appreciate simple love and natural wonders.

1. **One out of two extracts based on poetry from the text to test reference to context, comprehension and appreciation. (01x04= 04 Marks)**

A. **Read the stanza given below and answer the questions that follow:**



- "When did my childhood go? Was it the day I ceased to be eleven,
Was it the time I realised that Hell and Heaven,
Could not be found in Geography,
And therefore could not be,
Was that the day!"

- a. **How did the poet realise his being grown up?**
- b. **What does the Hell and heaven stand for?**
- c. **What kind of phase of his life does the stanza reveal?**
- d. **What is the poet asking for?**

Ans. a. The poet realised his being grown up, when he was able to differentiate between truth and fiction. / when he was analysing the statement of adults.

Ans. b. It stands for the world of imagination that fascinates only small children./ These are nothing but the product of our imaginative mind that helps the person to escape from reality.

Ans. c. The stanza reveals the phase of rationalism where he is using his seat of reasoning.

Ans. d. He is asking for the time when his childhood went.

B. Read the stanza given below and answer the questions that follow:

"When did my childhood go?
Was it the time I realised that adults were not
All they seemed to be,
They talked of love and preached of love,
But did not act so lovingly,
Was that the day!"

- i. **What does the stanza expose?**
- ii. **According to the poem when did his childhood go?**
- iii. **What contrast did he find in adult's behaviour?**
- iv. **How did he find the hypocrisy in adult's behaviour?**

Ans.1. The stanza exposes the hypocrisy of the adult.

Ans.2. It might go when he was able to analyse the contrast of adult's way of thinking and way of life.

Ans.3. They talked of human values but did not practise in their day to day life.

Ans.4. He found that they pretend to have certain belief that they do not really



have.

C. Read the stanza given below and answer the questions that follow:

“When did my childhood go?
Was it when I found my mind was really mine,
To use whichever way I choose,
Producing thoughts that were not those of other people
But my own, and mine alone
Was that the day!”

- i. **What do the words ‘My own’ and ‘mine’ stand for?**
- ii. **When did his childhood go?**
- iii. **Which phase of life does this stanza show?**
- iv. **Why did he choose his way?**

Ans.1. It shows the independent way of thinking of a grown-up/ It reveals the development of his own seat of reasoning.

Ans.2. It might go when I realised his ‘self-thinking.’/When he was able to take his own decision.

Ans.3. Individuality, transitional period – between childhood and grown up.

Ans.4. He chose his way to express his own views. / To show his self – confidence.

D. Read the stanza given below and answer the questions that follow:

“Where did my childhood go?
It went to some forgotten place,
That’s hidden in an infant’s face,
That’s all I know.”

- i. **What does the first line suggest?**
- ii. **What would the ‘forgotten place’ stand for ?**
- iii. **What does he know about his childhood?**
- iv. **Find out the rhyme scheme in the present stanza.**

Ans.1. It suggests place where his childhood went.

Ans.2. ‘Forgotten place’ stand for the childhood that cannot be regained or restored.

Ans.3. He knows that childhood is the state of mind of a person it will reside in an infant’s face only.

Ans.4. abba.

Answer the following question up to 40 words.

1. How does the poet describe the process of being grown up?

Ans. The process of being grown up develops the critical thinking and analytical point of view in the person. It makes the person rationalized and abled to take his decision by virtue of his seat of reasoning.

2. How does the poet repent on his loss of childhood?

Ans. He expresses concern over his childhood's disappearance. Childhood cannot be regained. It keeps our life aloof from the world of hypocrisy, bitter reality and materialism.

3. The poet has asked two questions one is about the time and other is about the place. Why has he used these questions?

Ans: He has used these two questions to interpret the time and place of way of going his childhood away. 'When' points out the process of being rational at a particular time and 'where' states the place where the innocent world of childhood resides.

