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Class 11 English (Hornbill) Notes

CHILDHOOD



Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

Poem-4

Childhood

By Markus Natten

In the poem 'Childhood', Markus Natten depicts the reality of childhood innocence gradually transforming into adult rationality, hypocrisy and individuality. The poem begins with the poet wondering when did his childhood go - was it the day he ceased to be eleven; was it the day when he could distinguish between fantasy and reality by realizing that heaven and hell don't exist since they are not found in geography books; was it the day when he could understand the hypocrisy of adults by realizing that people were not all that they pretended to be; or was it the day when he became conscious of his own growing individuality by realising that he had a mind of his own and that he was capable of producing thoughts and opinions that were different from other people.

In the final lines, the poet concludes the speculations in his mind regarding his lost childhood. He now tries to understand where his childhood has gone. Though he is not aware of the

day he lost his childhood, he knows that it has gone to some forgotten place, that is, on the face of an infant. The poet believes that though his childhood has become a memory for him, it has become a reality for some other child. Childhood is a cyclic process, where it leaves one person and goes to another.

Very Short Answer Questions

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. 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!

   a. Name the poem and the poet.

   b. What does the poet realise about adults?

   c. What is the poet's mood in the given stanza? [Hint:-disillusion]

2. 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!

   a. How does the poet realise he has grown up?

   b. The words T, 'my' and 'mine' have been used seven times in the given stanza. What does this indicate?

      [Hint:- realisation of individuality]

   c. '....my own and mine alone'. What is the poet refering to here?

3. 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. According to the poem when did his childhood go?

b. What does Hell and Heaven stand for?

c. Find words from the stanza which mean the following: i) ended ii) understand

Short Answer Questions

Answer the following questions in not more than 30-40 words.

1. How does the poet realise he has grown up?
2. What do the phrase 'my mind was really mine' mean?
3. The first three stanzas of the poem end in exclamation marks. Why do you think the poet does so?
4. What is the poet's attitude towards childhood in the poem of the same name?
5. Adulthood is a stage that follows childhood. Explain.
6. What is the theme of the poem?
7. What different questions does the poet ask in the poem?
8. Why does the poet take 11 years as the age of demarcation?
9. What is the poet's conclusion about Hell and Heaven?
10. What does the poet observe about the behaviour of adults? How is the observation significant?
11. What does the poet discover about his mind? How is the discovery important?
12. What are the changes involved in the process of growing up?
13. Where can the poet find his lost childhood? Is it lost irrevocably?
14. What notion of childhood emerges out of the poem?