

The Browning Version Childhood



Terence Mervyn Rattigan



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Name: Terence Mervyn Rattigan

Lifetime: 10 June 1911 – 30 November 1977

Profession: British dramatist and screenwriter

Famous works: French Without Tears (1936), The Winslow Boy (1946), The Browning Version (1948), The Deep Blue Sea (1952) and Ross (1960), Cause Célèbre or A Woman of Principle (1975)

INTRODUCTION

Terence Rattigan's 'The Browning Version' is an extract from his play "The Browning Version" (1948). It presents two contrasting school teachers. They are Mr Frank and Mr Crocker-Harris. They are different in age, temperament and devotion to their profession. Mr Frank is young, more social while Mr Crocker-Harris is middle aged and reserved. Mr Frank lacks involvement and devotion. Mr Crocker-Harris is feared as a task-master. The one-act-play also presents the hidden rivalry among teachers. It also describes the reaction of Taplow, a student of Mr Crocker-Harris, towards his teachers.

SUMMARY

Two School Masters

This one-act-play is a story of two school teachers and a student named Taplow. Mr Crocker-Harris is a middle aged teacher while Frank is a young colleague of Mr Harris. Taplow is a student of lower fifth class. He is a boy of 16. Both the teachers provide a striking contrast. They have only one thing in common. They belong to the same school.

Frank is Open; Crocker-Harris is Reserved

Young Frank is quite open to his students. He doesn't keep any distance while dealing with them. Taplow is not a student of his class. But still he takes a lot of interest in him. His long conversation with Taplow reveals his open nature. On the other hand, Mr Crocker-Harris is quite reserved. He doesn't mix up with his students. He maintains a respectable distance with them.

Frank Cares Little; Crocker-Harris a Strict Follower of Rules

Mr Frank doesn't believe in observing formalities. He cares little regarding rules and regulations. Mr Crocker-Harris follows them very strictly. In this regard he is different from the other teachers. He never leaks out results till they are formally announced.

Frank—Envious of Crocker-Harris

Mr. Crocker-Harris is feared and even respected. He has a wonderful hold over his students. They are scared of him. Mr Frank Crocker-Harris admits that he is envious of Mr Crocker. Perhaps he lacks that effect which Taplow Crocker-Harris Harris has left over his students. Mr Frank encourages Taplow to criticise Crocker-Harris. Actually, he urges him to imitate Harris. This clearly reveals the working of his mind. He even asks Taplow to 'cut' Crocker-Harris. He lacks Harris' devotion. He teaches science but shows no interest in his subject. This shows his lack of dedication and commitment towards his profession.

Crocker-Harris—Shrivelled inside Like a Nut

Taplow says that Crocker-Harris is shrivelled inside like a nut. It is quite true. He is not open. He doesn't like flattery, Nor does he like anyone who likes him. He is a hard task-master. He gives extra work to Taplow even on the last day of school. This he does to punish Taplow for being absent for a day last week. Sometimes he cracks jokes. His 'classical' jokes lack humour. No one understands them except him. They are as dry and humourless as he himself is. But in spite of everything, he likes Crocker- Harris. Taplow, however, praises Frank as a teacher. He says that he is young.

MILLIE CROCKER

Millie Crocker is the wife of Crocker-Harris, She is a thin woman in her late thirties, She is rather more smartly dressed than the 'general run of schoolmasters' wives'. Both Frank and Taplow feel her presence. Taplow feels uneasy. He fears that perhaps she heard him talking ill of Mr Harris, She sends Taplow to a chemist. She agrees to take the blame on her in case Mr Crocker - Harris comes in Taplow's absence.

GLOSSARY

Version—a statement, कथन;
remove—promotion, अगली कक्षा में
उत्तीर्ण करना; slackers—shirkers,
कामचोर; muck—dirt, rubbish; kept
in—made to overstay by the teacher;
got carried away—too much excited

to keep oneself in check; cut—run away, avoid; sadist—a person who takes pleasure out of giving pain to somebody; shrivelled-up—shrunk, अन्दर से भिंचे हुए ; excerpt—extract, उद्धरण ; extra—additional, अतिरिक्त; specialise—gain speciality, विशिष्टता प्राप्त करना ; criterion—yardstick, पैमाना ; protestingly—disagreeing, प्रतिवाद करते हुए; The Agamemnon—a play by a Greek writer, यूनानी नाटक ; indicating—pointing to; strung—threaded, joined, पिरोये हुए ; kept in—made to overstay for some reason, बाद में ठहरने को बोला गया ।

For good—for ever, permanently, सदा के लिए; masters—teachers, शिक्षक; outright—straightaway, सीधे —सीधे; imitating—copying, नक़ल उतारते हुए; human—kind-hearted, दयावान; gone too far—said too much, अतिशयोक्ति कर दी; got carried away—too excited to stay within limit उत्तेजना में आ गया ; evidently—clearly, स्पष्ट रूप से ; severe—strict, harsh, कठोर ; cut—get away, चले जाओ ; lock—up—closure of the school, स्कूल की बंदी का समय ; probable—perhaps, शायद ; envy—feel jealous, डाह करना ; form—class, कक्षा ; scared—afraid, भयभीत; sadist—one who gets pleasure out of giving pain to others, दूसरों से कष्ट देकर मज़ा लेने वाला ; pause—short silence or gap in speech, ठहराव; frightening—one who creates fear, डराने वाले ; shrivelled up—shrunk, सिकुड़ा हुआ।

Shrivel—contract, सिकुड़ जाना ; exaggerating—overstating the facts, बढ़ा —चढ़ा कर कहना ; classical—

(here) wonderful, very old, शास्त्रीय ; politeness—gentle feeling, विनम्रता; confess—admit, स्वीकारना; advance—Improvement, प्रगति; general run—common wives of teachers; cape—cloak, sleeveless loose fitting garment, लबादा ; screen—curtain, पर्दा; infinitely—greatly, अत्यधिक; relieved—relaxed, राहत युक्त ; frantically—nervously, घबराहट के साथ ; goes lose, मैं खो दूँगा ; particularly—especially, विशेष रूप से ; prescription—a physician's slip of medicine, दवाई की पर्ची ।

MAIN POINTS

1. Frank is a young school master.
2. Crocker-Harris is a middle aged master.
3. Taplow is a boy of sixteen. He has come in to do extra work as ordered by Crocker Harris.
4. Taplow is in the lower fifth class.
5. Taplow is waiting for the result. If he passes, he will opt for science in the next class.
6. Mr Crocker-Harris is unlike other teachers. He never tells the result before it is officially announced.
7. Taplow says that he is extremely interested in science. He likes science more than Aeschylus' 'Agamemnon.'
8. Frank tells Taplow that if a student is given any extra work on the last day, he is sure to get through.

9. Taplow describes that such sort of rules don't apply to Mr Crocker-Harris.
10. Mr Harris told Taplow that he had given him what he deserved; no less and no more.
11. Frank relishes Taplow speaking against Crocker-Harris but pretends to be fair to him.
12. He suggests Taplow not to wait and cut his class and go back home.
13. Taplow is scared of Crocker-Harris. He doesn't dare to cut the class.
14. Frank admits that he envies his fellow teacher Mr Crocker-Harris. Students are very much scared of him.
15. Taplow replies that Mr Crocker-Harris is not a sadist and doesn't enjoy torturing others.
16. Mr Crocker-Harris doesn't show his real feelings. He is shrivelled up inside like a nut.
17. Mr Harris hates people who like him.
18. In spite of all shortcomings in Mr Harris, Taplow likes him.
19. Then Millie Crocker appears. Taplow is much frightened. Perhaps she has heard everything they were talking about.
20. But she comes to the aid of Taplow. She defends him with a natural plan.

21. She takes out a prescription. She asks Taplow to take this prescription to the chemist and come back before Mr Crocker-Harris comes.

CHARACTER SKETCH

Taplow:

Taplow was sixteen years old, studying in the lower fifth grade. His conversation with Frank tells us about his likes and dislikes. It also helps us to know about Crocker-Harris. Taplow had a desire to specialize in a Science subject. He did not like arts, especially the play 'Agamemnon'. He was very frank and straightforward about his idea of Crocker-Harris. Taplow had a strange attitude towards him. He admitted that in spite of everything he still liked Crocker-Harris. He even laughed at his poor jokes out of courtesy. He even worked for him in his absence. Taplow went to the chemist to get a prescription for him. He has to stay behind even on the last day of the school. Mr. Crocker-Harris has given him extra work to do because he had been ill for a day during the week and missed the class. It is already very late. Mr. Crocker-Harris has not come yet. But Taplow is afraid of Crocker. He dare not leave the class until Crocker comes. Although he is afraid of Crocker, he doesn't dislike him. We can say that Taplow is a very obedient student.

टैपलो सोलह वर्ष का था, निचली पाँचवीं कक्षा में पढ़ता था। फ्रैंक के साथ उनकी बातचीत हमें उनकी पसंद और नापसंद के बारे में बताती है। यह हमें क्रोकर-हैरिस के

बारे में जानने में भी मदद करता है। टैपलो की इच्छा विज्ञान विषय में विशेषज्ञता हासिल करने की थी। उन्हें कला पसंद नहीं थी, खासकर 'अगेमेमोन' नाटक। वह क्रॉकर-हैरिस के अपने विचार के बारे में बहुत स्पष्ट और सीधे थे। टैपलो का उसके प्रति अजीब रवैया था। उन्होंने स्वीकार किया कि सब कुछ के बावजूद उन्हें अभी भी क्रॉकर-हैरिस पसंद है। यहां तक कि वह शिष्टाचार के कारण अपने घटिया चुटकुलों पर भी हंसते थे। उनकी अनुपस्थिति में भी उन्होंने उनके लिए काम किया। टैपलो उसके लिए दवा लेने के लिए केमिस्ट के पास गया। स्कूल के आखिरी दिन भी उसे पीछे रहना पड़ता है। मिस्टर क्रॉकर-हैरिस ने उसे अतिरिक्त काम दिया है क्योंकि वह सप्ताह के दौरान एक दिन के लिए बीमार था और कक्षा से चूक गया था। पहले ही बहुत देर हो चुकी है। मिस्टर क्रॉकर-हैरिस अभी तक नहीं आए हैं। लेकिन टैपलो क्रॉकर से डरता है। जब तक क्रॉकर नहीं आता तब तक उसने कक्षा छोड़ने की हिम्मत नहीं की। हालाँकि वह क्रॉकर से डरता है, लेकिन वह उसे नापसंद नहीं करता है। हम कह सकते हैं कि टैपलो एक बहुत ही आज्ञाकारी छात्र है।

ANDREW CROCKER HARRIS:

Mr. Crocker Harris is a middle aged senior teacher in the same school where Frank is also a teacher. Mr. Harris teaches Latin to students. He is a very strict teacher and enjoys an admirable command over his students. He follows the rules and regulations of the school quite meticulously. He is strict with his students; but he is not a sadist. He does not want his students to like him; he wants them to make sincere efforts in learning. He gives extra work to

students who show carelessness and make mistakes. Though he is strict, his students admire him. He was sincere towards his work as a teacher and was known to be a strict disciplinarian who did not disclose the results before it was announced by the headmaster.

मिस्टर क्रॉकर हैरिस उसी स्कूल में एक मध्यम आयु वर्ग के वरिष्ठ शिक्षक हैं जहाँ फ्रैंक भी एक शिक्षक हैं। श्री हैरिस छात्रों को लैटिन पढ़ाते हैं। वह एक बहुत सख्त शिक्षक है और अपने छात्रों पर एक सराहनीय आदेश प्राप्त करता है। वह काफी सावधानी से स्कूल के नियमों और विनियमों का पालन करता है। वह अपने छात्रों के साथ सख्त है; लेकिन वह एक सैडिस्ट नहीं है। वह नहीं चाहता कि उसके छात्र उसे पसंद करें; वह चाहता है कि वे सीखने में ईमानदारी से प्रयास करें। वह उन छात्रों को अतिरिक्त काम देता है जो लापरवाही दिखाते हैं और गलती करते हैं। हालांकि वह सख्त हैं, लेकिन उनके छात्र उनकी प्रशंसा करते हैं। वह एक शिक्षक के रूप में अपने काम के प्रति ईमानदार थे और एक सख्त अनुशासक के रूप में जाने जाते थे, जो प्रधानाध्यापक द्वारा घोषित किए जाने से पहले परिणामों का खुलासा नहीं करते थे।

MR. FRANK:

Mr. Frank was a younger teacher who enjoyed making fun of Mr. Crocker Harris. He was a man of poor morals as he had no qualms in having an insincere intimate relationship with Mr. Crocker Harris's wife, Millie Crocker Harris. He told Taplow not to wait for Crocker Harris as he was being late. This clearly shows that Frank was a man of not only poor moral values but also failed to be an ideal teacher. This is also clearly evident when he said that

he hated what he taught. Mr Frank, as his name shows that he was quite a frank teacher. He likes being liked. He enjoyed it when Taplow imitated Mr. Crocker Harris. He doesn't follow the rules and regulations of the school. He doesn't like his own subject science of which he was a teacher. He does not like Mr. Crocker-Harris.

मिस्टर फ्रैंक एक छोटे शिक्षक थे जिन्हें मिस्टर क्रोकर हैरिस का मजाक उड़ाने में मज़ा आता था। वह खराब नैतिकता के व्यक्ति थे क्योंकि उन्हें मिस्टर क्रॉकर हैरिस की पत्नी मिल्ली क्रोकर हैरिस के साथ एक निष्ठाहीन अंतरंग संबंध रखने में कोई दिक्कत नहीं थी। उसने टैपलो से कहा कि वह क्रोकर हैरिस की प्रतीक्षा न करे क्योंकि उसे देर हो रही थी। यह स्पष्ट रूप से दर्शाता है कि फ्रैंक न केवल खराब नैतिक मूल्यों के व्यक्ति थे, बल्कि एक आदर्श शिक्षक बनने में भी असफल रहे। यह भी स्पष्ट रूप से स्पष्ट है जब उसने कहा कि उसने जो सिखाया उससे वह नफरत करता था। मिस्टर फ्रैंक, जैसा कि उनके नाम से पता चलता है कि वह काफी स्पष्टवादी शिक्षक थे। उसे पसंद किया जाना पसंद है। जब टैपलो ने मिस्टर क्रॉकर हैरिस की नकल की तो उन्हें बहुत मज़ा आया। वह स्कूल के नियमों और विनियमों का पालन नहीं करता है। उन्हें अपना खुद का विषय विज्ञान पसंद नहीं है, जिसके वे शिक्षक थे। उन्हें मिस्टर क्रोकर-हैरिस पसंद नहीं है।

OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS (MCQ)

- Who has written 'The Browning Version'?
 - Terence Rattigan
 - Mr Edgar S. Woolard

- Mr. Lester Brown
- Kushwant Singh

Ans. A. Terence Rattigan

- Who are the three characters of the play 'The Browning Version'?
 - Taplow, Alice and Mr. Harrow
 - Taplow, Frank and Mrs. Harris
 - Frank, and Mr. Crocker – Harris
 - Alice, Frank and Mr. Crocker – Harris

Ans. C. Taplow, Frank, and Mr. Crocker – Harris

- What is the age of Taplow?
 - Fourteen
 - Sixteen
 - Twenty
 - Five

Ans. B. Sixteen

- What does Frank do?
 - Student
 - Teacher
 - Principal
 - Parent

Ans. B. Teacher

- Who is Mr. Crocker-Harris?
 - Principal
 - School Teacher
 - middle-aged school-master
 - Don't know

Ans. C. middle-aged school-master

6. Where is the starting scene of the play set ?

- A. School Classroom
- B. School Playground
- C. Home
- D. Road

Ans. A. School Classroom

7. What was Taplow doing on the last day of school?

- A. Extra Work
- B. Time pass
- C. Can't say
- D. completing homework

Ans. A. Extra Work

8. In which class does Taplow study?

- A. Lower fifth
- B. seventh
- C. ninth
- D. lower tenth

Ans. A. Lower fifth

9. Why does Taplow have to do extra work?

- A. because he has missed his previous week due to illness

B. because he didn't perform well in his studies

C. because he was there to help his teacher

D. because he was called by his teacher

Ans. A. because he has missed his previous week due to illness

10. Why does Taplow want Science as a remove?

- A. because he has no option
- B. because he finds the subject extremely interesting
- C. because he is confused
- D. Can't say

Ans. B. because he finds the subject extremely interesting

11. Why did Taplow call Mr. Crocker – Harris 'Hardly Human'?

- A. because he is a sadist
- B. he is all shriveled up
- C. He is very rude to everyone
- D. he finds peace in failing students

Ans. B. he is all shriveled up

12. What book was Taplow reading?

- A. History textbook
- B. The Agamemnon

- B. Julius Caesar
- D. English Novel

Ans. B. The Agamemnon

13. At what time was Mr. Harris supposed to come to school?
- A. Six-thirty B. seven
 - C. eleven D. twelve

Ans. A. Six-thirty

14. Why was Frank jealous of Mr. Crocker – Harris?
- A. because of the effect he has on students
 - B. because of his fame
 - C. because he was senior schoolmaster
 - D. because he was paid well

Ans. A. because of the effect he has on students

15. What short name does Taplow call Mr. Crocker – Harris in his absence?
- A. Crock B. Harris
 - C. Crocker D. Teacher

Ans. A. Crock

16. How does Taplow react when Mr. Crocker – Harris cracked a joke in the class?
- A. he laughed
 - B. he ignored it

- C. he asked him what it meant
- D. he did nothing

Ans. A. he laughed

17. What is the name of Mr. Crocker – Harris's wife?
- A. Millie Crocker – Harris
 - B. Miley Crocker – Harris
 - C. Haley Crocker – Harris
 - D. never noticed

Ans. A. Millie Crocker – Harris

18. When did Mrs. Crocker – Harris enter the classroom?
- A. When Taplow and Frank were discussing Mr. Harris
 - B. When no one was in the classroom
 - C. with Mr. Crocker – Harris
 - D. when only Taplow was in the classroom

Ans. A. When Taplow and Frank were discussing Mr. Harris

19. How would you describe Millie Crocker – Harris?
- A. Thin Woman, late thirties, smartly dressed
 - B. fat woman, forties
 - C. thin woman, in her twenties

D. thin women, smartly dressed

Ans. A. Thin Woman, late thirties, smartly dressed

20. Who said the lines, 'Come along, Taplow. Do not be so selfish as to keep a good joke to yourself.'?

- A. Mr. Crocker – Harris
- B. Millie
- C. Frank
- D. Principal

Ans. C. Frank

21. Why was Taplow worried that Mrs. Crocker – Harris might have heard what they were saying?

- A. as she had been standing for a few minutes when they were busy talking
- B. as she interrupted them talking about his husband
- C. as she heard them talking about Principal
- D. Don't know

Ans. A. as she had been standing for a few minutes when they were busy talking

22. What was Millie carrying when she entered the classroom?

- A. basket B. books
- C. knits D. flowers

Ans. A. basket

23. Where was Mr. Crocker – Harris?

- A. At the Bursar's
- B. At home
- C. At market
- D. At library

Ans. A. At the Bursar's

24. What did Millie suggest to Taplow in her husband's absence?

- A. to go to chemist to get her prescription filled
- B. to go to his home
- C. to play golf
- D. to wait

Ans. A. to go to chemist to get her prescription filled

25. Does Taplow think that Mr. Crocker – Harris is biased?

- A. Yes B. no
- C. May be D. Can't Say

Ans. B. no

26. How is Mr. Crocker – Harris different from other teachers?

- A. as he is not biased
- B. as he is strict
- C. as he is old
- D. as he is rude

Ans. A. as he is not biased

27. How did Frank react upon the arrival of Mrs. Crocker – Harris?
- A. he was happy
 - B. he was nervous
 - C. he was relieved
 - D. nothing as such

Ans. C. he was relieved

28. Who was Agamemnon?
- A. he was American astrologer
 - B. he was an Egyptian king
 - C. he was the king of Mycenae in Greek mythology
 - D. Don't know

Ans. C. he was the king of Mycenae in Greek mythology

29. What does 'Remove' mean in the chapter?
- A. a division in British Schools
 - B. take away something
 - C. unfasten
 - D. get rid of

Ans. A. a division in British Schools

30. Does Mr. Crocker – Harris come to the school in the play?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Maybe
 - D. Can't say

Ans. B. No

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. Why does Mr Frank envy Mr Crocker-Harris?

Ans. In Spite of Crocker-Harris nottellingtheresultsto the students before it is officially announced and in spite of his making students stay back and take extra work, the students still have a liking for Mr Crocker-Harris. This makes Frank envy Mr CrockerHarris for the impact he has on students.

Q2. What is funny about Taplow's attitude towards Crocker-Harris?

Ans. Taplow has more than one reason to dislike Mr Crocker-Harris but strangely he has a grim liking for the teacher and does not mind doing extra work for him. May be it is his fear of the man, but the fact remains that Taplow's attitude to Mr Crocker-Harris is funny because it defies logic.

Q3. In which one respect Crocker-Harris is very different from all other masters Taplow has known?

Ans. Unlike other masters, Mr Crocker Harris does not reveal the results before the due date since it is the head master's prerogative to declare the results. Moreover, while most teachers loved to hear that children like them, he scoff at the very idea of a child telling him that he is likeable.

Q4. What advice does Mr Frank give Taplow? Is it safe for Taplow to follow it?

Ans. Frank suggests to Taplow to leave and not to wait for Mr Crocker-Harris because he is ten minutes late. Taplow could still go and play golf but he is afraid that Crocker-Harris will follow him home or do something else. Taplow is really shocked to hear Mr Frank's suggestion and shudders to think of the consequence of following it.

Q5. Comment on the attitude shown by Taplow towards Crocker-Harris.

Ans. Taplow is respectful towards Mr. Crocker-Harris and likes him for his principles. He criticizes him for being a feelingless person yet regards him an extraordinary master. He is mortally afraid of him and dare not cut the extra work even on the last day of the term.

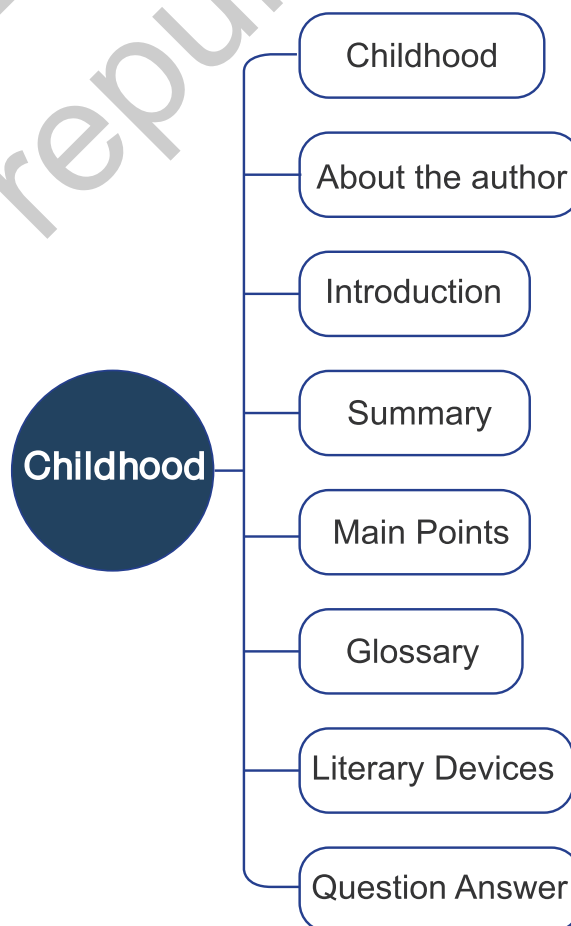
Q6. Does Frank seem to encourage Taplow's comments on Crocker-Harris?

Ans. Yes, Frank seems to encourage Taplow's comments on Crocker-Harris. He shows appreciation for Taplow's imitation of Mr Crocker-Harris and asks him to repeat it. On another occasion, Frank tells Taplow not to keep a good

joke (narrated in the style of Mr Crocker Harris) to himself but to tell it to others.

Q7. What do you gather about Crocker-Harris from the play?

Ans. Mr Crocker-Harris appears as a stem master who is a man of principles and stickler to the rules. He believes in fair assessment of his students and is not swayed by emotions, as the man is hardly human. He is not a sadist, but strict in the performance of his duties. Even on his last day at school, when he is over-busy in his own affairs, he does not neglect his duty towards his students.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marcus Natten is a Norwegian writer who holds a position with New Zealand and is the head of Hatchery Innovations LMD. He is best known for *The Book Thief* and *The Messenger*.

INTRODUCTION

The poem, 'Childhood' focuses on the theme of loss of innocence. In this poem, the poet, Markus Natten wonders when and where he lost his childhood. Adolescence is usually a confusing time for a child who is unable to immediately come to terms with the physical, hormonal and psychological changes in his or her personality. He becomes a 'young adult'; he neither wants to call himself a child nor is he completely an adult.

कविता, 'Childhood' मासूमियत के नुकसान के विषय पर केंद्रित है। इस कविता में कवि मार्कस नटन आश्चर्य करते हैं कि उन्होंने अपना बचपन कब और कहाँ खो दिया। किशोरावस्था आमतौर पर एक बच्चे

के लिए एक भ्रमित करने वाला समय होता है, जो अपने व्यक्तित्व में शारीरिक, हार्मोनल और मनोवैज्ञानिक परिवर्तनों के साथ तुरंत नहीं आ पाता है। वह एक 'युवा वयस्क' बन जाता है; वह न तो खुद को बच्चा कहना चाहता है और न ही वह पूरी तरह से वयस्क है।

SUMMARY

Obsessed with the Loss of Childhood

The poet is obsessed with the loss of his childhood. He wants to know exactly when he lost his childhood. He makes different speculations. He realises that the process of attaining adulthood and the loss of childhood is gradual. It involves different stages of growth.

सारांश:

बचपन के नुकसान से ग्रस्त

कवि अपने बचपन के नुकसान से ग्रस्त है। वह जानना चाहता है कि उसने अपना बचपन कब खोया। वह तरह-तरह के कयास लगाता है। उसे पता चलता है कि वयस्कता प्राप्त करने और बचपन के नुकसान की प्रक्रिया धीरे-धीरे होती है। इसमें विकास के विभिन्न चरण शामिल हैं।

Rationality-The First Step to Maturity

The poet makes a guess that it was at the age of eleven when he started thinking like a rational human being. He realised that 'hell and heaven' were mere imaginary concepts and they existed only in the mind. It was the

time when he started distinguishing between truth and imagination; reality and fiction.

तर्कसंगतता-परिपक्वता की ओर पहला कदम

कवि अनुमान लगाता है कि यह ग्यारह वर्ष की आयु में था जब उसने एक तर्कसंगत इंसान की तरह सोचना शुरू किया। उन्होंने महसूस किया कि 'नरक और स्वर्ग' केवल काल्पनिक अवधारणाएँ हैं और वे केवल मन में ही मौजूद हैं। यह वह समय था जब उन्होंने सत्य और कल्पना के बीच अंतर करना शुरू किया; वास्तविकता और कल्पना।

Ability to See Through the Hypocrisy of Adults

Perhaps the poet lost his childhood when he was able to see through the hypocrisy of adults. He realised that the grown ups were not as good as they appeared to be. Nor did they practise love in their life as they frequently talked and preached. Gradually, when he learnt this art, he moved a step toward adulthood.

वयस्कों के पाखंड के माध्यम से देखने की क्षमता

शायद कवि ने अपना बचपन खो दिया जब वह वयस्कों के पाखंड के माध्यम से देखने में सक्षम था। उन्होंने महसूस किया कि बड़े लोग उतने अच्छे नहीं थे जितने वे दिखते थे। न ही उन्होंने अपने जीवन में प्रेम का अभ्यास किया क्योंकि वे अक्सर बात करते और प्रचार करते थे। धीरे-धीरे, जब उन्होंने यह कला सीखी, तो वे वयस्कता की ओर एक कदम आगे बढ़े।

Individuality– the Loss of Childhood

There came a stage in the poet's life when he developed the art of independent thinking. At this stage he realised that his mind was his own and it was not influenced or directed by others. The day he developed his individuality, he ceased to be a child.

व्यक्तित्व बचपन की हानि

कवि के जीवन में एक ऐसा पड़ाव आया जब उन्होंने स्वतंत्र चिंतन की कला का विकास किया। इस स्तर पर उन्होंने महसूस किया कि उनका मन उनका अपना था और यह दूसरों से प्रभावित या निर्देशित नहीं था। जिस दिन उसने अपना व्यक्तित्व विकसित किया, वह बच्चा नहीं रहा।

Childhood Reflected in the Innocent Face of an Infant

In the final stanza the poet asks, 'Where did my Childhood go? Then he comes out with an answer. Perhaps his Childhood is lying hidden at a place that has been forgotten. The glimpse of his lost childhood can be seen over the innocent face of an infant.

एक शिशु के मासूम चेहरे में झलकता बचपन

अंतिम छंद में कवि पूछता है, 'मेरा बचपन कहाँ गया था? फिर वह एक जवाब के साथ बाहर आता है। शायद उनका बचपन किसी भूली हुई जगह पर छिपा पड़ा है। एक मासूम के मासूम चेहरे पर उसके खोए बचपन की झलक देखी जा सकती है।

MAIN POINTS

1. The poet seems to be obsessed with the question: "When did my childhood go"?

2. When he completed eleven years, he grew rational. He realised that 'hell' and 'heaven' are imaginary concepts and don't exist anywhere but only in the mind.

3. There came a period in the poet's life when he saw hypocrisy in the lives of the grown ups. Perhaps that was the time when he lost his childhood.

4. When the poet developed his own individuality, that was the stage when he ceased to be a child.

5. He started thinking independently without being influenced or directed by others.

6. In the last stanza, the poet does not ask 'when' he lost his childhood but asks 'where' his childhood has gone to?

7. The poet himself gives an answer. His childhood stands for innocence and it is lying hidden in the innocent face of an infant.

GLOSSARY

go — end (समाप्त होना)

ceased to be — stopped being (नहीं रह गए)

realised — understood (समझना)

seemed — appeared (प्रतीत हुआ)

preached — taught (प्रचार)

act — behave (ठीक से व्यवहार करना)

lovingly — with compassion or love for others (प्यार से)

really mine — when not influenced by others' opinions(सच में मेरा)

whichever — any (इनमें से जो भी)

producing — creating (उत्पादन)

thoughts — views, opinions coming from the poet's mind (विचार)

forgotten — unremembered (भूल गई)

hidden — concealed, kept out of sight (छुपे हुए)

infant — small child (बच्चा)

LITERARY DEVICES

(साहित्यिक उपकरण)

1. Refrain—(Line(s) that is/are repeated at regular intervals throughout the poem. The refrain often carries the central message of the poem)- “When did my childhood go?... Was that the day!”

2. Antithesis – (A rhetorical device in which two opposite ideas are put together in a sentence to achieve a contrasting effect)- “Hell and Heaven”

3. Alliteration – (Repetition of same consonant sound at the beginning of two adjacent words) - “My mind”; “Whichever way”; “That, they”

4. Inversion – when the subject-verb order is reversed “To use whichever way I choose”

5. Rhyme scheme- The poet does not follow any particular rhyme scheme. Only the first stanza has a rhyme scheme of ‘abbccd’

OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. What is the poem 'Childhood' about?

- A. Poet's lost childhood
- B. Childhood of every person
- C. Childhood of poet's child
- D. Poet's father's childhood

Ans. A. Poet's lost childhood

2. After what age did the poet realise that he had lost his childhood?

- A. Twelve B. Eleven
- C. Ten D. Thirteen

Ans. B. Eleven

3. What the poet could not find in the Geography book?

- A. Hell and Heaven
- B. End to sky
- C. Island
- D. Country

Ans. A. Hell and Heaven

4. What did the poet find out about Hell and Heaven?

- A. They could be found in Geography books
- B. They were imaginary places

C. They were in America

D. They were in India

Ans. B. They were imaginary places

5. What did the poet realise about adults?

- A. That they are mature
- B. They have to earn money
- C. They are not what they seem to be
- D. They are cunning

Ans. C. They are not what they seem to be

6. Why are the adults not what they seem to be?

- A. They talk and preach of love but do not act so
- B. They are very shrewd
- C. They are selfish
- D. They are lazy

Ans. A. They talk and preach of love but do not act so

7. What did the poet realise about his mind when he lost his childhood?

- A. That he can use it in whichever way he wants
- B. That he is very intelligent
- C. That he is dumb

D. That he cannot use it in whichever way he wants

Ans. A. That he can use it in whichever way he wants

8. What did the poet conclude about his lost childhood at the end of the poem?

A. It went to another dimension

B. It went to some forgotten place

C. It moved away with time

D. It shifted to his younger sibling

Ans. B. It went to some forgotten place

9. Where could he see his childhood now?

A. In an infant's face

B. Only in his memories

C. Nowhere

D. In his brother

Ans. A. In an infant's face

10. What type of Rhyme Scheme is used in the poem 'Childhood'?

A. ABABAB B. ABBABA

C. ABABCB D. ABBCCD

Ans. D. ABBCCD

11. Who is the poet of the poem 'Childhood'?

A. Shirley Toulson

B. Walt Whitman

C. Marcus Natten

D. Naipaul

Ans. C. Marcus Natten

12. What is the meaning of the word 'ceased'?

A. Starting of something

B. Come to an end

C. In the middle

D. To chase something

Ans. B. Come to an end

13. What is the opposite of the word 'hidden'?

A. Open B. Closed

C. Partial D. Exposed

Ans. D. Exposed

14. According to the poet, adults are _____

A. Hypocrites

B. Smart

C. Lovable

D. Intelligent and Cunning

Ans. A. Hypocrites

15. What did the poet sense about himself when he realised he could use his own mind the way he wants?

- A. He sensed that he is as intelligent as his friends
- B. He sensed his own individuality and a separate personality
- C. He sensed that he is very smart
- D. He sensed that he could use his mind in creative work

Ans. B. He sensed his own individuality and a separate personality

16. What refrain literary device is used in the poem 'Childhood'?

- A. When did my childhood go?
- B. Hell and Heaven
- C. Could not be found in Geography
- D. That's all I know

Ans. A. When did my childhood go?

17. Antithesis is where two opposite words are used together in a sentence in a poem, where did the poet use it?

- A. Infant's face

- B. Forgotten place
- C. Hell and Heaven
- D. Preached of love

Ans. C. Hell and Heaven

18. Which of these is NOT one of the options where the poet thinks that his childhood has gone?

- A. The time when he ceased to be twelve
- B. The time when he realized that hell and heaven could not be found in Geography
- C. The time when he realized that adults were hypocrites
- D. None of the Above

Ans. A. The time when he ceased to be twelve

19. Which poetic device has been used in the following line-Was it when I found my mind was really mine.

- A. Alliteration
- B. Simile
- C. Metaphor
- D. Personification

Ans. A. Alliteration

20. What question does the poet put forth?

- A. "When did my childhood go?"
- B. "Where did my childhood go?"
- C. Both A and B
- D. None of these

Ans. C. Both A and B

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. What according to the poem is involved in the process of growing up?

Ans. According to the poem, the process of growing up involves attaining maturity and becoming a rational and logical thinker. When the poet became an adult, he was able to see the hypocrisy in other people. He could distinguish the behaviour of double-standard preach and talk of love. A grown-up can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. A mature person stresses on his thoughts and is capable of having his own opinion.

Q2. What is the poet's feeling towards childhood?

Ans. The poet is disappointed and puzzled by the loss of his childhood. He wanted to know when was the moment he became a grown-up and lost the innocence of an infant. He expresses his confusion by asking when and where did his childhood go.

Q3. What did the speaker learn about the existence of Heaven and Hell?

Ans. As the speaker grew to be mature, he acquired reasoning power. He realized that Hell and Heaven could not be found in Geography books or Atlas. Since they could not be located anywhere in the world map, he concluded that they did not exist. He would believe only what he could see and find.

Q4. How did the speaker realise the hypocrisy of the adults?

Ans The speaker noticed a wide gulf between what adults appeared to be and what they actually were in real life. There was an apparent contradiction between their words and deeds. They talked of love and advised others to love, but they never acted lovingly.