

The theme of childhood and the process english literature essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Childhood is a wonderful time of life in which a child transforms to an adult; however it is something that is constantly explored in literature. Childhood is a pleasurable time in which life is innocent. Childhood is the most beautiful season of all life's seasons. The poems " Half-Past Two" and " Hide and seek", present the perspective of a child and his life and will be explored in depth. The other three poems " Piano", " Poem at thirty nine" and " Once Upon a Time", state that an adult is feeling nostalgic, remembering his childhood. Whereas the poem " Mother in a Refugee Camp" is about a tragic life of a mother who lost her child, which depicts her love to him. The first poem is by U. A. Fanthorpe, the writer of " Half-past two". The poem is spoken from the overview of an older man casting back on the moment in his infantile when he had a precise concept of time. The writer uses complex words to convey the child's concept of time beforehand his teacher stated him to wait " till half-past two", and this influences that the child cannot ' click' the " language" of time. In this poem, the point of view is very much that of a child speaking to the author and thinking in his head, " he knew a lot of time: he knew". The poem begins with " Once upon a" which is an opening of old fairy tales which started this way, this foregrounds the past in the framework of the present. Compound words are used to exemplify how much divergent time means to the boy and the understanding of numbers, " onceupona" and " notimeforthatnowtime". When the writer states " He knew a lot of time", this exhibits how the boy knew, different times: like " Tvtime" and " notimeforthatnowtime", however not, the time, and this indicates to him evading " into the clock less land forever". The boy has split his day up into conservative categories to try to comprehend time and have been

having anticipated composite words time like " schooltime", teatime". Throughout the poem, the poet uses uppercase letters to indicate the significance of the teacher and the consequences that she had. In the poem after the boy does " Something Very Wrong" the poet uses uppercase letters to accentuate the importance of the event and the aftermath on the little boy. This is then recurrent in the next verse, and this strengthens the prominence of the incident. In the third verse, the writer uses " Time", in which shows the importance of time in the poem. The writer uses literary strategies, to show the childishness of the child when he was young, as she personifies or humanizes the clock to show the boy does not recognize the information given from it, " He knew the clock face, the little eyes. And two legs for walking. But he couldn't click its language". The last verse of the poem it tells us about that finally, when he becomes adult he realizes that time was easy to learn. The themes explored in " Half Past Two" are childhood understandings, reflection, isolation and desertion. These themes are also explored in " Hide and Seek". " Hide and seek" is a brilliant message hidden in the description of a childhood game. The poem starts with the assured and brave challenge of a boy who has selected a crafty place to hide and is assured nobody will be able find him, " Call out. Call loud. I'm ready", still in spite the fact that he is uncomfortable and scared; he takes relief in the fact that nobody will be clever to catch him. Then he shows the feeling when showing, " The floor is cold", which means he is frightened being in that toolshed, but it, is immediately over cantered by the belief that the children who are looking for the boy will be seeking near the trees and bushes. The poet advises the boy that he must be alert not to sneeze when

they come probing for him in the tool shed as " You mustn't sneeze when they come prowling in". The seekers do come " someone stumbles, mutters", despite at the fact that the assumed win has made the usually gaudy boys quiet and unresponsive. There were quite a few sequences of prompt orders following: boy solidifies, holds his breathe and closes his eyes anticipating that they won't find him. Sure enough, the voices dwindle as the children walk away presuming that the boy would never dare to duck in the tool shed, as it was probably measured off boundaries to children. Even when the children go away from the shed, the boy does not reveal, exulting in the fact that they will keep probing and doubting where he was, all the while admiring at his cleverness. It had been a long time meanwhile they left and the boy develops uncomfortable, cold, stiff and suffocated, " your legs are stiff, the cold bites". He then finally decides that it is time to reveal, his victory. Unexpectedly, he came out of the shed and victoriously said, " Here I am, come up and own up I've caught you". But to his disenchantment he finds the garden uninhabited and in silence. All the children have neglected him and had departed home, " The darkening garden watches. Nothing stirs. Some literary devices also used in " Hide and seek", on the starting line, punctuation like exclamation marks are used to show the passion of the boy: "' I'm ready!". The poet uses personification and the senses to designate the nearby atmosphere in a rich way: " The darkening garden watches".

Intermittent rhyme trailed by half-rhyme is used to enhance a feel of rhythm to the poem: " But be careful that your feet aren't sticking out, wiser not to risk another shout". The poem is one incessant verse. It is like theatrical monologue said in second person point of view. The mature speaks to his

childhood self in second person, explaining his feelings and thoughts. There are short sentences, about two to three words, to build up tension and create immobility in the poem: " Nothing stirs." " Don't move." " Don't breathe." The poem is not just about an infanthood game, but it is about life. The problems which the boy deals after planning to hide in the shed represents the obstructions a man has to face with while strolling down the street, a man chooses in life. But the boy's persistency to win and prosper allows him to be strong enough to defeat all his difficulties. The other boys who are the competitors, they are described as " prowling" alike as if they were hunting animals waiting to attack on their target when it is unconscious. Such are the difficulties life heaves in a man's approach, but if, like the boy, a man has a preplanned aim in mind, then it is not difficult to pull through difficulties. This poem is just like " half past two", where both poems show the difficulties and loneliness in childhood. In both the poems child's point of view is put forward by the poet. The third poem " Once Upon a Time" was written by Gabriel Okara, who is an African writer. This is similar to other poems as they all concentrate on the growing up or childhood. The name of the poem, " Once Upon A Time", has extraordinary significance to the beginning of every fairy tale. It was probably chosen by poet, as the man in the poem enunciates his wish to go, " back in time", and regains his child-like innocence and faultless behaviour. The poem tells the communication between an elderly father and son, where the father wishes to acquire from his son. The poem " Once Upon A Time" starts by the father expressing his son in what way the people, or " they or, " used to laugh with their hearts" which means they used to enjoy and cherish their lives; they had fun. He then changes on to say that

currently they only, " laugh with their teeth, while their ice-block cold eyes search behind his shadow" which tells us that that now writer talks about adulthood and they now do not continue their enjoyable life. They laugh mechanically and there is lack of communication like they are dead. This creates very contrary, forged and wrong feelings and it is a very harsh delineation. This affects the nature of the poem that now becomes atrocious and painful." Goodbye" is an expression that means " see you again". Its meaning has declined to " Good-riddance" which means " don't come again or never meets again". The poet wants to explain by this that everything is faked and is depressed of what he is done. Usage of literary devices is common in this poem like metaphors, similes, symbolism and hyperbole. The usage of metaphor like " ice-block cold eyes" depicts the nature of them; harsh and is like a person not to talk to. The portrait smile is a symbolic item of somewhat that is not felt, but done virtuously for the sake of it supported by " Homeface, officeface, streetface, hostface, cocktailface, with all their conforming smiles like a fixed portrait smile." This also shows the effects of a simile. Hyperbole is used to show some exaggeration through poet, to the reader to make them feel home; " Feel at home"! " Come again". Narration normally uses a consecutive organization as in a child's fairy tale which begins with " Once upon a time . . ." and ends with " And they lived happily ever after." The author explains to his son that he wants to relearn and re-understand everything and become like him. The man disbelieves even his eidetic image, his reflection " for my laugh in the mirror shows only my teeth like a snake's bare fangs". At last it then shows the man showing his dissatisfaction as he states, " I want to be what I used to be when I was like

you", showing that he wants to be straightforward and trustworthy again. He regrets adulthood and wants to cherish his childhood life with fun and reality. This poem links to both "Hide and seek" and "Half-Past Two" as they both concentrate on childhood life and all three poems together give the reflection of the process of growing up in "Once upon a time". The next poem, "Piano" by D. H. Lawrence which I'm going to talk about briefly, is about a person who feels nostalgic and regrets his past as he listens to a woman singing. The poem begins with a man perceiving the easeful singing of a woman. The man who was attending the lady is so affected by his past memoirs that he is just physically present, his mind elsewhere, "Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong". Without any contemplation of his maturity, he surges into cries reminiscing the ecstatic faultless and purity of his immature years. He starts bawling, thus traversing the break among his past and his present "Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast". This poem wiles the man into the nostalgia of childhood. In conclusion this poem concentrates at the difficulties of adulthood compared to joyous life of childhood. This is a poem revolves from happiness of childhood to the darkness in adulthood, to which a man weeps remembering it. This poem is similar to the "Poem at 39". These two poems "Poem at 39" and "Piano" are based upon feeling nostalgic and remembering the past. These both poems consider and share a theme of remembering a person who is not there anymore. The fifth poem is "Poem at 39" written by Alice Walker about a girl who feels nostalgic and remembers his father and his habits. She remembers as he was good in math and accounts. She even cannot forget his cooking style, "He cooked like a person dancing in a yoga

meditation and crave the voluptuous sharing of good food". If his father was alive and there, he would have admired her multi-tasking abilities as suited to a woman, " He would have grown to admire the woman I've become". The girl is sad, as his father is not around. He taught her to have fun with life, how to care of herself and about life. She shows a sense of gratitude for him; he was an inspiration for her life. It tells us that she has become the woman that her father wanted her to be. In the usage of literary devices, Walker has used quite a large amount of symbolism: " tossing this and that into the pot; seasoning none of my life the same way twice" like her father used to. In conclusion, this is a poem which explores the inscriptions left by an adult on his child. Finally, the last poem Chinua Achebe's Mother in a Refugee Camp, paints a disconsolate picture of a mother holding her defunct son in her arms for the last time. It is about a mother who is now poor and lives in a refugee camp which is plagued, illness and sickness, in the camp. The mother loved his child so much that she was not ready to accept that he was dead by " the I coloured hair left on his skull". Her life was distorted as she saw her young child dead as " like putting flowers on a tiny grave". " Former life - a little daily act of no consequence", Achebe depicts a tragic sense by comparing that prior to how life is now the things she once did were merely a routine act which was no important and had no consequences but is now contrasted with the present in which it is only a tragic memory. The phrase " daily act" suggests that before there was no fear - no consequence but now the only connection she has to the " formal life" is a memory which evokes pathos as we learn that before the woman could take care of her baby but all she could do now is to try to hold on but in vain as her child is dying. By mentioning

their " formal life" also makes it seem like it was a completely different life ago that strongly contrasts to how it is now therefore intensifies the horrific image of how things of " no consequence" now means the world to the woman. . In conclusion, this poem portrays the relationship between her mother and a child in a refugee camp. Love and death is conveyed in this poem by the poet, using human structure to show the demise in the child that the mother is embracing. This is also carrying love because the poet used the death of the child, as a way of making the love the mother had for her dying child. In summation, all these six poems " Hide and Seek", " Half Past Two", " Once upon a time", " Piano", " Mother in a Refugee camp" and " Poem at 39" share a theme of childhood and growing up and feelings of different writers towards it. " Hide and seek" describes of a child playing a game with his friends and having fun, and eventually his friends leave him alone. This poem shows that the boy he is feeling abandoned and lonely; this is a part of childhood. Similarly " Once upon a time" tells that the past is better than the present; because there was love, sincerity and faithfulness in the past which was childhood. Now that in the present, everything has changed, this is now adulthood life. Hence the poet wants to relive the past. In a different perspective, " Half past two" is about a boy learning and understanding time. It is about a boy struggling with time in his childhood and now, in present when he is grown up, he is remembering it. It is about a boy who is given a punishment for an unspecified mistake which is forgotten by the teacher. The poems " Piano" and " Poem at 39", are in which the writer feels nostalgic and wants to live his past back, thinking childhood was the most melodious time of life. Finally, the last poem " Mother in a Refugee

Camp" is feeling of a mother after his child died in a very young age. It is a very tragic poem about a mother who is in the trauma of her son's death. All these three poems share the theme of relationship between childhood and adulthood of a person. Word Count: 2681