**Margret Atwood**

**A Sad Child**

**Short answer:**

**Q. Comment on the stanza of the poem?**

**Ans:-** The opening stanza of the poem touches the universal trait of the human beings i.e, sadness. In the poem the speaker says to the child that sadness is inevitable to the child. Without giving any proper reason of her sadness, the speaker begins to advise some remedies to cope up with her sadness. The speaker in the poem suggests that she should go to a psychiatrist or take a tablet go to sleep. The final remedy is that she should embrace and assimilate her sadness just like doll’s eyes are assimilated in the doll itself. The final remedy suggested by the speaker captures her main intention. It can do some good to her. According to speaker when something is unavoidable it is better to embrace it.

**Q. What is the symbolic interpretation of the images, new dress smeared with Ice-cream, flushed with the and ‘mouth sulky with Suger’.**

**Ans:-** There images represent the gender stereotypes of the society. The image ‘new dress smeared with ice-cream’ symbolically presents the patriarchal society where females are marked by the black sports in their character. In the patriarchal society, a grown up child begins to realize how her innocent character is marked by blackness like new dresses smeared with ice-cream in the society. Symbolically these images expose the disparity that starts when a girl child begins to realize that her feelings hurt in the society. She begins to question the existence of God. It is like a neighborhood party, where feelings get hurt and she comes inside, flushed with the sun and sulky with sugar. Flushed with the sun means she begins to realize the patriarchal nature of society. ‘mouth sulky with sugar’ symbolically represents her anger which she is unable to share with anybody.

**Q. What are the different means suggested by the speaker that will help the child cop[e with her sadness?**

**Ans:-** The speaker in the poem suggests the following means that will help the child to cope with her sadness:

1. She should go to a psychiatrist.
2. She Should take a tablet.
3. She should go to sleep
4. She should embrace and assimilate her sadness just like doll’s eyes are assimilated in the doll itself.

**Q. How is the little girl’s emotional loss shown to be a collective experience?**

**Ans:-** Little girl’s emotional loss as a collective experience has been shown by the speaker by hinting at the gender stereotypes associated with girls. Further in the last stanza, this collective experience is related with the death images that emphasizes on the universal nature of emotional loss of women. The speaker does not suggest any particular remedy that would eradicate her existentialistic fears. The poem is concerned with coming to terms, with, what are in themselves depressing feelings, by trying to find the means of making them bearable.

**Long Answer:**

**Q. Elucidate the theme of the poem.**

**Ans:-** The theme of this poem is to have faith during times of desperation.

In Margaret Atwood’s poem “A Sad Child”, the poet uses simplistic diction, imagery, and figurative language in order to express one’s ideas or feelings about experiencing depression. The speaker, possibly Atwood, uses these literary techniques as a basis of coping with the inevitable occurrences in life, which is influenced by sadness, as the title would suggest. The opening line also suggests this idea as it says “You’re sad because you’re sad.” The speaker is suggesting that sadness is inescapable as it is “psychic. It is age. It is chemical”.

The speaker suggests all children are sad, though some get over it, as it is a natural part of life. Throughout the poem the speaker develops ways of coping with this sadness as she suggests seeing a shrink or “hug your sadness like an eyeless doll”. This simile suggests that a child unwillinging hugs the eyeless doll. Child looks to an innocent doll as a means of escaping the misery. The speaker also looks more so to the materialistic things in life, like buying a hat, coat, or pet and hopes to forget the sadness. The speaker also suggests taking on a physical task, like dancing, as another way to deal with the pain. Although, the speaker tries to keep an optimistic point of view as she suggests, “count your blessings”.

To conclude, the speaker states, “none of us is; or else we all are”, which suggests that unfortunately either we are all effected by depression or not, which adds to the idea that depression is universal. Through the use of diction, imagery, and figurative language, the speaker stresses the idea that although depression is inescapable when consumed by it, there are ways to cope with the sadness.

**Q. ‘An eyeless doll’ is an unwanted toy and yet the speaker suggests to the child to deal with her sadness by hugging such a doll. Comment.**

**Ans:-** Suggesting various remedies to cope with sadness, Margret Atwood emphasizes that the child should embrace an eyeless doll. An eyeless doll is an unwanted toy but the suggestion of the speaker comments that sadness is inevitable and inescapable. One must learn to make good situation out of the bad experiences. To embrace an eyeless doll is to accept the social reality where one cannot escape from a gender stereotypes. According to speaker when something is unavoidable it is better to embrace it. One can at least overtake them by various remedial measures. One cannot have a liking of sadness but at the same time one cannot escape them. If we try to question the reason behind our sadness and will waste more energy on the exploration of this reality, one cannot have any enjoyment in the life. It is better to accept the reality that sadness is part of our existence. So the repulsion can cause more harm than it brings the comfort. The poem itself concerns with coming terms with, what are in themselves depressing feelings, by trying to find the means of making them bearable. More over the speaker reminds the child that she has to encounter so many situations in future that will bring the emotional loss in her. So from the beginning, she must have the habit of hugging these unfavorable situations. In the last the speaker states that none of us can escape. We all are in one- way or other way sad. This suggests that unfortunately either we are all affected by depression or not, which adds to the idea the depression is universal. Through the use of diction, imagery, and figurative language, the speaker stresses the idea that depression is inescapable, so we have to embrace it.

**Q. The speaker for from consoling the child assures her that she will encounter many future situations that will remind her she is ‘not favorite’ way does the speaker do so?**

**Ans:-** “A women is not born but she is made so”, is the reason for the speaker to assure the girl child that she will encounter many future situations that will make her understand that she is not the favorite child. The speaker asserts that depressions, disappointments and frustrations are fundamental for women in the society. In the future events, she would begin to realize the gender stereotypes associated with women. In the third stanza the speaker uses a metaphor and states, “the light fails and the fog rolls in and you’re trapped in your overturned body”. This statement suggests that her female existence will entrap her and make her more miserable. The speaker tries to enlighten her mind by bringing these stereotypes before her. The girl child must be prepared since her childhood to encounter such realities. This very realization could possibly make her bold to face such situations in future.

**Q. Comment on Atwood’s use of death images is the last two stanzas.**

**Ans:-** The poetry of Atwood is permeated by the overriding theme of loss, which is either caused by or else leads to aging, grief, death and depression. A sad child revolves round the perennial dilemma faced by every child on coming of age. When they realize that bad and unfair things can happen to good and innocent people, they start to question the indoctrinated belief in a beneficent god. The poem is concerned with coming to terms with what are in themselves depressing feelings by trying to find the means of making them bearable. The girl child is reminded of the future situations where her emotional loss will be imminent inescapable.

In the last stanza the death images introduced in order to give the answer to those questions which people would ask to the God. The speaker states that although females have to go through different situations where they are subjugated and marginalized due to gender stereotypes. But in the end all have to meet the same destiny that is death. This image suggests that these gender stereotypes are manmade not God Made. Again Margaret Atwood suggests that it is not God that makes the women to suffer in the society but the culture, social and artificial doctrines made by the man. God has put equal efforts to make both genders. He has made the biological differences in order to make the society balanced one. If these would have been differences from God then death would not have treated both genders equally.