

For Anne Gregory

In this poem, a young man discusses why a person falls in love, that is what determines it. According to them a person is not loved for his basic nature but because of his/her physical feature, i.e., outward physical appearance. It is not possible to love one for oneself. Only God can do so.

The poem 'For Anne Gregory' by W.B. Yeats is a poem of 18 lines in all. In this poem, the poet addresses to young Gregory and tells her that her hair is of the same colour as honey and when it falls, the poet begins to think her beauty spell bound. Her hair is so beautiful that every man falls in love with her. At this Gregory gives response to the poet that man love her only for her outward beauty while this outward appearance may be changed at any time. At this, the poet concludes that it is a truth since time immemorial that man can not easily judge a woman other than her looks. He tells Anne that she can never be ugly inward or outward even if she wishes to be so.

NCERT Solutions

Thinking About the Poem (page 141)

Question 1.

What does the young man mean by "great honey-coloured /Ramparts at your ear?" Why does he say that young men are "thrown into despair" by them?

Answer:

The young man in the poem praises the great honey-colored hair of Anne. Anne's hair have been called rampart, meaning a wall. It is called so because they act as a wall, as they prevent young men from looking beyond those yellow hair and into her soul. Her hair are so attractive that young men cannot look at anything else. Anne's yellow hair are so pretty that young men hopelessly fall in love with her. She is so pretty that everyone wants her, which cannot happen; hence, they are thrown into despair.

Question 2.

What colour is the young woman's hair? What does she say she can change it to? Why would she want to do so?

Answer:

Anne's hair are yellow, like the colour of honey. She says that she can change it to black, brown or carrot; she means that she can change it to any colour she wants. Anne says so to show that outer beauty is changeable and not permanent or real. She wants young men to look in her soul and love her for her inner beauty. In order to do so, she needs to show them the superficiality of her external beauty.

Question 3.

Objects have qualities which make them desirable to others. Can you think of some objects (a car, a phone, a dress...) and say what qualities make one object more desirable than another? Imagine you were trying to sell an object: what qualities would you emphasise?

Answer:

People desire objects because of their qualities that suit their need. The things we consume, goods we use such as a car, a phone, a dress etc. physical qualities matter the most. Before buying

anything, it is always considered that the object is durable and looks pretty. If I were to sell a dress, I would select the one that is very appealing to the eye and comfortable for the body. Then I would emphasise on the durability of the dress so that the customer feels that he/she is spending his/her money at the right place and in the right thing.

Question 4.

What about people? Do we love others because we like their qualities, whether physical or mental? Or is it possible to love someone “for themselves alone”? Are some people ‘more lovable’ than others? Discuss this question in pairs or in groups’, considering points like the following.

1. A parent or caregiver’s love for a newborn baby, for a mentally or physically challenged child, for a clever child or a prodigy
2. The public’s love for a film star, a sportsperson, a politician, or a social worker
3. Your love for a friend, or brother or sister
4. Your love for a pet, and the pet’s love for you.

Answer:

The students should attempt on their own.

Question 5.

You have perhaps concluded that people are not objects to be valued for their qualities or riches rather than for themselves. But elsewhere Yeats asks the question: How can we separate the dancer from the dance? Is it possible to separate ‘the person himself or herself’ from how the person looks, sounds, walks and so on? Think of how you or a friend or member of your family has changed over the years. Has your relationship also changed? In what way?

Answer:

The students should attempt on their own.

Extra Questions

Short Answer Type

Question 1.

What does the young woman wish?

Answer:

The young woman wishes that she should be loved for herself alone and not for her yellow hair. She says that she could dye her hair in brown or black or carrot coloured.

Question 2.

Would the young man love her for herself alone?

Answer:

The young man’s desires have been frustrated for want of hope because he has fallen from her grace, he will never love her for herself alone, though he might love her yellow hair.

Question 3.

Why is the youth in despair in the poem “For Anne Gregory”?

Answer:

The young man loves Anne. He is attracted towards her external beauty. He feels that young men are in despair because of her exquisite beauty.

Question 4.

What did the religious man tell the poet?

Answer:

The religious man told the poet that he found a book to prove that only god could love her for her spiritual beauty and not for her physical beauty.

Question 5.

The poet in the poem 'For Anne Gregory' conveys that We should give importance to the inner beauty and not to the physical appearance. Explain with reference to the poem.

Answer:

It is an accepted fact that external beauty is shortlived but inner beauty remains forever. Inner beauty gives satisfaction and joy. We should thus learn not to accept things at their face value. We should try to discover the inner beauty and strength of a person, though it is not easy to do so. We should accept the person with positive and negative values.

As the time passes relations are strengthened. In the poem 'For Anne Gregory' the beloved wants that her lover should love her for herself not the colour of the hair. She wants to strengthen this fact that inner beauty is more important than external beauty.

Question 6.

Write a paragraph on the topic "All that Glitters is not Gold". With reference to the poem "For Anne Gregory" written by W. B. Yeats.

Answer:

What we see through the naked eye might not always be the naked truth. Like shining pieces of glass that shine and glitter like diamonds, the way people appear on the outside can be very misleading. We must never judge a book by its cover as there is a possibility that we might be wrong.

Appearances should never be trusted. It can lead us to wrong conclusions. A person may be very handsome or beautiful outside but inside if the character is not good that person's appearance is of no value. So always try to look beneath the skin because beauty is skin deep. The real beauty lies in the personality of the person, not in external appearances.

Question 7.

What does the young man mean by "great honey-coloured / Ramparts at your ear?" Why does he say that young men are "thrown into despair" by them? "

Answer:

The "great honey-colored / Ramparts at your ear" refers to the beautiful yellow coloured hair that falls at the woman's ear and cover it like a wall around a fort. He says that the young men are "thrown into despair" by them because they look so beautiful on the women that her beauty gets thoroughly enhanced. The young men fall in love with her and feel despair. He says that it is not possible that someone would love her alone and not her yellow hair.

Question 8.

What colour is the young woman's hair? What does she say she can change it to? Why would she want to do so?

Answer:

The young woman's hair is of yellow colour. She says that she could get her hair dyed to brown, black or carrot colour. She would change the colour of her hair so that the young men in despair would love her only and not her yellow hair. She wanted them to love her for what she was and not for her appearance such as her hair colour.

Question 9.

Objects have qualities which make them desirable to others. Can you think of some objects (a car, a phone, a dress...) and say what qualities make one object more desirable than another? Imagine you were trying to sell an object: what qualities would you emphasise?

Answer:

Objects have qualities which make them desirable to others. There are many factors that make them desirable such as their usefulness, utility, disability, their price and appearance.

Question 10.

What about people? Do we love others because we like their qualities, whether physical or 'mental'? Or is it possible to love someone "for themselves alone"? Are some people "more lovable" than others"? Discuss this question in pairs or in groups, considering points like the following.

(i) A parent or caregiver's love for a newborn baby, for a mentally or physically challenged child, for a clever child or prodigy.

(ii) The public's love for a filmstar, a sportsperson, a politician, or a social worker.

(iii) Your love for a friend, or brother or sister.

(iv) Your love for a pet, and the pet's love for you.

Answer:

Try yourself in classroom / classroom activity.

Question 11.

You have perhaps concluded that people are not objects to be valued for their qualities or riches rather than for themselves. But elsewhere Yeats asks the question: How can we separate the dancer from the dance? Is it possible to separate 'the person himself or herself from how the person looks, sounds, walks, and so on? Think of how you or a friend or member of your family has changed over the years. Has your relationship also changed? In what way?

Answer:

Classroom Activity.

Reference to Context

Read the following stanza and answer the questions that follow:

Question 1.

"Never shall a young man,

Thrown into despair

By those great honey-coloured

Ramparts at your ear,

*Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."*

- (i) Who is the speaker in this stanza?
- (ii) Why is the youngman in despair?
- (iii) With what are her ears compared?
- (iv) Name the poem and poet.

Answer:

- (i) The poet is the speaker, he is addressing Anne Gregory.
- (ii) The youngman is the lover of Anne. He is in despair because he has seen the white hair of his beloved.
- (iii) Her ears are composed with ramparts, which are high, wide walls around a castle or a fort.
- (iv) The poem "For Anne Gregory" composed by "W. B. Yeasts".

Question 2.

*"But I can get a hair-dye
And set such colour there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair."*

- (i) Who is the speaker in these lines?
- (ii) What colour would she give her hair?
- (iii) Why is she ready to do so?
- (iv) Name the poem and poet.

Answer:

- (i) Anrie Gregory is the speaker in these lines.
- (ii) She would give her hair colour brown or black or carrot.
- (iii) She is ready to do so because her lover feels that men love her because of her golden hair. She wants to be loved for her inner beauty.
- (iv) The poem "For Anne Gregory" composed by "W. B. Yeasts".

Question 3.

*"I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."*

- (i) Who is 'I' in the first line?
- (ii) What did he find yesternight?
- (iii) What does the poet convey in the last three lines?
- (iv) Name the poem and poet.

Answer:

- (i) 'I' in the first line is the poet— W. B. Yeats.
- (ii) The poet heard an old religious man declaring that only God could love us for ourselves alone and

not our hair.

(iii) The poet conveys that human beings are incapable of seeing inner beauty. They love someone only for the external beauty. Only God can love someone for the inner beauty.

(iv) The poem "For Anne Gregory" composed by "W. B. Yeasts".