

For Anne Gregory

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.

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.