



Brain International School

Vikas Puri, New Delhi

ASSIGNMENT NO. 4

SUBJECT: ENGLISH

CLASS-X

OCTOBER, 2025

CH 9: The Proposal

Theme:

Anton Chekhov's *The Proposal* is a farcical satire that mocks the hypocrisy and materialism of the upper-class society. The play highlights how human pride and greed can turn even a marriage proposal into a ridiculous quarrel. Through Lomov, Natalya, and Chubukov's petty arguments, Chekhov exposes how ego overshadows love and reason. Beneath the humour lies a subtle critique of social pretensions and the absurdity of human behaviour.

Answer the following questions:

1. How does Chekhov use humour and exaggeration to expose the shallowness of social relationships?
2. In what ways do the characters' arguments over trivial issues reflect the materialistic mindset of the society?
3. Discuss how the play's ending, though comic, reflects the emptiness of relationships driven by property and status.
4. The principle 'Forgive and Forget' helps a lot in maintaining cordial relations with our neighbours. Do you think the author proves this message in the play "The Proposal"?
5. Anton Chekhov has used humour and exaggeration in the play to comment on courtship in his times. Illustrate with examples from the lesson, "The Proposal". Also mention the values, you think, any healthy relationship requires.

POEM 9: The Tale of Custard the Dragon

Theme:

Ogden Nash's humorous narrative poem explores courage, humility, and the irony of appearances. Through Custard—the timid dragon who turns brave in crisis—the poet shows that real bravery is revealed through actions, not words. The poem challenges stereotypes and reminds the readers that even the quietest individuals may possess hidden strength.

Rhyme scheme: The poem follows a consistent **aabb** rhyme scheme in its stanzas, giving it a playful, rhythmic, and musical quality. For example, the first stanza rhymes "house" with "mouse" and "wagon" with "dragon".

Poetic Devices

- **Repetition:** Words, phrases, and entire stanzas are repeated for emphasis and rhythm. The refrain "And a realio, trulio" and the phrase "little pet dragon" are repeated, as is the line "Custard cried for a nice safe cage".
- **Simile:** This device compares two different things using "like" or "as." Nash employs many similes to create vivid imagery:
 - ✓ "Mustard was as brave as a tiger in a rage".
 - ✓ "Mouth like a fireplace".
 - "Clashed his tail like irons in a dungeon".
- **Metaphor:** A direct comparison between two unlike things without using "like" or "as".
 - ✓ "Chimney for a nose" directly compares the dragon's nose to a chimney.
 - ✓ "Daggers on his toes" compares the dragon's sharp claws to daggers.
- **Alliteration:** The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words adds to the poem's rhythm.
 - ✓ "Belinda was as **b**rave as a **b**arrel full of **b**ears".
 - ✓ "Custard **c**ried for a nice safe **c**age".
- **Personification:** Human characteristics are given to the animal characters.
 - ✓ Ink, Blink, and Mustard "rudely called him Percival" and tease Custard for his fear.
 - ✓ The animals are described as having human emotions and being able to speak.
- **Onomatopoeia:** The use of words that imitate sounds helps create a dramatic and lively effect. "Giggled," "weeek," "growled," "clatter," and "clank".
- **Anaphora:** The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of consecutive lines, such as "And a" in the first stanza, builds rhythm.
- **Oxymoron:** This device combines two contradictory terms. "Pet dragon," for instance, highlights the absurdity of a docile dragon.
- **Irony:** The poem is filled with situational irony.
 - ✓ The small pets—Ink, Blink, and Mustard—boast of their bravery, while the formidable dragon, Custard, is a supposed coward.
 - ✓ The irony is resolved when the pirate appears and the supposedly brave pets flee, leaving the seemingly cowardly Custard to bravely face and defeat the pirate.
- **Exaggeration:** It is a statement that makes something worse, or better than it really is. It is used to create humour. Example: Belinda giggled till she shook the house. Here the giggling of Belinda is shown to shake the house which is an overstatement or an exaggeration.

- **Allusion-** Allusion means an indirect reference. It is a figure of speech in which a reference, typically brief, to a person, place, thing, event, or other literary work with which the reader is presumably familiar. Example: Ink, Blink and Mustard, they rudely called him percival.
- **Poetic license/Wordplay:** The poet intentionally misspells words like "winda" for "window" and uses invented words like "realio, trulio" to maintain the rhyme scheme and add to the poem's playful feel

Answer the following questions:

1. How does Ogden Nash use irony to redefine the meaning of bravery in the poem?
2. What can we learn about human nature from the way Belinda and her pets treat Custard before and after the pirate's attack?
3. If Custard represents modesty and real courage, what do the other pets symbolize?
4. How does humour help the poet deliver a moral message without being preachy?
5. Reflect on a real-life situation where someone underestimated when someone showed true courage. How does it relate to Custard's story?

POEM 10: For Anne Gregory

Theme:

W.B. Yeats's *For Anne Gregory* explores the contrast between outward appearance and inner beauty. Through a conversation between the poet and Anne, Yeats questions superficial love and suggests that only divine love is truly unconditional. The poem urges self-awareness, emphasizing that real affection values character over charm.

Poetic Devices:

- **Alliteration:** The repetition of initial consonant sounds, such as "your yellow," "set such," and "he had," creates a lyrical quality and emphasizes certain words.
- **Metaphor:** The poet compares Anne's yellow hair to "ramparts" (castle walls), suggesting it frames her face and is a physical attribute that can be replaced.
- **Anaphora:** The word "that" is repeated at the beginning of consecutive lines in the last stanza ("That he had... That only God..."), highlighting key ideas.
- **Refrain:** The repeated lines "Love you for yourself alone / And not your yellow hair" appear in the first and third stanzas, reinforcing the poem's main theme.
- **Rhyme Scheme:** The poem follows an ABCBDB rhyme scheme, giving it a consistent rhythm and musicality.
- **Symbolism:** The "yellow hair" serves as a symbol of external or superficial beauty, while the speaker suggests that only "God" could love the "self alone".

- **Irony:** The central irony lies in the contrast between the speaker's idea that true love comes from the soul and the societal obsession with superficial beauty, exemplified by the recurring mention of "yellow hair".

Answer the following questions:

1. How does the dialogue form of the poem make its message more personal and reflective?
2. In what way does Anne Gregory's desire to dye her hair symbolize the human need for acceptance?
3. The poem suggests that only God loves "for yourself alone." What does this reveal about human limitations?
4. How does the poet's tone evolve from playful to philosophical?
5. The poem focuses on the transient nature of physical beauty. How does this idea connect with the broader concept of impermanence in life as highlighted in the story, 'The Sermon at Benaras'.
6. Imagine you are Anne Gregory—how would you respond to the poet's belief about love and beauty in today's social media-driven world?

CH 9: The Book That Saved the Earth

Theme:

Claire Boiko's *The Book That Saved the Earth* is a futuristic satire that celebrates human intelligence and the power of literature. When Martians misinterpret a simple children's book as a threat, it humorously underscores the importance of communication, imagination, and interpretation. The play ultimately conveys that knowledge—especially through books—can save civilizations by promoting understanding over fear.

Answer the following competency-based questions:

1. How does the play highlight the danger of miscommunication and assumptions in interpreting other cultures?
2. What does the character of Think-Tank reveal about the misuse of intelligence and authority?
3. How is humour used to comment on the power of books and human creativity?
4. How does this play encourage readers to value learning and critical thinking in a world of technology?