

To be determined



of the of the Concerned 2 May 2009 A Woman's Last Word ' A Woman's Last Word' written by Robert Browning is a special love lyric that is defined by an exuding sense of irony and pathos. In fact it is a cross-gendered monologue that deals with the issue of role playing in the intimate human relationships. The relationship defined in the poem is very conventional in its perspective, yet it offers a unique insight into the seemingly conventional and regular. The poem starts with an argument between the two lovers and the speaker is trying to bring it to an end.

The very title of the poem suggests an approach towards a possible interpretation of a discernable dramatic situation. Though on the surface, the poem seems to suggest a practical validation of the male superiority in the relationship under consideration, yet the underlying currents in the poem reveal a woman's inherent superiority and finesse in the handling of love relationships. The woman in the poem is approaching the relationship with a sense of pragmatism and is well aware of the necessity of letting her male counterpart feel superior in this battle of the sexes.

The monologue begins with the woman's request for a cessation of the ongoing contention. She is intuitively aware of the fact that their quarrel has reached a precarious situation where sharp words could jeopardize the entire relationship. Ant further perusal of the logical arguments will only do an irreparable damage to the relationship. Her instinct nudges her to revert back to the agreed upon status quo so as to give the relationship a chance. Thus she yearns to drop reasoning in the favor of more fundamental and basic sensual and physical modes of communication. She in fact encourages her husband to subside to his conventional role.

Be a god and hold me

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With a charm!

Be a man and fold me

With thine arm! (21-24)

She in return offers to revert back to her conventional role defined by docility and subservience.

Teach me, only teach, Love!

As I ought

I will speak thy speech, Love,

Think thy thought-

Meet, if though require it,

Both demands,

Laying flesh and spirit

In thy hands (25-32)

In this very instance of submission lies the astuteness of the woman in the sense that by succumbing to her conventional role as a woman, she is tacitly provoking her husband to do the same. As the dramatic action gets more intense and as her tone gets more submissive, superficially pointing to her unquestioning allegiance to her role, the sense of power that she commands in the relationship gets more discernable and apparent. Hence it gets really difficult to detect who is exercising the real control in the relationship.

Therefore the title of the poem ' A Woman's Last Word' presents a situation of ambiguity. Perhaps the woman in the poem has given up before the overpowering stature of her partner, or perhaps it is she who had the last word in the confrontation, considering the way she way she manipulates her husband into a state of passivity by urging him to let " All as before (3)."

Works Cited

Browning, Robert. “ A Woman’s Last Word”. Poem Hunter. com. 2 May 2009.