

ISABELLA WHITNEY

LEC-1 16.3.2020 12.30 P.M.

Hello Students! Good Afternoon!

We shall take up Whitney's poem this week---mon-wed.(March 16,17,18 2020)

She is the lone woman poet in this unit. We have studied Wyatt, Spenser and Donne so far in this unit dealing with love poetry from 16th-17th century. Isabella Whitney(1566-1600) is a woman poet whose take on love offers a distinct, subversive and corrective voice to the Petrarchan love conventions that largely centred around woman's chastity and stylised wooing of male lovers. Whitney talks about male infidelity, and uncertainties in love and marriage for the woman partner.

She uses a series of references from Greek and roman myths and epics and compares the betrayals, abandonments ,infidelities of epic heroes and contrasts them to loyal women characters from myths and epics.

The poem posits her lover's impending marriage to another woman and offers him good counsel regarding what to expect in future in the context of his own infidelity towards her. She desists from anger or playing the victim but acts with dignity and affirms her self-respect.

The tone is composed, erudite and avoids Petrarchan hyperboles, anti-thesis or Spensarian oxymorons. The absence of Wyatt's cynicism towards love or the witty ,epigrammatic style of Donne can be appreciated. This aspect renders Whitney's poem a self-restraint but indicates a clear standpoint towards the betrayal of her lover without resorting to melodrama or conventional language of 16th century love poetry.

Lines1-60 References

L1 close =secret

L7 sith = since

L13 quaild=failed

L14 begonne=taken off

L28 Sinon = Greek soldier who betrayed Troy,trojan horse episode

L33 Eneas = Aeneas,son of Priam who founded Rome

L34 Dido =queen of Carthage,abandoned by Aeneas

L37 Theseus =killed Minotaur,left behind Aridane at Naxos

L41 Jason = acquired the golden fleece with Medea's help,married her n bore two sons,won wars with her help but later abandoned her to marry Corinth's princess out of ambition for greater power.

L48 wolde =Jason had his will with her

L57 Aeolus =god of the winds

L60 slea-slay

LEC 2,TUE.17.3.2020,12.30P.M.

We shall discuss references from lines 61-100

Audio msgs on wa will elaborate upon these and discuss the poem with the class on our wa grp.questions and doubts can be taken up over calls,emails or wa msgs.

L61 =falsehed =falsehood

L74 Paris =son of Priam,eloped with Menelaus' wife,Helen and caused the trojan war

L77 Troyus =son of Priam,died faithful to his love for the Greek woman Criseid who had preferred Diomede over him.cross ref to chaucer's poem—Troilus & Criseyde and Shakespeare's tragedy of the same title

L98-99 in Odyssey Penelope, wife of Odysseus is praised for her constancy to her sea tossed ,absent husband ,missing for 10 years and keeping her powerful, riotous suitors at bay with her intelligence.While Helen's trade refers to seduction.

Lec 3 ,WED,18.3.2020,12.30P.M.

In this concluding section, Whitney sets up her moral high ground and affirms her independence and dignity by making a reference to her career as a poet. She cannot be perceived only as a beloved,Petrarchan or otherwise!

L101 =Luces =Lucretia,a roman killed herself to protect her chastity

L102 =Thisbie =beloved of Pyramus who killed herself believing him to be dead.cross refer to Ovid

L103 Peto =the friar who opposed Henry the Eighth's divorce to Catharine of Aragon

L104 rueth = such a pity

L114 Cassandra =Priam's daughter who could predict future

L120 refraine =prevent\check it

L126 Nestor = a Greek king well-known for his wisdom

L129 Xerxis = rich king of Persia who defeated greeks in 480 B.C.

L130 Cressus = wealthy king of Lydia

L132 mould =earth

L140 the rest =refers perhaps to her other pb poems

With the help of these references you may read the poem and revert to me for discussion, questions and clarifications.

NEXT WEEK WE SHALL TAKE UP SHADOW LINES.

READ UP THE NOVEL

Dr.B.MANGALAM

