

Ovid Amores 1.5.7-26

Ovid was a Roman poet writing in the time of the emperor Augustus. Amores is the collection of three books of love poetry written by Ovid. The poem in question is a poem depicting a man who is describing the scenery and time whilst having intimate relations with a Woman named Corinna. Lines one to six set the scene of the room where it portrays the scenery around the room and what the man in the poem can see.

Line seven begins the extract that will be focused on. The lines start by speaking of the light that is let in through the window in the room and it says that it is the light for “shy girls” (Ovid Amores 1.5.7). This leads into the eighth line where Ovid writes that shy girls hope to hide their “timid modesty” (Ovid Amores 1.5.8). Which could refer to a shyness of their own body. Here we begin to get a glimpse into what the rest of the poem will portray. In the next in the four lines we begin to get a true understanding of what the poem is truly wishing to portray to complete the scene. These lines depict the beauty of Corinna it describes her general appearance without describing any distinct facial features. It also describes her clothing saying that she has a tunic with the belt open. Next in line thirteen we can see beginning of the main content of the poem.

This line begins with the man in the scene tearing off Corinna’s tunic off. In the Next lines Ovid describe Corinna’s body and speaks of her wanting her tunic back on but not doing anything to hide herself again depicting her as shy. Next the poem goes into detail with depicting Corinna’s body Them poem does so in such a way that in the modern day would be considered as erotica. This was uncommon at the time and rather than go into the emotional forms of love it delves into the physicality of love. The poem also focuses only on the male perspective of the physicality as the poem is completely at the perspective of Ovid.¹ In the next set of lines Ovid depicts how Corinna’s body looks and, in the poem, she is described as perfect. It is clear then that Ovid is deeply infatuated by her beauty as the descriptions given portray minimal detail however the text does give a sense that in the eyes of Ovid, she is beautiful. Yet it is clear that this in the modern day would be considered as objectification of Corinna. However, at the time of the writing in Rome the objectification would not have been shunned however it must be noted that the erotic overtones of the poem may have been met with mixed reactions.²

In lines nineteen to twenty-four Ovid goes on to describe her body in ways that would also be considered as objectifying as it describes her breasts, her flat stomach and her thighs all in a sexual manner using descriptors that would be seen in a modern day erotic novel. Ovid then goes on to reason why he describes her features and he writes “I saw nothing not to praise” (Ovid Amores 1.5.23). Ovid moves on saying that he pressed her body up against his. He then says “Who does not know the rest? Tired we both rested” (Ovid Amores 1.5.25). Through this he does not give any detail of the events of their relations leaving it to the imagination of the reader but also ending the poem abruptly with Ovid saying “May mid-days often come forth to me in this way” (Ovid Amores 1.5.26) This

¹ Ovid, *Amores* (Book 1) - William Turpin, chapter “The Siesta”

² Ovid, *Amores* (Book 1) - William Turpin, chapter “The Siesta”

also showing that he would wish for the events that took place of which he describes to come each and every day.

This poem seems to portray a very personal and intimate experience for the Author Ovid as Corinna is said to be the woman who due to the experience, he had in this moment made him become a poet. Therefore we can derive possible meaning to the life of Ovid from this poem. In the previous poems of the collection in *Amores* it is said that the author Ovid allures to Corinna as being the woman who would turn his interests to poetry and in this poem we are given the setting and the name of Corinna who was not named previously in *Amores*.³ There is also a message behind the Poem as it gives a sense that it is the creation of Ovid to finally portray the reasoning for his poetry in such a way that he believes will portray to the reader his view of the events.

This poem then is a display by Ovid in order to describe to his audience the feeling and the view of what would to him be a turning point in his life where he potentially due to these events has become a poet. We can then conclude that Ovid indeed wished to portray the events in his words which we would consider to be objectification of Corinna however the true intent of the writing is for him to portray her beauty in such a way that he gives minimal descriptive detail and yet the reader is able to create a mental image of the scene.

³ Ovid, *Amores* (Book 1) - William Turpin, chapter "The Siesta"

Bibliography

Ovid, Amores (Book 1) - William Turpin

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