

## Main Themes in Poetry

The main themes that Ovid explores in his poetry are the roles of women, self-pity, and love. In his brilliant poem, 'Advice to Women', Ovid outlines what he believes a woman should be. He says that a woman should be beautiful and always insure she is looking her best, "What is your chiefest duty, pray, listen well and I will tell you how to keep your beauty." Clearly, Ovid believes that the woman's role in society is to look good for her partner. The poet is insinuating that a woman is nothing without beauty and that that is the most important thing above everything else. As this poem progresses, Ovid continues to explain that it is important for men to look their best, too. However, for a woman it is her upmost duty to look good. Ovid doesn't focus on aspects like talents or intelligence holding any importance

Another example of the role of women in Ovid's poetry is in his poem 'The art of love'. rather than offering advice to women in this poem he offers his expertise to men. Ovid claims that women are materialistic, selfish, and greedy beings, and tries to advise men about how they should be treated in order to have a successful relationship. Ovid tells men to give in to what their partner wants and to be obedient. "Just play whatever part she'd have you play. Like what she likes, decry what she decries." It is evident that all that he believes in gender roles in society. Women are supposed to be weak, greedy, and bossy. This belief contradicts the belief at the time, as Greek women were meant to be loyal and faithful. It is quite clear that Ovid believes men should be subservient to women and given to their desires.

Ovid's poetry clearly creates a great sense of self-pity. In the poem 'Misery in Exile,' Ovid is lonely and bored. It is very clear he is trying to evoke feelings of sympathy among his readers. While trapped in exile, Ovid feels he can no longer find inspiration to write poetry. He feels as though he is forgetting his own mind surrounded by so many foreigners. Ovid complains of this injustice that has been done to him, he speaks of how unfair it is that his abilities are being wasted and how he of all people deserves to be upset. The poet is clearly trying to create an atmosphere of sorrow and depression. Clearly, he is drowning in self-pity.