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Ovid and Metamorphoses

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Ovid and Metamorphoses

Metamorphoses by Ovid is one of the most famous poems that are used in literary courses since it depicts a lot of themes and literary characteristics. In the Metamorphoses, Ovid explains how things came to be in the world by giving tales of how the world started and how it progressed for the world to be where it is today. He has told many stories about giants, gods, goddesses, wars, and mortals, which points out a moral lesson or points out several themes used in the current world. The Metamorphoses poem is a representation of how the world and the beings in it transformed year after year due to the decisions and their actions. It is majorly a poem that describes the world's history by incorporating many beloved and known tales from Greek mythology. The poem did not give importance to the gods or heroes in the Greek mythology tales but focused more on the mortal characters.

Every story described in the Metamorphoses poem entails transformation since Ovid wanted to link the stories together. This is so because he explains how the heavens, world, and everything else was developed out of chaos (Guanci, 2012). He also describes how humankind progressed from the Gold Age, then the Silver Age, and finally to the Age of Iron, otherwise known as the Age of Man. The Gold Age and Silver Age symbolizes gods' and goddesses' reign and how they ruled over mortal men. The Age of Iron represents mortal men who rose into power after the extinction of the gods and goddesses, where they used weapons made of iron to fight their wars. One war that was included in the poem was the Trojan War between Troy and the Greeks. However, most of the tales incorporated in the poem were Greek Mythology, which included gods, goddesses, and how they used their power to transform the people who defied them into creatures and stones (Mandelbaum, 1995).

Ovid is believed to be using black humor in *Metamorphoses* since the situation that was happening in the tales incorporated in the poem cannot be described as humorous. Hence, many scholars think his humor provoked criticism since it was humane and profound, misogynistic, or hateful. Ovid's humor is seen in rape or death scenes, while other touches of humor are depicted from loving and tender scenes. It is believed that he used to laugh at everything, even situations that expect one to be serious. Thus, individuals who believe in Ovid's work in his poems and tales agree that humor helps them understand the *Metamorphoses* poem.

The *Metamorphoses* also talks about Augustan Rome, whereby the Age of Augustus flourished because it harnessed literary skills and talent wonderfully. Many literary works that were done in the Age of Augustus flourished since many individuals during that time read and were influenced by them. Augustan Rome, however, was known to ban Ovid and his books from Rome's libraries. This was because Augustus took offense over what Ovid wrote in some of his poems, which has described the art of seduction (Guanci, 2012). This kind of art rarely pleased Augustus; hence, he ordered that Ovid be exiled from Rome and his books.

The lesson I learned from reading *Metamorphosis* is that love can cause good or bad things happening to an individual. In Greek mythology incorporated in the poem, love caused envy and jealousy, making gods turn people into creatures or commit because they were loved more than them. Also, love caused other individuals to live happily in the chaos and destruction of the world. However, love has consequences, no matter how good it is to others.

References

- Guanci, S. R. (2012). Ovid's Metamorphoses: Book One, a New Text Reader (Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia).
- Mandelbaum, A. (1995). The Metamorphoses of Ovid: A New Verse Translation.

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