

Ovid the metamorphoses

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



Joey c. The Metamorphoses: Why Jupiter's feelings that humans are evil is misled and hypocritical. " And I reckon them that are good must suffer for it the same as them that are bad. "? William Faulkner. Faulkner's ideology is prevalent in the story The Metamorphoses, by Ovid, as the poet tells of the god Jupiter destroying all man kind (except for Deucalion and Pyrrha) because of the actions of one, Lycaon. Ovid describes Jupiter's destruction as an effort to protect all the gods who do not live in the heavens. However, Jupiter's actions are not justified in any way presented in the book.

In the story there are multiple cases where Jupiter and other gods cause danger and torment on the lower class of gods. Examples of rape, intervention of true love, and god's being killed, forever changed, and cast out, are all reoccurring events that occur throughout The Metamorphoses. This concludes that, with the destruction of humanity, Jupiter exemplifies characteristics of ignorance and hypocrisy by: not considering the good and well being of other humans, harming the very gods he set out to protect, and ignoring the other gods wrong doings, that were more detrimental than any human ever had the power to do.

Jupiter believes that humans are all evil, however he took this generalization off of one situation and failed to consider any other possibilities. By this generalization, Jupiter has misled information and a bias heart going into his decision to flood the world. Jupiter, during an age of hardship and nothing sacred, went to see a human named Lycaon. During his visit Jupiter was treated with disrespect and was even attempted to be murdered by Lycaon. "... at first Lycaon mocked their piety... ' He planned to take me, overcome

with sleep, and murder me as I lay unawares. ” (The Metamorphoses: Book 1, 308-313).

So outraged, Jupiter set out to destroy humanity with a flood. K Balsley, whose article about The Metamorphoses is published in the University Of California Press, believes that much of Jupiter’s intention was anger based and that led Jupiter to his misjudgment. “ Jupiter is too overcome with anger, too quick to punish and too abusive of his authority as king of the gods to provide an unbiased version of the truth” (Balsley). Jupiter’s anger clouded his mind from seeing the good that others might have and that Lycaon’s actions are the reason why Jupiter flooded the world, not by mankind's evil.

With the flood, two people survived, Deucalion and Pyrrha. These two were examples of the honorable and just men and women that Jupiter neglect to consider as he tore apart all human kind. “... Jupiter realized the world was now thoroughly inundated, and observed only a single man and woman left out of the many thousands there had been, and that they both were blameless and devout... ” (The Metamorphoses: Book 1, 447-451). These two individuals proved that Jupiter was too quick to action in his decision and made a major mistake in believing all man kind is evil.

These two major parts of The Metamorphoses show Jupiter’s action as ignorant, but it is also Jupiter's hypocrisy seen through his own wrong doings which presents the flaws of Jupiter's justification on the flood. A major justification of why Jupiter washed out humanity is to protect the gods that lived on the earth, however this is a hypocritical desire as there are multiple cases in The Metamorphoses where he caused the earth dwelling gods’ torment. In book 2 of The Metamorphoses, Jupiter seeks out Callisto and

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rapes her. "... s she began recounting the day's hunt, (Jupiter) interrupted her with an embrace that clearly showed his criminal intent" (The Metamorphoses: Book 2, 595-597). By successfully raping Callisto, Jupiter caused her harm which was the very thing he wanted to protect them from. His lust is unstoppable in the book as he is a powerful god and he hurts both his wife, Juno, and his others in his sexual acts. In book three, his wife is so furious at the lust driven Jupiter that she convinced one of his lovers, Semele, to make Jupiter make love with her using all of his power. ... (Semele) could not bear such heavenly excitement, burst into flames and was incinerated by Jove's gift. Her child was torn out of her womb unfinished... " (The Metamorphoses: Book 3, 497-400). Because of Jupiter's action's both Semele and his own unborn son are killed. His lust drove Juno to intentionally hurt both Semele and Jupiter because she knew that: by making love to Semele, it would kill her and the unborn child. This shows that he fails to protect the gods, and in a very hypocritical action, he actually did more damage to the gods than any human ever did. The evil of Jupiter's actions are ironic because his punishment of all humanity is a result of the cruelty and wickedness of humans that Jupiter saw. Through Jupiter's faults it is clear that his destruction of mankind was an act of hypocrisy, however it is also the actions of other god's that make Jupiter's reasons for the flood seem foolish. The gods in the story have powers that even the greatest of human abilities cannot compare to, and with evil intentions they can cause much more damage too.

The god's actions in The Metamorphoses hurt many earth dwelling gods and prove that Jupiter has no justification for the flood if the other gods can't

even act decently. In book 14, Glaucus asks Circe to help him get his love, Scylla. However, Circe was in love with Glaucus so she turned Scylla into a Monster. " Her lover Glaucus wept at this and fled from having any more to do with Circe... (Scylla) carried off Ulysses' man as plunder" (The Metamorphoses: Book 14, 96-102). As a monster she killed many men until she was finally transformed again.

This turn of events shows that Circe's selfish and evil heart that not only destroyed the love of Glaucus but also killed many innocent men, and morphed Scylla (who had been blameless throughout the story) into a monster. Evil is seen through the gods and they have much greater power to act on it. This poses a greater threat to the gods than any human could have. The power the gods have comes with major responsibilities, however it is prevalent throughout the poem that the gods use these powers in selfish ways. For example, when Cupid shoots a love arrow at Apollo and an arrow to reject his love at Daphne.

He does this as an act of retaliation of Apollo's rudeness toward him. This action caused Apollo to attempt to rape Daphne, even if the attempt fails as Daphne's father turns her into a tree before anything happens. " One is in love now, and the other one won't hear of it" (The Metamorphoses: Book 1, 657-658). This not only causes Apollo to be love driven but for Daphne to never want love, which turns the situation into a rape scene. Cupid's enormous amount of pride caused multiple gods emotional harm and displays that Jupiter misjudged the negative effect the gods have on each other.

The good and the wicked are punished by Jupiter in this story. It is shown throughout the story of examples of ignorance and hypocrisy created by the flood on Jupiter's behalf. Jupiter shows these traits by not considering the good people effected by the flood, harming the gods who he believed he would be protecting by the wipe out of humanity, and by ignoring the evil actions the gods. Jupiter has no justification of the destruction of humanity and his actions were unjust, hypocritical, and ignorant.