

First & Last Name

Professor Martin

Engl. 2332

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Text: *Metamorphoses*

Passage: “Now it was Jove who had caught sight of Io;... What should he do? It would be cruel to consign his love; but if he kept her, he would just raise doubts. On one side, shame keeps urging: Give her up. Love, on the other side, insists: Do not. So, in the end, the goddess got her rival as a present” (Ovid Book I.202-260).

Question: What do Jove’s reactions with Juno in Lines 238 – 260 reveal about his sense of morality as compared to the action he takes in Lines 202 - 224?

Issue: Issues of Cause and Effect. The question deals with the importance that motivations play in decision-making and how one contends with the outcomes of such decisions. Jove makes poor moral decisions and opts to conceal his actions from his wife, Juno.

Critical Approach: The Psychoanalytic approach is the most appropriate for this passage and question. Psychoanalysis with the Freud’s superego affects what our culture has taught us about good and bad. Jove has been forced to cope with some consequences of his actions, but fails to acknowledge his lack of morality and accountability in his actions and the negative manner in which he affects others. He recognizes his desire to be with Io, but does not want to disclose that information to his wife, Juno. A great paragraph!

Answer:

Early in the passage, we witness a scene where Jove is observing Io's return from her father's stream. Upon seeing her, he is overcome with a desire to make her his wife. However, she rejects his advances and flees from him. But Jove is a god and employs the use of dense fog and clouds to make her stop, after which he rapes her.

Jove's wife, Juno, observes the clouds that hang over an expanse of the earth in the full daylight hours. Suspecting that something out of the ordinary has occurred, she descends upon the area and finds her husband there. Jove has anticipated the arrival of Juno and morphed the exquisite Io into a white heifer in order to deceive his wife. Although a heifer, Io is still lovely in appearance. Juno even praises the appearance of the heifer, although she is keenly aware that all is not as it appears on the surface.

Sensing deception, Juno asked Jove where the heifer came from during which time he lies and states that "the earth had given birth to this fine heifer." In an attempt to expose the situation further, Juno asks for the heifer as a gift to her. In a cruel twist of fate, Juno has called Jove's bluff.

Jove agonizes internally over the situation, weighing his options. He does not want to surrender this "possession" that he had transformed for the sole purpose of deceiving his wife. Conversely, he does not want to divulge his true intentions or actions to his wife.

Jove finally makes his decision – and gives the heifer as a gift to his wife, Juno. He opts to conceal his true intentions. Jove is selfish and irresponsible in the fact that he took something that did not rightfully belong to him – Io's chastity. It might appear that he demonstrates some level of responsibility in considering his wife and giving her the gift she has requested.

However, line 254 reveals Jove's true intention – shame. Out of shame he decides to disguise who he really is and relinquishes Io after all.