Reader Response 5

Ovid’s Metamorphoses book 8

**Summary**:

Minos attacks the city of Alcathous. Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, who also ruled the city , falls in love with Minos. She scalps her father to give his power to Minos. Minos decides to impose the fairest terms on the defeated city, and he leaves. Scylla angrily purses Minos’s ship but turns into a bird. Daedalus is not happy to be in exile. He builds wings so that he and his son, Icarus, may fly away, however dies cause he flew too close to the sun.

After Theseus victory his fame spreads, and the Caledonians appeal to him for help in slaughtering a boar that has terrorized their land. After a fight, Meleager kills his two uncles. Althaea decides to throw the log into the fire and Meleager’s life starts to fade away. Achelous tells a story about Erysichthon, a man with no regard for the gods. He chopped down a sacred tree for no reason, persisting even when the tree groaned in pain. Ceres called on Hunger to strike him. A powerful urge to eat gripped Erysichthon. He sold his daughter into slavery to pay for more food and eventually consumed mouthfuls of his own flesh, killing himself.

**Analysis**:

The Metamorphoses has never depicted love affairs or loving relationships that end happily. And, Ovid argues that love creates great pain. The character of Scylla suffers the torment of unfulfilled love. Althaea’s familial love puts her between her son, Meleager, and her brothers. This depicts in modern world how getting attached to someone too close is very harmful as they then won’t be able to focus on the other works to do like, jobs, payments and other errands that are needed in the world to survive. Moreover, they must choose only one course of action. For Scylla, the correct path is clear, but she does not take it. Instead, love leads her to scalp her father in a wild bid to gain the favor of Minos. Althaea, in contrast, has no obvious course of action. However, love for her brothers leads her to kill Meleager.

With the story of Daedalus, Ovid develops the theme of the power of art. We have seen that art enables artists to express themselves, communicate, and relieve their pain. In this book, Daedalus demonstrates art’s nearly magical properties. By deploying his creative powers, Daedalus accomplishes the impossible. However, Ovid stresses that art is as dangerous as it is powerful. Those who use it without mastery may harm themselves and others. This can be seen in the modern world too as many times people use art as a form to express themselves. It always doesn’t have to be paintings, it could range from poems to music to express themselves. It becomes as an alternate way for them to show the world what they really feel like

**Questions**:

Can Shakespear’s Hamlet also provide a good example, along these lines, of how too much love for anyone can be very harmful, even if it’s a family member.