

Ethan ADAMS Poetic Flights: The Travels of Phaethon, Daedalus, and Pythagoras in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

Signaled by the opening line's *fert animus*, readers learn that Ovid's poem will go where his mind takes him. The incipit maps out the poem's narrative trajectory as a mental voyage, and Ovid leads the reader on a grand tour of temporal, spatial, and literary loca in the Greco-Roman world. The flight narratives of Phaethon and Daedalus are literal reenactments of the poem's theme of travel, and have been acknowledged as models of poetic undertaking (V. Wise, Ramus 1977). But the flight theme is also revisited in the mental excursions of Pythagoras, whose speech incorporates verbal and thematic elements from these literal flights while also alluding to the poetic flight and apotheosis of the poem's epilogue. The relationship between the literal flights of Phaethon and Daedalus and the philosophical travels of Pythagoras has thus far attracted little attention. In this paper I show that the poem's mental itinerary as outlined by the poet himself in the proem and epilogue is reflected in all three flight narratives, an intratextual series which together posit mental flight as a symbol of poetic daring, creativity, and immortality.

My argument seeks to ground Ovid's thematic flight discourses as an amalgamation of inter- and intratextual motifs. Ovid adapts the theme of poetic flight, common in Greek and Roman literature, alluding to Horatian texts (Odes 1.3, 2.20, and 4.2) which construe the flights of Daedalus and Phaethon as models of poetic daring. I relate literal flight to the philosophical pedigree of *fert animus*, whose concept of mental travel, inaugurated in the proem, alludes to similar philosophical concepts in Empedocles (fr. 129 D-K), Parmenides (fr. 1.1 D-K), Lucretius (DRN 1.72-4), and ascribed to the Pythagorean Archytas (Horace Odes 1.28). In picking up the proem's concept of the impulses of the *animus*, Ovid's speech of Pythagoras alludes (through verbal 'transmigrations') to the literal travels of Phaethon and Daedalus, rewrites flight as a philosophical endeavor, and prefigures the poetic flight and apotheosis of the epilogue. These intertexts, expanded in the narrative tableaux of Phaethon, Daedalus, and Pythagoras, are crystallized in the epilogue's reminiscences of Horace (Odes 3.30) and Ennius (var. 17-18 V) as a culmination of Ovid's theme of poetic audacity and apotheosis.

Spaced throughout the text—at the regular, and emphatic, intervals of beginning, middle, and end—these poetic flights frame and buttress the poem's spatial margins while at the same time codifying poetic achievement as the transgression of boundaries. Ovid flies above his own (and others') texts, granting the reader an occasional glimpse of 'authorial' perspective focalized in the flights of Phaethon, Daedalus, and Pythagoras. Working inside the narrative through programmatic characters, Ovid engages the reader through inter- and intratextual allusions to construe flight as a metapoetic theme. But working outside, or, rather, above the narrative (in the proem and epilogue), the poet ultimately transcends his text by creating and surpassing his own intratextual models.